

Prot. No. 252/2022

Archiepiscopal Encyclical for National Philoptochos Sunday

November 13, 2022

Commemoration of the Parable of the Good Samaritan (8th Sunday of Luke)

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:

Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? (Jeremiah 8:22)

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We celebrate National Philoptochos Sunday on the day that we remember the parable of the “Good Samaritan,” when mercy and unconditional compassion are manifest as the highest Christian virtues. A stranger was robbed and wounded, left for dead. And another stranger, a Samaritan, changes the course of the man’s life. He refuses to pass by, as did the so-called religious figures in the parable. The Samaritan answers the question that the Prophet Jeremiah poses: “Is there no balm in Gilead?” And he answers in a resounding “Yes, there is!”

So it is also with our Philoptochos societies from coast to coast. They apply the balm of love and compassion to all who come their way, and particularly to the vital philanthropic ministries of the Mother Church of Constantinople. Especially in this year when the Balıklı Hospital has experienced such a devastating fire, I encourage all of you to be generous with Philoptochos, who never fail to provide for these charitable causes.

The Philoptochos knows the essence of the American Spiritual, “There is a balm in Gilead, to make the wounded whole.” They know how to bring healing to individuals and communities who have experienced trauma. Let us give thanks to the Lord that these “Good Samaritans” are in our midst – making our Church even more loving and merciful every day – and offer to them our support, our resources and our cooperation.

With paternal love in our Lord Jesus Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America