



# GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

June 24, 2020

Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, National Commander  
The Order of Saint Andrew  
Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate  
8 East 79th Street  
New York, NY 10075

*Dear Archon, National Commander,*

I greet you warmly in the grace and peace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Having received your gracious wishes and beautiful flowers, it is with sentiments of deep gratitude and heartfelt appreciation that I communicate with you in order to thank you and all the Archons of the Order of Saint Andrew for your kindness and sincere desire to share in the joy of this first anniversary of my enthronement as Archbishop of America. Truly, the loving welcome with which I have been received by the devout faithful of the Archdiocese throughout this initial year of my archpastoral ministry in America has been profoundly moving. And while serving the Church in this capacity is a significant honor, it nevertheless constitutes a tremendous responsibility as well to steer the “ark of faith” true and unharmed in the crystalline waters of this great land’s vast spiritual ocean.

Indeed, the fervent prayers of this eparchy’s Christ-loving faithful have proven to be an inexhaustible source of strength, encouragement and inspiration during my maiden voyage in the United States. Likewise, these same prayers serve as luminous navigational beacons and dependable orientating compasses for our sacred Archdiocesan vessel, helping to illumine its course and direct its heading toward the safe harbor of the Lord’s all-encompassing embrace, where we can all moor ourselves spiritually without any fear or worry of drifting astray. Therefore, it is only natural that preserving the collective wellbeing of the pious flock entrusted to my archpastoral care constitutes a central focus and vital paternal concern of mine within the daily scope of my hierarchical duties and responsibilities. For it is only by working together with one another that we will be able to till the soil of this fertile land and ready it for a harvest of the richest fruits and most priceless spiritual treasures.

Of course, a great deal of work remains to be done, and it requires the participation of the plenitude of the Church in America to complete. While we have certainly succeeded in beginning to address various issues of paramount importance across this sacred Archdiocese, we are by no means close to being finished. We must now turn to face the present-day challenges and conflicts afflicting our country from within, and embrace all of our fellow brothers and sisters who are engaged in these troublesome quarrels. It is time to recall some of the fundamental principles and basic ideals that this proud nation was founded upon — namely, freedom and equality, liberty and justice — and utilize them to foster a spirit of mutual respect and solidarity between every citizen of goodwill, so as to help ease tensions and reconcile our differences in the hope of healing the current divide in our society. In living a life of authentic Christian witness and love, compassion and understanding, we open ourselves up to the ecumenical character and inclusive nature of the Orthodox Church, and thus, we embody the same genuine openness that Christ Himself instructed His very own apostles to practice in abundance.

And so, as we collectively strive to continue growing from “strength to strength” and “glory to glory” as one body united in Christ, I extend to you and all of the Archons my archpastoral blessings and wholehearted prayers, beseeching the Almighty to always bestow upon you and your families His rich grace and abundant mercy.

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS  
Archbishop of America