



ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ

ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ

Αριθμ. Πρωτ. 214/2022

Αρχιεπισκοπική Έγκύκλιος για τη Μικρασιατική Καταστροφή

25 Σεπτεμβρίου 2022

Πρὸς τοὺς Σεβασμιωτάτους καὶ Θεοφιλεστάτους Ἀρχιερεῖς, τοὺς Εὐλαβεστάτους Ἱερεῖς καὶ Διακόνους, τοὺς Μοναχοὺς καὶ τὶς Μοναχές, τοὺς Προέδρους καὶ τὰ Μέλη τῶν Κοινοτικῶν Συμβουλίων, τοὺς Ἐντιμολογιωτάτους Ἄρχοντες τοῦ Οἴκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου, τὰ μέλη τῆς Ἠγεσίας τῶν 100, τὰ Ἡμερήσια καὶ Ἀπογευματινὰ Σχολεῖα, τὶς Φιλοπτώχους Ἀδελφότητες, τὴ Νεολαία, τὶς Ἑλληνορθόδοξες Ὄργανώσεις καὶ ὁλόκληρο τὸ Χριστεπώνυμο πλήρωμα τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς.

«Ὅτι σποδὸν ὡσεὶ ἄρτον ἔφαγον καὶ τὸ πόμα μου μετὰ κλαυθμοῦ ἐκίρνων» (Ψαλμὸς ρα΄, 10).

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Ὁ μῆνας Σεπτέμβριος ὁλοκληρώνεται μὲ ἐκδηλώσεις μνήμης γεγονότων, τὰ ὅποια εἶναι μὲν θλιβερά, ἀλλὰ σημαδεύουν τὴν ἐθνικὴ μας ταυτότητα. Μόλις πρὶν μερικὲς ἡμέρες ἦταν ἡ εἰκοστὴ πρώτη ἐπέτειος τῆς ἑνδεκάτης Σεπτεμβρίου, ἐνῶ βρισκόμαστε ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἐκδηλώσεων γιὰ τὴν ἐπέτειο τῶν ἑκατὸ ἐτῶν ἀπὸ τὴ Μικρασιατικὴ καταστροφή, κατὰ τὴν ὁποία χάθηκαν τόσες ζωές, ἀφανίζοντας τὶς Ἑλληνικὲς κοινότητες ἀπὸ τὸν Ἑλλήσποντο τοῦ Πόντου μέχρι τὰ νοτιότερα παράλια τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας. Σὲ ὁλόκληρη τὴν Ἀνατολία, φωτιές μίσους καὶ διωγμῶν κατάστρεψαν τὶς πόλεις τοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ πολιτισμοῦ, οἱ ὁποῖες ἤκμασαν γιὰ χιλιάδες χρόνια, ἀφήνοντας πίσω στάχτες καὶ ἀποκαΐδια. Περισσότεροι ἀπὸ ἓνα ἑκατομμύριο ἄνθρωποι ἀναγκάστηκαν νὰ φύγουν σὲ ἄλλους τόπους ἀφήνοντας πίσω τὶς περιουσίες τους καὶ ξαναρχίζοντας ἀπὸ τὸ μηδέν. Ἐνα πλῆθος ἀνθρώπων διασκορπισμένων στὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης, τὸ ὁποῖο δημιούργησε τὴν Ἑλληνικὴ Διασπορά.



Ὡς Ἀρχιεπισκοπὴ Ἀμερικῆς, ἐορτάζουμε τὸ φετινὸ ἔτος τὴν ἑκατονταετηρίδα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας, ὡς τῆς μεγαλύτερης ἐπαρχίας τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου. Σὲ μεγάλο βαθμὸ, ἡ δημιουργία τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς μας ἀπὸ τὸ Πατριαρχεῖο ἦταν μιὰ ἀντίδραση στὴ Μικρασιατικὴ Καταστροφή. Ἡ Μητέρα Ἐκκλησία βλέποντας τὰ τέκνα της, χωρὶς ποιμένα, διασκορπισμένα στοὺς πέντε ἀνέμους, συντετριμμένη, θέλοντας νὰ ἀνακουφίσει ὅλους τοὺς χειμαζομένους ποὺ ξενιτεύτηκαν μέχρι τὶς εὐλογημένες ἀκτὲς τῆς Ἀμερικῆς γιὰ νὰ ξεκινήσουν μιὰ νέα ζωὴ, ἔθεσε τὴ διαποίμανσή τους κατευθείαν ὑπὸ τὴ μητρικὴ τῆς σοφία καὶ ποιμαντικὴ εὐθύνη.

Γιὰ αὐτὸ τὸ λόγο, στὴν Ἀμερικὴ ἔχουμε χρέος νὰ μὴ ξεχνοῦμε τὸ ὀλοκαύτωμα τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας, καθὼς οἱ ρίζες μας εἶναι ριζωμένες στὴ στάχτη τῶν προγονικῶν μας τόπων, ποτισμένες μὲ τὸ αἷμα καὶ τὰ δάκρυα τῶν μαρτύρων καὶ τῆς προσφυγιάς, προεξάρχοντος τοῦ ἱερομάρτυρος Χρυσοστόμου Μητροπολίτου Σμύρνης. Τὸ μαρτύριό του προηγήθηκε τῆς πυρπολήσεως αὐτῆς τῆς θαυμάσιας πόλης, γνωστῆς ἀπὸ τὸ βιβλίο τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως, πρὸς τὸν ὁποῖο ὁ Κύριος εἶπε: «γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου, καὶ δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς» (Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου 2:10). Οἱ πρόγονοί μας εἶχαν βαθιὰ πίστη, στεφανώθηκαν ἀπὸ τὸ Θεὸ καὶ δὲν πρέπει νὰ ξεχνοῦμε ὅτι ὑπέφεραν γιὰ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ γιὰ τὴν ἀγία τοῦ Ἐκκλησία.

Ἄς μὴ ξεχνοῦμε λοιπόν, ἰδίως αὐτὸ τὸ ἔτος τῆς ἑκατονταετηρίδας αὐτοὺς ποὺ χάθηκαν καὶ τὸ λόγο γιὰ τὸν ὁποῖο χάθηκαν. Ἄς προσευχηθοῦμε γιὰ τὴν ἀνάπαυση τῶν ψυχῶν τους. Ἄς μνημονεύσουμε σήμερα ὅλους αὐτοὺς ποὺ οἱ θυσίες τους ὀδήγησαν στὴ δημιουργία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας στὴν Ἀμερικὴ καὶ ἀπανταχοῦ τῆς γῆς, διότι ἂν καὶ «σποδὸν ὡσεὶ ἄρτον ἔφαγον καὶ πόμα μετὰ κλαυθμοῦ ἐκίρωνων», αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ ἀπόγονοί τους ἐκπλήρωσαν μιὰ ἄλλη ρῆση τῶν προφητῶν, μὲ τὴν πίστη τους, τὴν ὑπομονή τους καὶ τὶς ὑπηρεσίες τους. Ἀντάλλαξαν «δόξαν ἀντὶ σποδοῦ» (Ἡσαΐας 61:3) καὶ ἡ κληρονομιά τους μένει ἕως τῆς σήμερον. Ἔχουμε χρέος νὰ τοὺς μνημονεύουμε ἐκφράζοντας τὴν ἄπειρη εὐγνωμοσύνη μας πρὸς αὐτοὺς. Αἰωνία αὐτῶν ἡ μνήμη!

Μετὰ πατρικῶν εὐχῶν καὶ τῆς ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀγάπης,

† Ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἐλπιδοφόρος

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GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 214/2022

Archebiscopal Encyclical for the Commemoration of the Asia Minor Holocaust

September 25, 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:

For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping (Psalm 101:10, LXX)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This month of September is replete with commemorations that define us as a People, even as they are hard to bear because of the loss and devastation. We just passed the twenty-first memorial of September Eleventh, and we are now upon the one hundredth anniversary of the Asia Minor Holocaust that cost so many lives and changed the face of the Greeks across the Hellespont in Pontos and the coasts of Asia Minor. Throughout Anatolia, fires of hatred and persecution reduced to ash the cities and the Hellenic civilization that had existed for thousands of years. Over a million human beings were forced to leave their homes and build their lives anew. It was the beginning of a dispersion of souls that created the Greek Diaspora that reached around the world.

As an Archdiocese, we have spent this year of 2022 in celebration of the Centenary of our Church as an Eparchy of our Most Holy Ecumenical Patriarchate. But to a great degree, the formation of our Archdiocese was a pastoral response to the Asia Minor Catastrophe. The Mother Church saw Her children upended and scattered to the four winds. Her heart was broken and to bring healing to those who survived and reached these blessed shores in



order to rebuild their lives, the Great Church ordered the ecclesiastical life of America directly under Her wise and maternal supervision.

Therefore, as an Archdiocese, we have an even greater responsibility to remember the Asia Minor Holocaust, because our origins are mingled with their ashes and tears. We are built upon the blood of those Martyrs, led by the Hieromartyr Metropolitan Chrysostom of Smyrna, whose martyrdom preceded the torching of this magnificent city – known in the Book of Revelation and to whom the Lord said, “Be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life!” (Rev. 2:10). Our spiritual and physical ancestors were faithful, they were crowned by God, and we shall never forget what they endured for the sake of Christ and His Holy Church.

Therefore, especially in this Centenary Year, let us remember those who were lost and what was lost, and offer prayers on their behalf to the Lord. Let us also commend all those whose sacrifices helped to build our Church here in America and around the world. For although they ‘ate ashes like bread and drank their own tears,’ through their faithfulness, perseverance, and service they and their descendants fulfilled another saying of the Prophets: they exchanged “glory for ashes” (Isaiah 61:3), and their legacies endure to this day. Our debt of gratitude is exceeded only by our debt of remembrance. May their memory be eternal.

With paternal blessings and love in the Lord,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America