



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΙΚΑΓΟΥ

August 16, 2013

Reverend Clergy
Beloved Faithful
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago

Welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed you...
—Romans 15:7

Dearly Beloved,

In our constant striving to fulfill our Great Commission in Christ, to preach the Good News to all nations and peoples, we once again invite all of our faithful and parishes to observe Sunday, October 13, 2013, as **Inclusion Awareness Day**.

Our Lord did not simply wait for persons to approach Him; rather, He actively sought those who were in need of His care and healing. So too, we must actively seek to make our houses of worship accessible to all who desire to stand and worship with us, and find ways to invite and include those who might feel marginalized by their own special needs elsewhere in all our parish activities.

Therefore we are most thankful for the ministry program of our Holy Metropolis, "Pick Up Your Cross and Follow Me" which is holding its fourth annual day camp this year on Saturday, November 2, at our Saint Andrew Church of Chicago for children of our parishes who have such special needs and their families. Our observance of Inclusion Awareness Day is an opportunity to highlight this ministry.

Yet there is far more that can be accomplished. We are most grateful to the Pathways.org "Inclusion in Worship" movement. This initiative provides education materials and financial grants to assist congregations to be accessible and inclusive. An inclusion *Awareness Day Workbook* designed specifically for Orthodox Christian parishes is available online, and we hope you will take advantage of this resource that can be accessed at http://pathways.org/images/random_pdfs/EO_IADay_Workbook_FOR_WEB_POSTING.pdf.

May we resolve to begin the new Ecclesiastical Year in such a welcoming manner, and may our heavenly King, the Comforter, open our hearts, minds and doors to the gifts of all Orthodox Christians.

With Paternal Blessings,

Metropolitan IAKOVOS of Chicago