

University of Constantinople) devised an alphabet for the languages they found called the Glagolitic Script, which is the origin of the alphabet we call Cyrillic and is still in use throughout the Slavic world today. To think of the genius of these apostolic pioneers, who achieved such greatness without any of the technological advantages we have today, is to glimpse a truly miraculous stewardship of the Teachings of Christ. If you compare the accomplishments of these brothers with the noise we experience today on the Internet and Social Media platforms, you will begin to understand that true Doctrine is passed on from one person to another, face to face. Not accelerated by algorithms, but advanced by the Spirit of God working in the lives of holy men and women.

Our Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine, an Institution of our Sacred Archdiocese of America, commemorates a different kind of evangelist, but one just as human as those wonderworking Saints. The Shrine commemorates the lives of the first Greek Orthodox immigrants to America, who brought the Orthodox Faith to these blessed shores along with their dreams for a better tomorrow. Intentionally, or unintentionally, these ancestors of our Church served as missionaries and apostolic delegates to America, as they founded community after community. Their preaching may not have been “fire-breathing,” but they lit the fire of Orthodoxy on this continent.

Therefore, on this Feast of Saint Photios, let us remember these pioneers, whose sacrifices made possible the incredible opportunities we have today to live our Orthodox Faith in the public square. They are worthy of the same quest for which Saint Photios commissioned Saints Cyril and Methodios. In thanksgiving for them, let us support the Saint Photios Shrine in every way we can, honoring the memory of those who came before us, and building a better future for the next generation of Faithful.

With paternal blessings in Christ,

A handwritten signature in Greek script, which reads "Ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Ἐλπίδοφορος" (The Archbishop Elpidophoros).

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America