

My Beloved Ones,

I greet you with a Χρόνια Πολλά for the feast of Ss. Peter and Paul, which we were blessed to celebrate yesterday, and for the Synaxis of the 12 Apostles today. As this was the first week of St. Stephen's Summer Camp, I was blessed to be able to celebrate the Divine Liturgy with all the children, their counselors, and the clergymen, on both feast days. Naturally the observance of this blessed Feast was a true paniyiri!

Of course I pray that, with God's blessings, next year, we will be able to celebrate the Divine Liturgy with all our campers, counselors and volunteers, in the beautiful sanctuary which we have undertaken for their benefit, as well as the benefit of all the Orthodox in America.

As we begin the month of July, many of us are planning our vacations. Some of us will travel to various places in our own beautiful country; some of us will be going abroad, perhaps to the Motherland; but for all of us, vacation should be not only a time not of rest and relaxation, but an effort to strengthen ourselves for the future.

Even as we visit our relatives, relax on a beach, or whatever activities we have in mind, I feel it is important to always remember to keep the mind engaged. Education, after all, should be considered a never ending process for all human beings, no matter what time of year it is. Wherever we go, we should take time to read, find opportunities to visit a lecture, or see a theatrical presentation.

This last idea is especially true for those of us to have the occasion to visit Greece, which is the source of so much theater; whether we see a play in one of the original theaters, or watching modern troupes stage one of the ancient tragedies or satires. We should remember that these plays were specifically created to impart messages and lessons: to the citizens, they impart the correct ways of living; and to the leaders, they demonstrated how to truly fulfill their responsibilities toward the others.

My Brothers and Sisters, consider that the things we learned yesterday now belong to our personal history. Therefore, we must constantly seek to renew our knowledge, fulfilling our need for growth. In so doing, we will then continue to inspire ourselves and others to achieve greater heights, both personally and spiritually.

As we observe both the religious holidays of Ss. Peter and Paul and the Holy Apostles, as well as the very important national celebration that is the Fourth of July, I pray that your summer be full of enjoyment, knowledge, and happiness. God bless us all!

**+ALEXIOS**

Metropolitan of Atlanta

