



## GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS <sup>OF</sup> ATLANTA

### ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ



My Beloved Ones,

Having celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit, we now prepare for a Feast which honors all those Saints whose hearts and minds were filled with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This Sunday's Feast of All Saints is unique because our Church acknowledges not only those saints whose lives we are blessed to know, but especially those saints who are unknown to us.

Throughout the earthly existence of the Church there are those who heard Christ's warning from this Sunday's Gospel: "...*whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.*" (Matthew 10:38). Therefore, as St. Paul says, they "...*were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection.*" (Hebrews 11:35) However, the torments St. Paul describes were not only physical, but emotional and psychological as well.

Even those in isolation still led difficult and lonely lives. "...*They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*" (Hebrews 11:37-38) Many of us have difficulty imagining just what these Saints sacrificed, but I ask that we take note of an important thing. Those who opposed the Church considered the Christians dangerous, and unworthy to live in the world. St. Paul, however, reverses the material understanding: instead of these saints being unworthy of the world, we understand that it is the Saints, of whom this broken and sinful existence is unworthy.

The temporary powers did their best to ensure that the names of the early Christians would be forgotten. We know that they failed to extinguish the Word of God, but even so, there are countless holy individuals who—whether they suffered the death of a martyr, or a peaceful death—are not named. There are also those who have not become beacons throughout the world; instead, God helps them to live out their faith in quiet ways. However, simply because their names are not proclaimed, does not mean they are any less worthy of honor.

It is for this reason that the Church in her wisdom, has elected to make the Sunday after Pentecost the day during which we commemorate all the Saints. I fervently pray that every one of us calls upon not only our Patron Saint, but that unknown saint, to intercede on our behalf. I wish all of us, but especially those who celebrate their Name Day on this Feast, Χρόνια Πολλά!

**+ALEXIOS**  
Metropolitan of Atlanta