



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, Inc.

September 8, 2015

Dear National and Metropolis Board Members, Chapter Presidents and Stewards of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society,

On a bright, cloudless morning on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, I watched as the second tower at the World Trade Center was hit, and I saw the explosive eruption of fire and smoke. And when the towers fell, I lost a dear friend and colleague who, like so many others, selflessly ran to the site to offer help.

In the days after the attack, lower Manhattan was desolate – no noisy trucks, no bustling shops, no lights, and few people aside from first responders. Uniformed soldiers and tank-like vehicles patrolled the suddenly unfamiliar streets. The site smoldered for months, leaving an open sore, a gaping wound that is still waiting to be healed. And more than a decade later, we still seek healing and relief from that long time ache.

For many, New York is a large and distant urban city. But, when it was attacked, our nation responded as one. That dreadful attack was an assault on each of us, on our way of life, on the freedoms and values upon which our country was founded, and on our right to freely and joyfully profess and practice our faith. In the face of monstrous evil, thousands of innocent souls offered the ultimate sacrifice and our beloved Saint Nicholas Church, nestled in the shadows of the towering structures, was lost.

We can replace those dreadful memories with the beauty of our Church, a place of faith, and love, and redemption and healing. In times of need Philoptochos has always been there, with outstretched arms and warm hearts, and we have a rightful place in the process of renewal and healing. It is our privilege and honor to participate in the building of the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine. We can replace those dreadful memories with a beacon of Orthodoxy – a beacon that will shine on all people of all faiths, and assist all of us in our search for peace and solace.

The challenge before each of us is clear. We, each of us, must honor the sacrifice and not shrink from our obligation to rebuild the Church. We, each of us, must, through our participation, signal to all that our democratic foundations and deeply held religious beliefs cannot be, and will not be, destroyed. We, each of us, must choose the light of faith over the darkness of despair.

I urge you to support and contribute to the building of the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine Philoptochos Initiative. Through your offering you will become part of the healing, a bringer of the light, a ray in the beacon of Orthodoxy.

Thank you.

With love in Christ,

President
National Philoptochos Society