

## “On the Sea of Visions and Hopes”

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:*

**A**s the new year begins, we once again return to the sea, to our roots, to the beginnings of history—to *water*, this eternal symbol of maternity: “And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas; and God saw that it was good.” “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:10 and 1:2).



What is more, we return to the beginnings of our regeneration, to the renewal of creation and of man: The public activity of Christ was inaugurated at Lake Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee) and the Jordan River, where the Holy Spirit is once again present in the form of a dove.

The rising of the sun from the nadir of December to the zenith of June, the increase of light, our journey towards spring and Pascha, and the renewal of time—these are sealed by the all-radiant and hope-bearing Feast of Lights, the Theophany, with the revelation of the Three-Sunned Godhead.

Now creation is illumined, the sea is made sweet, nature is becalmed, and visions are renewed. The journeys of hope begin anew upon the sanctified waters, with gladsome and heartfelt prayers.

Our Christ-illumined people, imbued with a civilization born of the sea, is wont to sing, with simplicity and faith, about every seagoing vessel: “In the bow sits Christ, in the middle our Panagia, and at the rudder stands St. Nicholas.” Holy Icons, together with a perpetual vigil lamp, have always accompanied our sea-beaten and salt-drenched seafarers.

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**Today**, then, my beloved Brethren, at the beginning of 2012, let us renew our blessed tradition!

In the midst of the Uncreated Light of the Holy Trinity, with the Theotokos and the Saints as our companions, let us continue our journey full sail on the sea of visions and of hopes for a renewed Greece.

Let us exorcize grumbling and a negative, fatalistic mentality!

A crisis of any kind constitutes an historic opportunity for a gradual, but radical, change at every level.

Let us become creative and resourceful once again! Let us not allow the multilayered and multifaceted crisis to overwhelm and crush us!

Behind the numbers and statistics are people, and it is they who ultimately determine the numbers: by the renewal of creativity, the revitalization of a society of solidarity, and by self-sacrifice, for the re-establishment of just government, the restoration of institutions and precepts, and consistent recognition of the dignity of our neighbor.

Let us intensify our hopeful prayers and our creative repentance!

May Christ enlighten the spiritual, political, and economic leadership of our country, such that it might give rise to vision, hope, and creativity!



The time has come, under the boundless light of the Holy Theophany, for us to move from being a Greece of misery and international untrustworthiness to a Greece of creation—a Greece worthy of its civilization and history.

May Divine Providence now bless that our homeland decisively embark on a positive and utterly restored course!

“And instead of the [shrubby] bramble shall come up the [lofty] cypress, and instead of the [fetid] nettle shall come up the [fragrant] myrtle” (Isaiah 55:13).

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**May** the holy prayers of our much revered Elder, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, protect us, along with the blessing of the venerable members of our Holy Synod in Resistance of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church.

Finally, we feel the need, as we do every year, to thank most warmly all of those participating today in this radiant Feast of our Church and Nation, and in particular the holy Hierarchs and Priests from abroad, the



local authorities and other government representatives, the police force and harbor authorities of Oropos, and the traffic police of Malakasa.

May our Immaculate Mother, the Theotokos, ever be their Protectress and Guide.

May God be with you!

