



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΙΚΑΓΟΥ

Address to the Faithful of the Assumption of the Mother of God, Homer Glen

Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago
Sunday January 25, 2026

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

My heart truly longs to be with you today; to look upon you face to face, and to speak with you directly. Because of previously scheduled pastoral visits to parishes in the St. Louis Vicariate, I am unable to be physically present. Were it otherwise, I would be standing among you now. Please know with certainty that my concern for you is real, my involvement is active, and my prayers for this parish are constant.

Over the past few months, the Metropolis of Chicago has received information and requests for assistance concerning challenges facing your parish, particularly in the areas of financial practices, governance, and administrative life. These requests came from within the parish community itself and were offered out of love for the Church and concern for the future of this sacred community.

The Holy Archdiocese of America has also been contacted and is working closely with the Metropolis to bring clarity to the challenges facing the parish, to understand their causes, and—most importantly—to ensure that they may be corrected and avoided in the future.

In response to the information received thus far, we have initiated a careful period of listening, learning, and understanding. This work is ongoing and will inevitably require careful course correction. If unlawful activity is discovered, rest assured that the appropriate legal authorities will be contacted.

Following the completion of this review, the Metropolis and the Archdiocese will carefully consider the findings and determine appropriate next steps. These may include corrective actions, governance reforms, and, if appropriate, cooperation with civil authorities as determined by our pastoral responsibility, applicable legal obligations, and the Church's commitment to good governance. The goal of this effort is to strengthen trust, restore confidence, and ensure the long-term well-being of the parish community

It has become clear that the parish would be strengthened by additional support, experience, and clearer guidance as it moves forward in faith. For this reason, and with my full pastoral involvement, we have determined that the best way to assist the parish at this moment is the appointment of an interim Parish Council. This interim council will bring together faithful and experienced parish leaders from sister parishes within our Metropolis, who will serve hand in hand with existing members of your own community. They come not as outsiders, but as your brothers

and sisters in Christ, offering their God-given gifts and talents in humble service to this community of our beloved Most Holy Theotokos.

It is important for me to express clearly and pastorally:

This step is not taken to control or overshadow the parish. Nor is it taken to punish the parish. This is being done because we love the Parish, and love seeks to strengthen and heal.

The interim parish council has been given a focused and temporary responsibility: to assist the parish in bringing stability and transparency to its administrative and financial life, to understand where processes may have become strained, and to help prepare for a healthy and sustainable path forward. As this work unfolds, the interim parish council will communicate regularly with the parish community as information becomes available, sharing its findings and progress so that the faithful are kept informed and engaged. When the council has gained a full and clear understanding of the situation facing the parish, it will convene a general assembly of the parish to share this information openly. I encourage all to attend. God willing, I will be present at that assembly so that we may continue this work together in a spirit of transparency, unity, and trust.

I also wish to acknowledge something very human and very real. This news—and information that will be shared in the weeks and months ahead—may feel surprising or even shocking. This is understandable and not unexpected. We are advised that the parish has not held a general assembly for multiple years, resulting in regular sharing of information regarding the parish finances and administration. The sudden presence of transparency through the work of the interim parish council can feel unsettling. Please know that this is not meant to alarm, but to heal; not to destabilize, but to restore trust and path forward.

The Apostle Paul reminds us, “If one member suffers, all suffer together,” because we are all members of the one Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:26). At the same time, shared suffering does not give us permission to cause suffering in others. Words spoken carelessly, rumors repeated, and fear allowed to take root, wound the members of the Body, and burden the whole community.

I therefore ask you, with a shepherd’s heart, to support the interim parish council in their work. Pray for them. Cooperate with them. Encourage them as they serve your parish.

I also ask your prayers for your priest, Fr. Soterios Dimitriou, and for each other. Fr. Soterios has been placed on **administrative leave**, which is **temporary in nature** and is intended to allow this review to proceed **calmly and objectively**. **This is not a suspension**, and it should not be interpreted as a judgment, a penalty, or a conclusion of any kind. In his absence, Fr. Chris Avramopoulos, our Southside Regional Vicar, has been appointed to serve as interim administrative parish priest. Our clergy of the Metropolis will assist in providing for the sacramental and pastoral needs of this parish.

The appointment of an interim Parish Council and the administrative leave of Fr. Soterios Dimitriou are temporary administrative measures and are not determinative of, nor should they be construed as, findings of wrongdoing.

I wish to encourage those among you who may have been standing on the margins—perhaps uncertain how to help or when to step forward—to consider becoming more actively involved in the life and future of this parish. If you feel called to serve the Church, I invite you to speak with the new parish leadership. The future of this parish will be shaped not by a few alone, but by the faithful stepping forward together, so that this season may become a time of healing and renewal.

Your parish is entrusted to the loving protection of the Most Holy Theotokos. Like your parish, she was asked to trust the Lord when the path ahead was not clear. Without knowing everything that lay before her, she placed herself in God’s hands and said, “Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). It is my prayer that this parish, in this moment, may imitate her trust and place itself with confidence in the hands of God.

May the Most Holy Mother of God shelter this parish with her protecting veil, and may this community emerge from this moment strengthened, renewed, and filled with hope.

With love in Christ and abiding prayer,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Metropolitan Nathanael". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

† NATHANAEL
Metropolitan of Chicago