



THE GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

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ENCYCLICAL

THE HOLY EPARCHIAL SYNOD

“And Let Our Cry Come Unto Thee”

Sunday, July 19, 2020

To the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Again and most fervently, the Members of the Holy Eparchial Synod of Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, under the presidency of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, write to you with urgency, determination, and great faith; for we have heard your cries of anguish and pain over the seizure of the Great Church of Holy Wisdom, our Ἁγία Σοφία. We know that your hearts are broken and, for you as well as our Ἁγία Σοφία, we have spoken out and will continue to do so “in season and out of season,” (εὐκαίρως ἀκαίρως, II Timothy 4:2), and we will not relent in our pursuit of justice and righteousness.

Therefore, knowing that on Friday, July 24th, there will be an ‘inauguration’ of this program of cultural and spiritual misappropriation and a violation of all standards of religious harmony and mutual respect, we call upon all the beloved faithful of our Holy Archdiocese to observe this day as a day of mourning and of manifest grief. We urge you to invite your fellow Orthodox Christians and indeed all Christians and people of goodwill to share in the following observances.

We ask that every Church toll its bells in lamentation on this day. We call for every flag of every kind that is raised on the Church property be lowered to half-mast on this day. And we enjoin every Church in our Holy Archdiocese to chant the Akathist Hymn in the evening of this day, just as we chant it on the Fifth Friday of the Great and Holy Fast.

Let us, in this time of grief and mourning, appeal to the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. She is the “only Hope of the hopeless” (Ἡ τῶν ἀπελπισμένων μόνη Ἐλπίς), and as we chant to Her in the Akathist, “the Repository of the Wisdom of God, the Treasury of His Foreknowledge” (Σοφίας Θεοῦ Δοχεῖον, Προνοίας Αὐτοῦ Ταμεῖον, οἶκος P).

Therefore, with complete faith in the Foreknowledge of our Trinitarian God, and in the Divine Plan for our salvation (οἰκονομία), we entrust the future of our beloved Ἁγία Σοφία to His Wisdom, and we supplicate She who is the very Treasury of that Knowledge and the Repository of that Wisdom to intercede for us, to comfort us, to give us Her strength, and to manifest to us Her counsel, that we may ever do and say that which is pleasing in the sight and in the hearing of Her Son, our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father, Who together with the Holy Spirit is worshipped One God, unto the ages of ages. Amen!

With paternal love in our Lord Jesus Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS, Archbishop of America

Metropolitan Methodios of Boston

Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver

Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta

Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit

Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh

Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco

Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey

Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago