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National Commander of U.S. Archons Honors Archbishop Elpidophoros



Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, National Commander of the Order of St. Andrew, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, addressed guests at the dinner they hosted in honor of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros in Washington. The text of his speech follows:

Your Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Your Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, Fr. Alex Karloutsos, Order of St. Andrew Spiritual Advisor and Vicar General of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, Reverend Fathers and Presbyteres, Congressman Bilirakis, Members of the President Trump Administration, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished guests and Brother Archons of the Great Church of Christ,

Good evening and welcome to the Order of St. Andrew dinner honoring our newly enthroned and beloved Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as we gather here in Washington to participate in the U.S.

State Department's Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. How appropriate it is for the Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which has been the victim of religious persecution for centuries, to participate and speak at this ministerial, having served the Mother Church for over 25 years and who has witnessed first-hand the Martyria of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

We are especially honored this evening with the presence of His Beatitude Theophilos III, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, where the very birthplace of Christianity is being threatened with the complete asphyxiation of the Christian Community.

Whether you look at the Middle East, or Africa, or Asia, the countries of Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Egypt, Turkey, Yemen, China, Pakistan, India...it's horrific that Christians are persecuted globally. According to our own State Department, Christians face persecution in more than 60 countries around the world, that's more than one out of every three countries in existence today. Stated another way, although Christians comprise only 30% of the world's population, 80 percent of all acts of religious discrimination are directed at Christians. The Order of St. Andrew commends President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, and Ambassador for International Religious Freedom Brownback for organizing this Ministerial in which over 1000 individuals representing 130 countries are participating to focus attention on religious persecution and deliberating on the ways and means this evil can be contained and ultimately overcome.

Your Eminence, we are among friends this evening. Members of the Administration past and present, Distinguished Members of Congress, leaders of Hellenic American organizations, our local and beloved Clergy and Presbyteres and Brother Archons, whose collective desire is to seek the complete and unfettered religious freedom of the Holy and Great Mother Church of Constantinople.

Representing the Order of AHEPA is newly elected Supreme President Archon George Horiates and Supreme Treasurer Archon Savas Tsivicos, who is also the Honorary Chair of the Cyprus Children's Fund. We are honored to have AHEPA Executive Director Archon Basil Mossaides here with us. Representing the American Hellenic Institute is its President, Archon Nick Larigakis. The Hellenic Initiative is represented by Archon George Stamas, its president, The National Hellenic Society by its Executive Director Art Dimopoulos, The American Hellenic Leadership Council by its Executive Director Endy Zemenides, The Hellenic American Women's Council by its cofounder Theodora Hancock, the National Coordinated Effort of Hellenes by Archon Andy Manatos and the Western Policy Center by Archon John Sitalides.

We are all working together so that Halki may once again function as the luminary

seminary it once was and the worldwide ministry of His All-Holiness will be free of the interference of the government of Turkey. I believe this day will come and that ultimately the bells of freedom will peal from the St. George Patriarchal Cathedral at the Phanar pronouncing once and for all, that Religious Freedom has come to the Great Church of Christ! Amen!

At this time, as we begin our meal, allow me to recognize Archon George Stamas and his beloved wife Georgia, who serve as our sponsors this evening at this beautiful private club which is for the exclusive use of its members. Archon George we are very grateful!

We recognize the great efforts of the father/son Manatos Team... Well actually, it is a grandfather/father/son Team beginning with the late great Presidential Aid to JFK and LBJ Mike Manatos, for their invaluable assistance in the organization and execution of this evening's dinner and tomorrow's State Department Archon Sidebar at the Capitol.

A special word of thanks to Liz Fagan of Manatos team and our own outstanding Archons at the National Office, Archon Andrew Veniopoulos and Archon John Mindala. Thank you all so much!

Now please enjoy your dinner!

- Source: [The National Herald](#)