



My Beloved Ones,

I greet you with love and joy in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, praying that you and your loved ones receive His blessings of health, peace, and joy in this New Ecclesiastical Year!

Coming as we have to the end of summer, and the beginning of a new fall season, I am writing to remind you of a great historical event soon to take place in the life of our Metropolis.

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the Metropolis of Atlanta will be blessed as we receive miraculous Panagia Vimatarissa icon from the Monastery of Vatopaidi on Mount Athos, where it been a part of the monastery since it was discovered on the land where the Monastery would eventually be established.

By the 10th century, the icon was in danger of being stolen by pirates, who regularly sought to steal from the monasteries of the Holy Mountain. In order to prevent this, the monk responsible for the Holy Altar decided to place the icon of the Theotokos, along with the Cross of Saint Constantine and a lit candle, inside the well. However, though this Hierodeacon was taken captive by the pirates, the icon was safe, and eventually forgotten. 70 years later, now free, the Monk returned to the monastery and instructed the new Abbot to open the well. The icon was indeed there, along with the Cross: both were untouched and floating at the very top, illuminated by the still lit candle.

Now, together, we will all have the opportunity to venerate the miraculous icon of our Lady, offering glory to our God and Creator, thanking those who made this day possible, and enjoying the fellowship of our Metropolis of Atlanta family. Beginning at 11:00 AM, this rare and joyous occasion will take the form of a procession with the icon of the Theotokos into our new Panagia Chapel, led by myself, along with the Monks of Vatopaidi, the clergy of the Metropolis of Atlanta, and a parade group created especially for the event!

I hope to see as many parishioners there as possible, and to that end, [please RSVP with this link](#). For questions and additional information, please call Ethel Gjerde at 404-634-9345)

The arrival of an icon like the Panagia Vimatarissa, which survived theft and was hidden away for centuries untouched, is not an opportunity that shall often be repeated. It is for this reason that I wish to see as many of our parishioners experience this joy as well!

**+ALEXIOS**  
Metropolitan of Atlanta