



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

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

February 6, 2024

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

Their sound has gone forth unto all the earth.... (Psalm 18:4, LXX)

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

As we celebrate the feast of Saint Photios the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, the Evangelizer of the Slavic Peoples, let us take from his noble example the spirit of true apostleship on behalf of all people. Especially during this time when our Ukrainian Brethren are suffering wave after crashing wave of violence and abuse from the Russian Federation, we implore the intercessions of Saint Photios the Great to finally put an end to this fratricidal war of greed and aggression. The Gospel delivered to the Slavs by the saintly Patriarch of Constantinople was one of peace, not war; one of friendship, not enmity; one of love, not hate.

As we continue to pray for the peace of the world — and especially in the Holy Land — we also recognize the vision of our Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine; for it is a National Institution of our Sacred Archdiocese that is dedicated to preserving the memory of the early immigrants and founders of our Church in America. The sound of the voices of those immigrants who came to America — whether known in name or not — has gone forth throughout our land, and has carried the message of the



Everlasting Gospel to every corner of our Nation. Many grandparents and great-grandparents have been fortuitous apostles. As they journeyed throughout the United States looking for a better life, they brought with them the Orthodox Gospel of Christ.

Therefore, on this Feast of Saint Photios, let us take time to focus with gratitude and thanksgiving on those who came before us. They sought a better world for themselves and their children. We can do no less. The Shrine of Saint Photios reminds each and every one of us that we also are called unto the apostleship of peace and of love. As we support the Shrine in material ways, let us also take up its spiritual vision to not only remember a noble past, but also to forge a better future for the whole world.

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America