

ENCYCLICAL OF HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP GREGORIOS OF THYATEIRA AND GREAT BRITAIN TO THE GREEK-ORTHODOX DAYTIME AND EVENING SCHOOLS ON THE OCCASION OF THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR 2015-2016.

Dear Parents, Children and the Educational Bodies of the Greek-Orthodox Diaspora in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

With our entrance into the New School Year 2015-2016, I extend warm and heart-felt greetings of affection and profound appreciation to all those who toil to convey the Greek-Orthodox Tradition to the New Generation of the Greek-Orthodox Diaspora in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

I would first like to congratulate the organised Diaspora for their unanimous efforts to reverse the EDEXCEL decision to stop Modern Greek A-level exams. I am certain that the way the campaign was organised will bear fruit and the Government will intervene to help with the withdrawal of this decision. I wish to stress the need to continue with the campaign for the learning of the Greek language and Civilisation that Hellenism and Christianity forged throughout the centuries, as preserved and safeguarded by the Great Church of Jesus Christ, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and successfully promoted by the Greek-Orthodox Churches all around the globe.

We live in troubled, - and in many ways apocalyptic,- times and for this reason it is our duty to renew our faith to the Triune Worshipped and Glorious God and to the great values of Christianity. These are, our profound faith in God, our adherence to God's commandments and our return to our roots as expressed by our Orthodox Church and tradition to this day. We should become more conscious and devout Christians. We should show respect for the Divine. We should partake in the sacred observances in the life of the Church and attend Church services frequently, particularly in Sundays and the Great Feasts of Christianity. We should become philanthropic and merciful towards the poor, the unemployed, the sick, the elderly and the needy amongst our brethren, and like the Tax Collector in the Evangelical parable, we should repent for our transgressions and sins and humble ourselves so that we may receive mercy and pardon by the philanthropy of the Merciful God.

I believe that we should stress to the people in our Schools and Families the value of virtue, of friendship, of solidarity, of moderation, of economy and of our genuine love towards others, particularly the underprivileged of this life. I say this on our entrance to the new School Year as a fatherly reminder of the great values in life. These are, Freedom, Democracy, respect for our elders, our Parents, the Lords, and the Laws of the Country. We should teach the value of friendship, solidarity and cooperation among children and their Parents, Teachers and in general, the society we live in. By our virtuous life and good example, we should support and guide our children in the society we live in. We should support our families by recourse to the foundations of Faith, Hope and Love as taught by our Lord Jesus Christ by means of His Sacrifice on the Cross for the salvation of Humankind. We should pray from the depths of our soul that we may be enlightened by Christ to have fear of God and to protect our families and all the children in the world. Virtue is the pinnacle of Education, progress and success for both the young and the old. 'Wisdom starts with the fear of God'.

I pray for the progress of the Schools, both daytime and evening ones, the upgrading and restitution of Education within the sacred boundaries of our Orthodox Christian Tradition and remain with warm wishes in the Lord and honour.

London, September 2015

Archbishop Gregorios
of Thyateira and Great Britain

Note: To be read from the Pulpit instead of a Sermon, on Sunday 6 or 13 September 2015