



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

June 27, 2024

Dear Reverend Clergy, Esteemed Parish Council Presidents, and all the faithful of the Metropolis of Atlanta,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Several concerned parishioners have brought to our attention attempts to scam parishioners by impersonating Metropolis of Atlanta clergy (whether by email, or SMS messaging). Knowing that such fraudulent and malicious efforts often target churches, this is opportunity to remind ourselves of the proper protocol to spot & avoid these unfortunate attempts to prey on the kind hearts of the faithful.

Please remember, that under no circumstances would a Priest of our Metropolis email or text a parishioner with a request for gift cards, or other monetary funds. However, should you receive a suspicious communication requesting gift cards, or any other kind of gift, **DO NOT**:

1. Reply to the message
2. Click on any links
3. Download any attachments
4. Use the contact information provided in either the text or email
5. Share your personal or financial info vial email or phone,

Question every single email that comes into your in-box and every single text message that hits your phones. If something appears general, suspicious, or urges immediate response or action, it is typically an indication of a scam.

Be sure that your computer is running active anti-virus and anti-malware and that you always confirm the validity and identity of any individuals sending you social media requests. Some of these scammers are impersonating profiles of fellow-parishioners and using that network of people to develop their sophisticated scams.

Let us work together to ensure the safety and security of our parishes, and so, our Metropolis.

In Christ,

+ Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis

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Chancellor



CYBER SECURITY WATCH

Provided by the Departments of Internet Ministries and Information Technology



CYBERCRIME HAS BEEN INFILTRATING OUR LIVES FOR YEARS.

More recently, parishes and religious communities around us are being targeted by a phishing scam where the attacker poses falsely as the parish priest and asks the recipient for money usually in the form of gift cards.

Image source: vectoz.com

EDUCATE yourselves and others about the dangers of emails and phone scams.

YOUR PARISH PRIEST *should never* reach out via personal email to request immediate financial assistance. Be vigilant if you do receive an email that fits this description! Here are some *do's* and *do not's* to guide you:

DO NOT...

- ❌ reply to the message
- ❌ click on any links
- ❌ download any attachments
- ❌ use the contact information provided in the email
- ❌ share personal or financial data via email or phone

DO...FOLLOW THE 3 V'S

- ✅ **VIGILANCE** requires that you should question every email that comes in
- ✅ **VERIFY** the email by contacting your parish
- ✅ **VERY OFTEN** change your passwords

REPORT CYBERCRIME IMMEDIATELY to the following Federal agencies and to the Archdiocese:

- **Federal Trade Commission:** ftc.gov/complaint
- **FBI:** fbi.gov/tips
- **Archdiocese Technical Support:** techsupport.goarch.org

LEARN MORE by visiting blogs.goarch.org/internet-ministries by contacting the Departments of Internet Ministries and Information Technology with your questions at techsupport.goarch.org.