



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL & SYNODICAL ENCYCLICAL

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**Archepiscopal & Synodical Encyclical
for the Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross**

April 7, 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:

Καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ Ἐύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν. (Ἀποκάλυψις 22:2)
And the leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the Nations. (Revelation 22:2)

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

In the midway point of the Holy Lent, we arrive at the oasis of the Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross. Now the Tree of the Cross overshadows us with its healing leaves and fruits, and the flowers with which we adorn It in the Divine Service reflect Its lively glory. The Cross, once an instrument of suffering and death, has become the Tree of Eternal Life, and we are invited to share in Its mission of redemption and salvation. It is because of this mission that the Holy Eparchial Synod has decided to that an Encyclical should be issued every year for Feast of the Veneration of the Holy Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord calls each and every one of us to pick up our own cross and follow Him, to walk the path of self-sacrificial love that led Him to Golgotha and to the Garden Tomb. This invitation is for every Christian, whether we have fully understand that call or not. Those who aspire to the Holy Priesthood through the laying on of hands often tell of hearing a distinct calling, which is named a “vocation.” They feel they are being summoned to serve Christ and His Church as clergy, and so they work with their local



priest and Hierarchy, and find their way to our beloved Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology, to pursue studies that lead to ordination. We should all encourage this noble and indeed sacred pursuit, and fill Hellenic College and Holy Cross with candidates to serve the future generations of our Church in America.

In this season of the Great Lent, when our fasting is to be augmented by almsgiving, let us all strive to dedicate an offering to our beloved Theological School, and give tangible, financial support those who are answering the call of the Lord in their very specific mission. Those who choose to take up the cross of service in the Holy Priesthood – whether they are called to be Deacons, Presbyters, or Hierarchs – are called to a lifelong sacrifice of their will, and they surely merit our support and our appreciation.

Therefore, let us answer the call of the Lord today as best as we are able, and enter into the oasis of the Veneration of the Holy Cross. There, we will find refreshment and healing from the Tree of Eternal Life, and find the strength to continue our Lenten journey to the Great and Holy Pascha.

With paternal love in Christ,

+ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America

Methodios Metropolitan of Boston

Alexios Metropolitan of Atlanta

Nicholas Metropolitan of Detroit

Savas Metropolitan of Pittsburgh

Gerasimos Metropolitan of San Francisco

Apostolos Metropolitan of New Jersey

Nathanael Metropolitan of Chicago