



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

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Archiepiscopal Encyclical for the Feast of the Holy Unmercenaries, Saints Cosmas and Damian

October 30, 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:

*O holy Unmercenaries and Wonderworkers, visit our infirmities. Freely have you received, freely give unto us.
(Apolytikion, Plagal of the Fourth Mode)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Holy Saints Cosmas and Damian are the best example to all of us, as we consider the work of our National Philoptochos on behalf of the benevolent and philanthropic ministries of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. By definition, an ἀνάργυρος — which literally means, “one who refuses silver” — is the exact opposite of a φιλάργυρος, a “lover of silver,” the appellation given to the Betrayer of the Lord who took the thirty pieces.

And it is the character of the Philoptochos, giving away the monies that it receives, not hoarding or heaping up “treasures on earth” (Matthew 6:19), which is the character that makes miracles happen in our midst. In all its philanthropies and charitable works, Philoptochos creates the conditions where people rise above their circumstances, and exceed themselves to become the image of God, in which they were created.

Philoptochos knows the truth of our Divine Liturgy: Τὰ σὰ ἐκ τῶν σῶν — Your own of Your own — that everything we have comes from God, and when we return it to Him in



thanksgiving, there is transformation. This is what the last part of the Apolytikion of the Patrons Cosmas and Damian means. These words echo the command of Christ to His disciples (Matthew 10:8); these words are the foundation of generosity in the Church.

Therefore, I exhort every parish and parishioner to heed our faith and this consummate teaching of goodness and beneficence. Our Philoptochos Societies are extending their hands in order to the support of the needs of the Mother Church. Especially after the fire at the Balıklı Hospital, which serves so many of our brothers and sisters in the Πόλη, let us help to fill the hands of our Philoptochos Sisters with the means to do good in this world. Through the intercessions of the Holy Unmercenaries and Wonderworkers Cosmas and Damian. Amen!

With paternal love in our Lord Jesus Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America