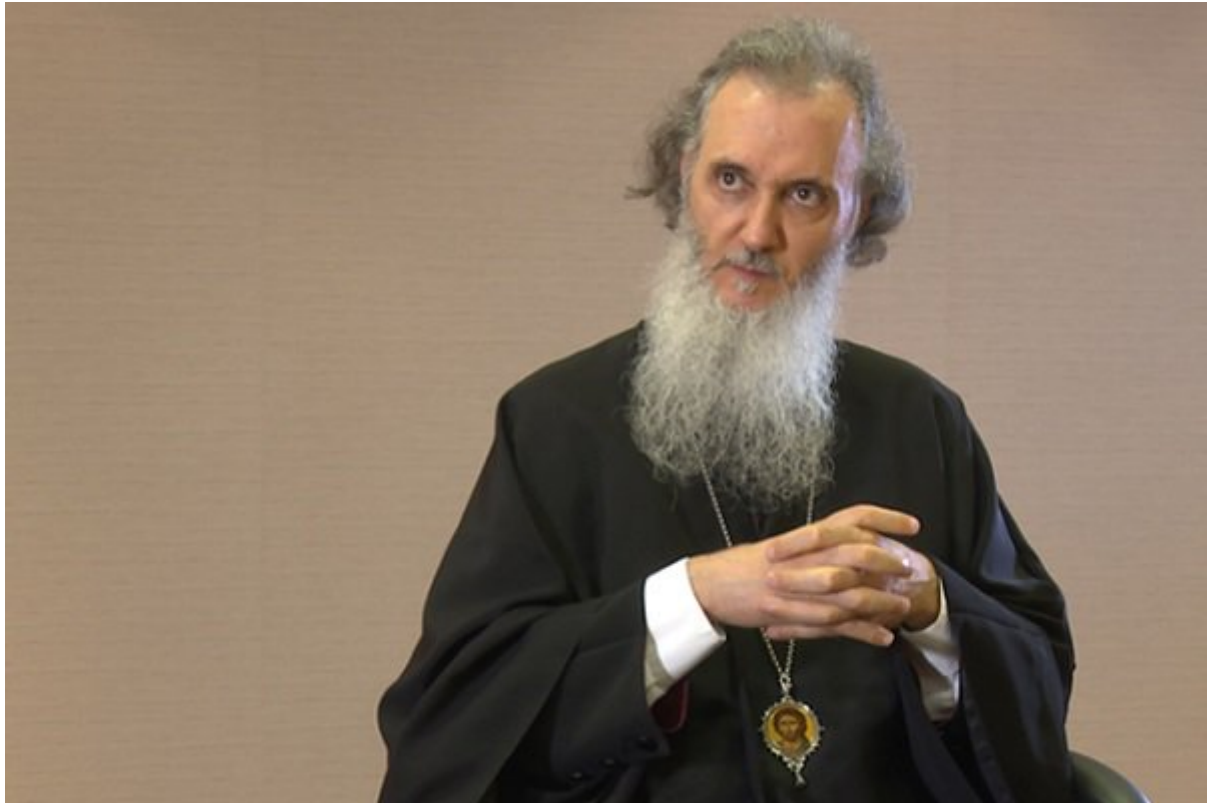


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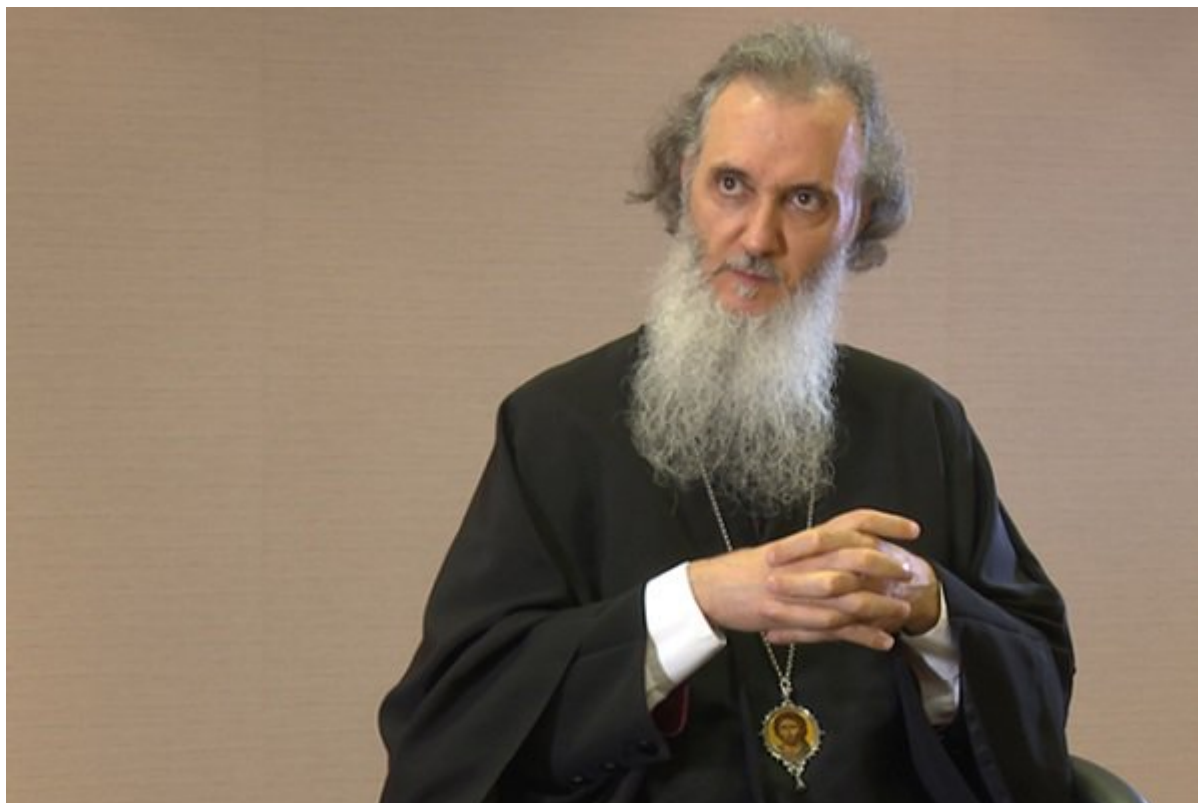
New year's message from Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea (Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



My beloved,

We now enter another New Year, which is a precious gift from God to the world, and we wish and hope it will be a peaceful one. In particular, those who have suffered recently and are still suffering from local wars and terrorist attacks have only one desire: to live peacefully during the New Year. And in our country, with its unacceptable division into the North and the South, suffering has been the ongoing reality for 64 years—the consequence of the cold war. For this reason, it is inevitable that our thoughts and prayers have been and continue to be centered on a long-awaited peace.



Nevertheless, we must also ask: How can political peace prevail among the peoples? Are international laws and signatures on transnational agreements the answer? Of course, these are good efforts, but they do not guarantee peace; for many times, laws and treaties are quickly violated due to social, economic, geopolitical and other expedient purposes.

The deeper truth is that in order for outer peace to exist, inner peace must also exist; that is, peace of the soul. In order for a person to have inner peace, his heart must be filled with “the peace from above”, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. (Gal. 5:22) Without God’s peace, it is impossible for true peace to exist in interpersonal, societal and transnational relations. If a person does not internally possess God’s peace, then he or she will certainly have a war with God, with himself or herself, and with family members, neighbors, and colleagues. The absence of peace with God, with ourselves and with our fellow human beings, provokes wars between nations with a mathematical certainty.

The conclusion, therefore, based on the word of God and human experience, is that only through inner spiritual struggle against egotism, jealousy, greed and self-love is it possible for a person to become an instrument of peace to the surrounding environment. Christ told us: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God”. (Matthew 5: 9) In other words, when we become true children of God, we shall live peacefully among ourselves, as brothers and sisters.

The angelic hymn sung upon the birth of Christ: “Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Lk. 2:14) surely does not refer simply to the predominance of any kind of peace on earth, such as peace based on secular values; instead, above all, it affirms the presence of God’s peace in peoples’ hearts and, consequently, in human relationships. St. John Chrysostom, commenting on this important subject says: “The great inner war of man since his Fall was abolished by Christ’s Incarnation. Thus, the heavenly multitudes of Angels, admiring the destruction of war and the coming of peace on earth, sang: “Glory to God in the Highest, peace on earth, and good will to men”.

Inner peace is very important because without peace, regardless of how many material objects a human being may possess, all such possessions are practically useless. Without inner peace, we cannot possibly do anything right in our life. Even our communication with God becomes distorted, if not impossible. That is why, in our Orthodox worship, the first and foremost petition is for God’s peace. The Divine Liturgy begins with the exhortations: “In peace, let us pray to the Lord” and “For the peace from God ...”. Then, after having asked for God’s peace, we pray “for the peace of the whole world ...”. Also the deacon, on behalf of the worshipping community, asks the Lord: “For a perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless day ...” “For an angel of peace, a trustworthy guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord”. “That the end of our lives may be Christian, without undue suffering, without shame, peaceful and for a good account of ourselves before the fearful judgment seat of Christ, let us ask of the Lord”. Finally, before every important moment of worship, such as the Apostolic and Gospel readings, the Eucharist, Holy Communion, etc., the Priest wishes “peace” to the faithful and the people respond: “And to your spirit”.

Beloved sisters and brothers, let us persist in asking our Lord to bestow “the peace from above”, which is the precondition for peace with God and with our fellow human beings. Moreover, let us fight against “our passions that war in our members” (James 4:1), so that peace may come to the world and to our beautiful country.

Metropolitan Soterios of Pisidia, our Clergy and your Metropolitan wish all of you inner and outward peace, good spiritual and physical health, and all the blessings of “the Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6) for your life and your endeavors throughout the New Year 2018.

“Therefore, my brethren, rejoice, be of good comfort, stand for one another, be of one mind, do not have disagreements, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.” (2 Cor. 13: 11). Amen!

MAY YOU ALL HAVE A BLESSED NEW YEAR!

+ Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea