

## 2006

The Ecclesiastic year starts on September first, while the civil year starts today. However, people are used to organize their matters according to the civil regulation. Today, we remember the circumcision in the flesh of our Lord since it is an event of the Savior's life mentioned in the Gospel, and it means that he respected Moses' Law in order to save us from it through his blood and enter a new life in Baptism. Since we were emancipated from all physical signs, faith has become the only connection between God and us. Those who have become in Christ's Kingdom don't need any tangible sign and this is why circumcision of Christian children was cancelled. We do not oppose anyone who wants to do it for health reasons although modern medicine says that circumcision has no benefits.

One of the great teachers of Alexandria, Origen, wrote a beautiful page about circumcision saying that we should circumcise the sin from our senses: we circumcise our hearing so that we don't hear impure things; we circumcise our sight in order not to see what might insult our Christian entity...etc. In other words, we should start the New Year in chastity and not spend New Year's Eve in gambling and entertainment.

After that, the church put the memory of one of the greatest bishops in history, St. Basil the Great, who died in 379 at the age of 49. He deserved the adjective "Great" because he was great in asceticism, in organizing worship and monastic life, social work, resisting the political authority that was anti-orthodox, and has played a big role in theology. Ecclesiastically, January first, is a full day. We enter it with hope as we wish that God gives us peace first and then economical prosperity. We pray for our country that suffers from horrible crimes against the safe and innocent. Therefore, each one of us should focus in his individual prayer on asking safety for all people, so that God provides peace between all our sects and so that no outside party would stab us and we would still be able to find our means of living and raise our children.

In addition to praying, there is another effort, and it is that whoever wants should volunteer to fast a day or more, and this fasting would be a kind of prayer for God to receive Lebanon in his mercy and goodwill. The year 2006 shall be new if the heart is renewed and purified. When we achieve repentance and decide to stay and dwell in it, we shall be renewed together and stay away from hatred and cursing. Perhaps God would then see this and save us from tests that are above our energy and would cut the hand of anyone who wants to kill the leaders of our

patriotic life or any press man. Then, we would be able to walk wherever we want without being afraid.

I feel sad when I see that the number of believers today is low. Oppose this bad habit and come to the Lord's Table so that your souls would become beautiful and free from all evil in order to ascent together to Christ. Time passes, and your tomorrow from the aspect of food, work and familial life would become today. Economical life is in constant ascending and descending. And most of the time, you are weaker than political mafias that can disturb the life of the country and defect its system.

Maybe the only thing remaining for you is to become a good person through your individual behavior. Try to make yourself spiritually beautiful and enhance the people of your house. When a lot of people do that, a beautiful society and a noble country shall be created.

Metropolitan George of Mount Lebanon