December 28, 2015
*Afterfeast of the Nativity

Dear Reverend Clergy and Esteemed Parish Council Members,

This year the clergy and lay leaders of the Metropolis of San Francisco will have the opportunity to come together at the 2016 Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly to be held on February 29 – March 1, 2016 at Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center in Dunlap, California. This annual gathering provides a forum for the leadership of all our communities to deliberate on important matters for our Metropolis and engage in dialogue and fellowship to enrich our common ministry. The Assembly will begin promptly at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, February 29, and will conclude with lunch on Tuesday, March 1.

The theme for this year’s Clergy-Laity Assembly is “Looking Inward, Looking Outward”, based on Proverbs 27:19, “As water reflects the face, so one’s life reflects the heart.” We will look “inward” at the individual with the assistance of our guest speaker the Rev. Vasileios Thermos, M.D., Ph.D., who is currently an Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Psychology at the Ecclesiastical Academy of the University of Athens. Fr. Thermos will offer an engaging presentation entitled, “Addiction and the Person: A Psychological and Theological Approach.”

We will look “outward” as a Metropolis through the progress of our Metropolis Strategic Plan, with presentations by the Metropolis Commission for Orthodox Missions and Evangelism (C.O.M.E.), Family Wellness Ministry and the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

In response to numerous questions from our communities about Clergy Benefits, we have also invited Mr. George Caravakis of GDC Financial to make a very informative presentation on clergy benefits. This is a vital component of each parish’s budget and is important for the health and wellness of our clergy and their families.

This year we will hold elections for eight clergy and eight laity to serve on the Metropolis Council for the next two-year term, and for one clergy and two laity to serve on the Archdiocesan Council for the same term. Nomination forms have already been sent to all parish clergy and this is another very important item for this year’s Assembly.

It is important that we have full representation from each of our parishes which includes:

- The Parish Priest
- The President of the Parish Council, and in his or her absence the Vice President, or in his or her absence any member of the Parish Council designated by it; and
- Two members of the Parish elected by the Parish Assembly.

The agenda and registration materials are enclosed or you can register online at: www.sanfran.goarch.org/CLA. Your timely response is requested by Friday, February 12, 2016. Please plan your schedules accordingly and plan to arrive promptly, coming with an open mind and heart, ready to learn and willing to share.

I wish you and our entire Metropolis family a peaceful, joy-filled and healthy New Year!

With Love in the Newborn King,

Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco