



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ARCHIEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

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Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of Saint Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople

February 6, 2022

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

*“Their sound has gone forth unto all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”
(Psalm 18:4, LXX)*

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This year — the Centennial year of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America — we pause to remember those who came before us, and honor the legacy of the pioneers of our Church in America. It seems only fitting, that on this Feast of the great and holy Patriarch Photios, we make special mention of the brave and stalwart πρωτοπόροι, whose voices brought the Faith of the Orthodox Christian Church to these shores. Thus, under the ever-memorable Archbishop Iakovos, our first National Shrine was established in St. Augustine, Florida, named for the great Patriarch — whose missionary endeavors are legendary — as a place of memory of those courageous souls.

The legacy of these early immigrants, who were the first waves of the Diaspora from Greece, Asia Minor and Cyprus, is visible in every community across our Sacred Archdiocese. Many parishes have established local archives and other methods of historical preservation, to cherish the stories and adventures of these often-unintentional



missionaries. With their hopes and dreams for a new start and a better life in America, they also brought their deeply held religious values and beliefs. Wherever they settled — from the mountains of Wyoming to the shores Oregon, from the Great Lakes to the greatest of cities — they founded churches and community centers, where faith, language, and culture would be cherished and taught.

Our Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine is a visible symbol of the aspirations and the legacy of our forebears. And they are the spiritual ancestors to all of us — Greek and non-Greek alike — because they were the vessels in whom the seeds of our Archdiocese traversed land and sea to plant the Greek Orthodox Faith and traditions in the new world.

And so, in this One Hundredth Anniversary year of our Church in America — an Eparchy of the same Mother Church of Constantinople that the Holy Patriarch Photios led over one thousand years ago — let us honor the legacy of our foremothers and forefathers. Let us honor them in every parish across this great land, and by sustaining the mission of our institution which honors their memory, the Saint Photios National Shrine, where the sound of their voices echoes unto eternity.

With paternal love in the Lord Jesus Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America