



## GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, Inc.

### CHRISTMAS 2011

To the National Board, Chapter Presidents and Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society Members:

*Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:8-11)*

It is with a sense of joy and anticipation in the upcoming Feast of the Nativity that I greet and embrace you. I offer these few verses from the Gospel of Saint Luke because I believe they demonstrate from the very start of the life of Christ that the Good News of His love is for all people.

On that first Christmas night we see the royal houses, the rulers of the people and those of privilege were not the ones who were chosen by God to hear the proclamation of the birth of Christ. In His divine wisdom, God chooses to proclaim the birth of His Son first to the shepherds. The shepherds were poor and accustomed to living a hard life. They lived for long periods with their sheep in the hills and fields being exposed to difficult and harsh conditions.

It was to these shepherds, however, that the angels appeared and specifically proclaimed the birth of the Messiah. As soon as the proclamation was made by one angel, immediately the heavens opened with brilliant light and were filled with a multitude of angels that praised God singing the words that we pray to this day: "*Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth, peace and good will to all people.*"

These verses are offered as reflection this Christmas because the Nativity provides reason and hope for our existence and because the Ladies Philoptochos Society understands for 80 years this message while serving those in need. You strive to make real this divine proclamation of the birth and love of Christ every time you feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the brokenhearted, support the Church ministries and offer your time to raise-up those who have fallen.

Beloved Sisters in Philoptochos, 2000 years after the birth of Jesus, your acts of charity bring light into the darkness just as the voice of the angel brought light into the darkness to the shepherds that first Christmas night. Especially at this glorious time of year, let us beseech Him in our prayers to guide us wisely, to live our lives appropriately, to assume responsibility and as stewards of this Earth, to preserve our environment.

I thank you for your workings of God's providence and your genuine commitment to the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society. May your families be blessed this Christmas and may your New Year 2012 be filled with grace and love of the Prince of Peace Jesus Christ.

With love and admiration in the Newborn King,

Aphrodite Skeadas  
National Philoptochos President