



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 336/2025

Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Day of Remembrance of Hagia Sophia

July 24, 2025

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 Sacred Archdiocese of America:

*Ἡ Σοφία γὰρ ἀληθῶς τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀνωκοδόμησεν
ἐαυτῇ σαρκώσεως οἶκον,
καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν ὑπὲρ νοῦν....
(Κοντάκιον Ἐγκαινίων τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφίας 562 μ.Χ.)*

*For truly the Wisdom of the Father built for
Herself a House of Incarnation
and tabernacled among us beyond understanding
(Reconsecration Kontakion of Hagia Sophia 562 A.D.)*

My beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

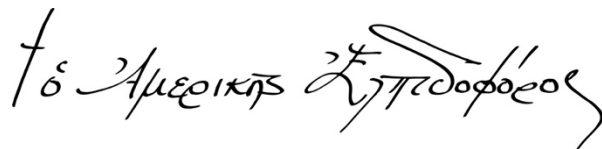
This fifth year since the re-conversion of the Great Church of Holy Wisdom to a mosque should remind us all how — in our world of increasing conflict — the inversion of Her purpose has become almost matter-of-fact. The great dome of Hagia Sophia, which for centuries was the largest the world had ever known, was designed to manifest the pleroma of God's creativity and the possibility for humanity to conceive within ourselves

and within our society the grace of transformation, of theosis. After 1453, Her dome was reduced to mere architecture and then replicated throughout the Ottoman world as a sign of heavenly beauty, but a beauty hollowed out by lack of understanding.

The Great Church, as She was rightly called, is an image of the Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, Who, in the fulness of the Divine Plan for Salvation (*οἰκονομία*), came forth as a perfect Human Being from the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, uniting and perfecting both male and female — Logos and Sophia — in Himself, the Theanthropos, Jesus Christ. Hagia Sophia did, and still does — despite the alien function to which She is now subject — manifest the “House of Incarnation,” bearing witness to the embodiment of God Who recapitulates in Himself all the potentiality and capacity of humanity for Divinity, so that we, as Saint Peter says, “might be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).

Our Day of Remembrance for Hagia Sophia remains a bittersweet reality for all Orthodox Christians, and indeed for every Christian of any historical awareness. The day and memory are bitter because spiritual error and lack of consciousness fail to ascribe Her full meaning. And yet sweet, because we have the Great Church incarnate in our Venerable Ecumenical Patriarchate, which abides as a spirit-filled space leading the Faithful to embody in their own lives the Mystery of the Incarnation and the reality of God. May the Great Church continue to always give birth to Her spiritual children throughout the world, so that the Tabernacle of Holy Wisdom continues to proclaim the glory of Logos and Sophia, our Savior Jesus Christ.

With paternal love and
prayerful consolation in the Lord,



† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America



**ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ
ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ**

Αριθμ. Πρωτ.: 336/2025

Αρχιεπισκοπική Έγκύκλιος στην ημέρα μνήμης για την Αγία Σοφία.

24 Ιουλίου 2025

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

**«Ἡ Σοφία γὰρ ἀληθῶς τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀνωκοδόμησεν ἐαυτῇ σαρκώσεως οἶκον καὶ
ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν ὑπὲρ νοῦν»**

(Κοντάκιον Ἐγκαινίων τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφίας 562 μ.Χ.)

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Ἡ πέμπτη αὐτὴ ἐπέτειος ἀπὸ τὴν ἐκ νέου μετατροπὴ τῆς Μεγάλης Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφίας σὲ ἰσλαμικὸ τέμενος ὀφείλει νὰ μᾶς ὑπενθυμίζει ὅτι μέσα σὲ ἓνα κόσμον ὅλο καὶ πιὸ συγκρουσιακό, ἡ μετατροπὴ τοῦ ἀρχικοῦ προορισμοῦ τῆς ἀπὸ ἐκκλησία σὲ τζαμί ἔχει καταστεῖ σχεδὸν κάτι φυσιολογικό! Ὁ μέγας τροῦλλος τῆς Ἀγίας Σοφίας, ὁ ὁποῖος γιὰ αἰῶνες ὑπερέβαινε κάθε ἄλλο ἀνθρώπινο κτίσμα, σχεδιάσθηκε γιὰ νὰ ἐκφράσει τὴν ὁμορφιὰ τῆς δημιουργίας τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ νὰ

καταδείξει τὴ δυνατότητα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τῆς ἀνθρώπινης κοινωνίας γιὰ τὴ θέωση. Μετὰ τὸ ἔτος 1453, ὁ τροῦλλος ἀπὸ πύλη θεώσεως ἔγινε ἓνα ἀπλὸ ἀρχιτεκτονικὸ ἐπίτευγμα καὶ ἡ χρῆση του γενικεύθηκε σὲ ὅλο τὸν ὀθωμανικὸ κόσμον ὡς σύμβολο οὐρανίου κάλλους· ἑνὸς κάλλους ἀδειανοῦ ἀπὸ κάθε νοσηματοδότηση.

Ἡ Μεγάλη Ἐκκλησία, ὅπως ὀρθῶς ὀνομάζοταν, εἶναι ἡ εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐνανθρωπήσαντος Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ ὁποῖος ἐν τῇ πληρότητι τῆς θείας οἰκονομίας γιὰ τὴ σωτηρία τοῦ κόσμου, γεννήθηκε τέλειος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τῆς Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας, ἐνώνοντας καὶ τελειοποιώντας τὸ ἄρρεν καὶ τὸ θῆλυ, τὸ Λόγον καὶ τὴ Σοφία, ὄντως θεάνθρωπος. Ἡ Ἁγία Σοφία, τότε ἀλλὰ καὶ τώρα, παρὰ τὴν ἀλλότρια λειτουργία, τὴν ὁποία ὑπομένει ἀναγκαστικά, ἐκφράζει τὸν «οἶκο τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως», δίνοντας μαρτυρία γιὰ τὴν ἐνσάρκωση τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἀνακεφαλαιώνοντας κάθε δυνατότητα καὶ ἱκανότητα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὴ θέωση, καθὼς λέγει ὁ ἀπόστολος Πέτρος, «γέννησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως» (Β΄ Πέτρου 1,4).

Ἡ ἡμέρα αὕτη τῆς μνήμης γιὰ τὴν Ἁγία Σοφία παραμένει μία γλυκόπικρη πραγματικότητα γιὰ ὅλους τοὺς ὀρθοδόξους χριστιανούς, ἀλλὰ καὶ γιὰ κάθε χριστιανὸ μὲ στοιχειώδη ἱστορικὴ συνείδηση. Πικρὴ ἀπὸ τὴ μία γιὰ τὸ πνευματικὸ σκότος καὶ ἡ ἔλλειψη συνείδησης ἀδυνατοῦν νὰ χωρέσουν στο μυαλό μας, ἀλλὰ καὶ γλυκιά ἀπὸ τὴν ἄλλη γιὰ τὸ ἔχουμε τὴ Μεγάλη Ἐκκλησία ἐνσαρκωμένη στὸ σεπτὸ μας Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο, τὸ ὁποῖο παραμένει ὡς πνευματικὸς καὶ θεοχαρίτως τόπος, ποὺ διδάσκει τοὺς πιστοὺς νὰ ἐνσαρκώνουν στὴν ἴδια τους τὴ ζωὴ τὸ μέγα μυστήριον τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως καὶ τῆς ἐμπειρίας τῆς θεώσεως. Εἴθε ἡ Μεγάλη Ἐκκλησία νὰ συνεχίσει πάντοτε νὰ γεννᾷ πνευματικὰ τέκνα σὲ ὅλο τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε ὁ ναὸς τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας νὰ συνεχίζει νὰ διακηρύττει τὴ δόξα τοῦ Λόγου καὶ τῆς Σοφίας, τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Μετὰ πατρικῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εὐχῶν παραμυθίας ἐν Κυρίῳ,



+ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἐλπιδοφόρος