



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL & SYNODICAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 79/2024

**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 Hierarch, 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



ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΚΑΙ ΣΥΝΟΔΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ

Αριθμ. Πρωτ. 79/2024

Αρχιεπισκοπική Έγκύκλιος για την Κυριακή τῆς Σταυροπροσκυνήσεως.

7 Ἀπριλίου 2024

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 Ἀρχοντες τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου, τὰ μέλη τῆς Ἡγεσίας τῶν 100, τὰ Ἡμερήσια καὶ Ἀπογευματινὰ Σχολεῖα, τὶς Φιλοπτώχους Ἀδελφότητες, τὴ Νεολαία, τὶς Ἑλληνορθόδοξες Ὁργανώσεις καὶ ὁλόκληρο τὸ Χριστεπώνυμο πλήρωμα τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς.

«Καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν» (Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου 22:2).

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Στὸ μέσον τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστῆς, ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας ἔχει τοποθετήσει τὴν ὄραση τῆς Κυριακῆς τῆς Σταυροπροσκυνήσεως. Σήμερα τὸ ξύλο τοῦ Σταυροῦ μᾶς ἐπισκιάζει μὲ τὰ θεραπευτικά του φύλλα καὶ τοὺς καρπούς, ἐνῶ τὰ ἄνθη μὲ τὰ ὁποῖα τὸ προσκυνούμε στὶς ἱερὲς ἀκολουθίες ἀντανακλοῦν τὴν ζῶσα δόξα του. Ὁ σταυρός, ἀπὸ ὄργανο βασανισμοῦ καὶ θανάτου, γίνεται τὸ δένδρο τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς. Καλούμαστε σήμερα νὰ μετᾶσχουμε σὲ αὐτὴ τὴν πορεία λύτρωσης καὶ σωτηρίας ποὺ μᾶς δείχνει ὁ ζωοποιὸς Σταυρός. Αὐτὸς εἶναι καὶ ὁ λόγος γιὰ τὸν ὁποῖο ἡ Ἱερὰ Ἐπαρχιακὴ Σύνοδος ἀποφάσισε νὰ ἐκδίδει κάθε χρόνο Ἐγκύκλιο, κατὰ τὴν Κυριακὴ τῆς Προσκυνήσεως τοῦ Τιμίου καὶ ζωοποιοῦ Σταυροῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Ὁ Κύριος προσκαλεῖ τὸν καθέναν ἀπὸ ἐμᾶς, «νὰ ἄρει τὸ σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ νὰ τὸν ἀκολουθήσει». Νὰ βαδίσουμε δηλαδὴ στὸ ἴδιο μονοπάτι τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς θυσίας ποὺ βᾶδισε ὁ ἴδιος πρὸς τὸ Γολγοθᾶ καὶ τὸν τάφο. Ἡ πρόσκληση αὐτὴ ἀπευθύνεται πρὸς κάθε χριστιανό, εἴτε ἔχουμε ἀντιληφθεῖ αὐτὴ τὴν κλήση εἴτε ὄχι. Μία ἰδιαίτερη «κλήση» νιώθουν ὅσοι ποθοῦν τὴν ἱερωσύνη διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν. Νιώθουν νὰ προσκαλοῦνται νὰ ὑπηρετήσουν τὸ Χριστὸ καὶ τὴν Ἐκκλησία του ὡς κληρικοί. Ἔτσι, ἀφοῦ συμβουλευτοῦν τὸν ἱερέα τῆς ἐνορίας τους καὶ τὸν ἱεράρχη τους, κατευθύνονται πρὸς τὸ ἀγαπημένο μας Ἑλληνικὸ Κολλέγιο καὶ τὴ Θεολογικὴ Σχολὴ τοῦ Τιμίου



Σταυροῦ, γιὰ νὰ κάνουν τὶς σπουδὲς ποὺ ὀδηγοῦν στὴ χειροτονία. Εἶναι ἀδήριτη ἀνάγκη νὰ ἐνθαρρύνουμε ὅλοι μας τὸν εὐγενῆ αὐτὸ στόχο καὶ νὰ γεμίσουμε τὸ Ἑλληνικὸ Κολλέγιο καὶ τὴν Θεολογικὴ Σχολὴ τοῦ Τιμίου Σταυροῦ μὲ ὑποψηφίους κληρικούς ποὺ θὰ διακονήσουν τὶς ἐπόμενες γεννεὲς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας στὴν Ἀμερική.

Κατὰ τὴν περίοδο τῆς Μ. Τεσσαρακοστῆς, ὅπου ἡ νηστεία μας ἐξυψώνεται μὲ τὴν ἐλεημοσύνη, ἄς προσπαθήσουμε ὅλοι μας νὰ κάνουμε μίᾶ προσφορὰ στὴν ἀγαπημένη μας Θεολογικὴ Σχολή, δίδοντας ἀπτή οικονομικὴ ὑποστήριξη σὲ ὅσους ἀνταποκρίνονται στὴν ἱερατικὴ κλήση τοῦ Κυρίου. Αὐτοὶ ποὺ ἀνέλαβαν νὰ ἄρουν τὸν σταυρὸ τῆς διακονίας ὡς κληρικοί, εἴτε ὡς διάκονοι, ὡς πρεσβύτεροι ἢ ὡς ἀρχιερεῖς, καλοῦνται διὰ βίου νὰ θυσιάσουν τὸ προσωπικὸ τους θέλημα καὶ σίγουρα ἀξίζουν τὴν ὑποστήριξη καὶ τὴν ἐκτίμησή μας.

Ἄς ἀνταπακριθοῦμε λοιπὸν σήμερα θετικὰ στὸ κάλεσμα τοῦ Κυρίου κατὰ δύναμιν ὁ καθένας, γιὰ νὰ εἰσέλθουμε καὶ νὰ δροσισθοῦμε στὴν ὄαση τῆς προσκυνήσεως τοῦ Τιμίου Σταυροῦ. Ἐκεῖ θὰ βροῦμε τὴν ἀναψυχὴ καὶ τὴν θεραπεία ποὺ πηγάζει ἀπὸ τὸ Δένδρο τῆς Αἰωνίου Ζωῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ δύναμη νὰ συνεχίσουμε τὸ πνευματικὸ μας ταξίδι τῆς Μ. Τεσσαρακοστῆς πρὸς τὸ Ἅγιο Πάσχα.

Μετὰ πατρικῶν εὐχῶν καὶ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἀγάπης,

† ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἑλπιδοφόρος

† ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἑλπιδοφόρος

† ὁ Βοστώνης Μεθόδιος

† ὁ Ἀτλάντας Ἀλέξιος

† ὁ Ντιτρόιτ Νικόλαος

† ὁ Πιττσβούργου Σάββας

† ὁ Ἁγίου Φραγκίσκου Γεράσιμος

† ὁ Νέας Ἱερσέης Ἀπόστολος

† ὁ Σικάγου Ναθαναήλ