



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 268/2025

Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Fourth of July

July 4, 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:

Ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μένητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, ἀληθῶς μαθηταί μου ἐστε, καὶ γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς. (κατὰ Ἰωάννην 8:31-32)

If you abide in My Message, then you are truly My followers, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:31-32)

My beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord,

The Fourth of July is much more than the American celebration of liberty. It is the memory of that moment of the turning of the tide, when a people who were abused by the powerful chose to stand up for themselves and grasp for the freedom that their conscience told them was their “unalienable right.” And this is the very same liberty that we constantly strive to preserve and ensure in this blessed American land for the liberties of all people, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin. However, a true freedom that is equal for every human being can only come from God, in the inner person.

The Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples that the truth would set them free. But in a world where the truth oftentimes appears to be obscured, we find ourselves frequently asking the same question as the man who ordered the crucifixion of our Lord did two millennia ago, “What is truth?” If we are able to *know* the truth of things, then we must also recognize that the condition for that knowledge is abiding in the Logos — the Message of the One Who ascended the Cross of His own free will for our salvation.

Therefore, freedom and truth are inextricably linked in the person of our Savior. If we are not truthful people — or in other words, if we are not *of* the truth, as the Lord answered Pontius Pilate (John 18:37) — then our perception will always be shackled to our own personal opinions or our willingness to blindly follow the views of others and not the Logos of the Word of God. And this, my dear friends, is contrary to the ethos and authentic perspective of the Orthodox Church and the Gospel.

On our Nation’s Birthday, then, when the entire world and our Country yearn for truth and peace — the firm and unyielding hallmarks of a genuine life in Christ — let us commit to truly being Christ’s followers. The Lord understands our need for freedom and knowledge, but He bestows them upon us in proportion to the measure of our faithfulness and the good deeds that we perform as His servants. Let us, therefore, strive to be honest disciples of His Divine Word, so that we may “know the truth” (John 8:32) and be truly free!

With much paternal love in Christ,



† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America



**ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ
ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ**

Αριθμ. Πρωτ.: 268/2025

Αρχιεπισκοπική Έγκύκλιος για την Τετάρτη Ιουλίου.

4^η 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 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 Αρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς.

«Ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μείνητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, ἀληθῶς μαθηταί μου ἔστε καὶ γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς» (Κατὰ Ἰωάννην 8: 31-32).

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Ἡ Τετάρτη Ιουλίου εἶναι κάτι περισσότερο ἀπὸ μία ἑορτὴ τῆς ἐλευθερίας στὴν Ἀμερικὴ. Εἶναι ἡ ἱστορικὴ μνήμη ἐκείνης τῆς στιγμῆς, ὅταν ἓνας καταπιεσμένος λαὸς ἀποφασίζει νὰ ξεσηκωθεί καὶ νὰ διεκδικήσει τὴν ἐλευθερία του, ὅπως ἡ συνείδησή του καταδεικνύει, ὡς «ἀναφαίρετο δικαίωμα». Καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ ἐλευθερία εἶναι κάτι ποὺ προσπαθοῦμε νὰ κρατήσουμε ζωντανὸ καὶ ἔμπρακτο σὲ αὐτὴ τὴν εὐλογημένη χώρα, γιὰ ὅλους τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἀνεξαρτήτως φυλῆς, ἐθνικότητας, θρησκείας ἢ

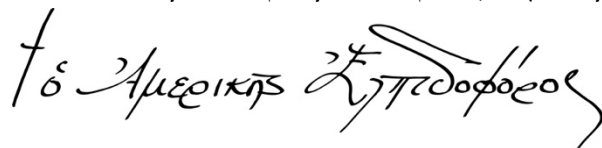
καταγωγῆς. Ὅμως ἡ ἀληθινὴ ἐλευθερία, ποὺ εἶναι ἀπροσωπόληπτη, μπορεῖ νὰ προέλθει μονάχα ἀπὸ τὸ Θεὸ καὶ νὰ ριζώσει μέσα στὸ βάθος τῆς καρδιάς μας.

Ὁ Κύριός μας Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἶπε στοὺς μαθητὲς του ὅτι ἡ ἀλήθεια θὰ τοὺς ἐλευθερώσει. Ἀλλὰ σὲ ἓναν κόσμον ὅπου ἡ ἀλήθεια συχνὰ μοιάζει θολή, ἔρχεται στὸ νοῦ μας ἡ ἐρώτηση τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ποὺ παρέδωσε τὸ Χριστὸ στὸ σταυρικὸ θάνατο: «Τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια»; Μποροῦμε νὰ γνωρίσουμε τὴν ἀλήθεια, μόνο ἂν παραμείνουμε ἐνωμένοι μὲ τὸ Λόγον, αὐτὸν ποὺ ἀνέβηκε στὸ σταυρὸ μὲ ἴδια θέληση, γιὰ νὰ μᾶς σώσει.

Ἐπομένως, ἐλευθερία καὶ ἀλήθεια εἶναι δεμένες μεταξύ τους στὸ πρόσωπο τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἐὰν δὲν εἴμαστε ἀληθινοὶ ἄνθρωποι, δηλαδὴ ἐὰν δὲν ἀνήκουμε στὴν ἀλήθεια, ὅπως εἶπε ὁ Κύριος στὸν Πιλάτο (Ἰω. 18, 37), τότε ὅ,τι βλέπουμε καὶ ἀντιλαμβανόμαστε θὰ παραμένει δεμένο μὲ τὴν ὑποκειμενικὴ μας γνώμη ἢ μὲ τὴν ἄκριτη ἀποδοχὴ ὅσων λένε οἱ ἄλλοι, καὶ ὄχι μὲ τὸ Λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ. Αὐτὸ δὲν ταιριάζει στὸ φρόνημα καὶ τὴ ζωὴ ποὺ προτείνει ἡ Ὁρθόδοξη Ἐκκλησία καὶ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Ἐνῶ τὸ Ἀμερικανικὸ ἔθνος μας γιορτάζει σήμερον τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς γεννήσεώς του, τὴ στιγμὴν ποὺ ὁ κόσμος ἀναζητεῖ ἀπεγνωσμένα τὴν ἀλήθεια καὶ τὴν εἰρήνην, τὰ ὁποῖα ἀποτελοῦν καὶ τὰ σταθερὰ σημεῖα μιᾶς ζωῆς μέσα στὸ φῶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἂς ἀποφασίσουμε νὰ γίνουμε ἀληθινοὶ μαθητὲς του. Ὁ Κύριος γνωρίζει τὴ δίψαν μας γιὰ ἐλευθερίαν καὶ γνώσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰ δῶρα αὐτὰ τὰ προσφέρει ἀνάλογα μὲ τὴν πίστην μας καὶ τὰ καλὰ ἔργα ποὺ κάνουμε ὡς ὑπηρέτες του. Ἄς προσπαθήσουμε, λοιπόν, νὰ εἴμαστε τίμιοι καὶ πιστοὶ μαθητὲς τοῦ Λόγου, γιὰ νὰ μπορέσουμε νὰ γνωρίσουμε τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ νὰ ζήσουμε ὄντως ἐλεύθεροι!

Μετὰ πολλῆς πατρικῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἀγάπης,



+ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἐλπιδοφόρος