

Simple Thoughts for the New Year (Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios Head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Canada)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



NEW YEAR'S ENCYCLICAL

Certain followers of another religion — that is very much in the news today — are fond of ridiculing Christianity and Christians. They say such things as: “Are you dumb? Are you a masochist? Don’t you know any better?”

They go so far as to ridicule the teachings and sayings of Christ Himself, when they say: “Christians are stupid. You can slap them on the cheek, and they will tell you to keep on hitting them.”



Of course, you know better. They misinterpret what Jesus said. “If someone strikes you on the one cheek, then turn to them the other.”

With this teaching, Christ preached tolerance; love; cooperation; and humility, while other religions preach supremacy; hate; revenge; and oppression.

Listen to me. In the New Year that begins, the first thing you need is faith in Christ. Why? Because in Christ, all the prophecies are fulfilled, for He is the True Messiah. The only True God. The only Redeemer and Savior of the world. There is no one else who can claim this. True faith is the link that unites humanity and the divine — a faith that allows each person who is baptized to be united with Christ the God-Man.

2016 has passed. Imitate your ancestors, the ancient Greeks, who would look back at the events of the past year and make their resolutions and plans for the New Year. Think about how you have lived your life and what changes you need to make. What good have you done? What harm have you done? What should you have done that you did not do? Since the Lord has allowed you to live through 2016, you still have time and a long journey before you in 2017. Make plans in 2017 for both your spiritual and material benefit. Stick to this plan faithfully, so that by the end of 2017, you will be successful — if the Lord wills that you are still on this earth.

During the course of this New Year, above all, have faith in Christ, the divine Son of God. Show genuine love to all people. We are all children of the same Father, who is the Only True God. Practice these virtues throughout the New Year: industriousness, honesty and kindness.

Do not fear possible threats. Violence can never prevail. Truth will ultimately prevail, for Christ is the Truth, the Way and the Life — a Life lived in abundance.

With faith in Christ and abiding in His love, you will succeed in this life and inherit life for eternity. I wish you a happy and blessed New Year, having Christ abiding in your hearts. Christ has accomplished the true victory over evil in this world, and this victory He grants to each person who is united with Him for eternity.

With fatherly love and blessings in the New-born Christ,

Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios

Head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Canada