**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA**
**ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 498/2026

**Archiepiscopal Encyclical for National Philoptochos Sunday**

November 1, 2026

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Presvyteres and Diakonisses, 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.

***Whoever is merciful to the poor lends unto God.***
***(Proverbs 19:17)***

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Our Philoptochos Sisterhoods, which are mirrors of community within every Parish, are wondrous vehicles of spiritual exchange. By showing mercy, compassion, and active philanthropy to those less fortunate among us, they create a miraculous imbalance with God. For as the Proverb says, "Whoever is merciful to the poor lends unto God."

Imagine that! We are lending to God. God has allowed Himself to be indebted to us. This seems to turn everything about the relationship between Creator and creation upside down. And yet, through His ineffable condescension toward us – out of pure love and nothing else – God allows Himself to become a debtor to us. This is a ministry beyond comprehension even to the Angels, for they long to look into things revealed and