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Archbishop Elpidophoros Remarks at the Dinner in Response to Ambassador George Tsunis The 4th Archon International Conference on Religious Freedom

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Your Eminences and Your Graces,

Honorable George J. Tsunis, Archon Hypomnematografos, United States Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic

Esteemed Archons of the Ecumenical Mother Church of Constantinople,

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in the Risen Lord,

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη!

I can think of not greater honor than to stand here and represent the Mother Church as Patriarchal Representative, and no greater friend to respond to with love and respect, than Ambassador George J. Tsunis. For the Ambassador is much more than a distinguished Greek-American with a record of tremendous success in every endeavor he has engaged. He is more than a political figure, who has given a commitment to democratic values and institutions equal to a battlefield soldier. He is more than a figure of decency, morality, values, and above all faith and family.

He is an exemplar of what is brightest and best in the Diaspora, and his service both to the United States and by extension, to Greece, epitomizes the nobility and purpose of all Diaspora Hellenes.

As an Archon of the Great Church, Ambassador Tsunis understands the complexities and conundrums that often face our Mother Church. He demonstrates that one does have to been born in the Πόλι, as I was, to be a true and authentic child of the Queen of Cities.

Like every Archon here from around the globe, he has his eye on the needs and

concerns of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. And his personal devotion to the sacred person of His All-Holiness sets a high bar for the entire Omogeneia.

We can take to heart his message to us this evening. He speaks from his soul and from a profound understanding of the issues that are vital for the world-wide community of Archons to address.

Ambassador Tsunis: for the Great Church of Christ in all that you say and do.

Thank you for being such a passionate champion

Thank you for being an American of such dignity and decency in a time when there is dire thirst for the example that you wholeheartedly give.

Thank you for being a Hellene who comprehends the weight of history that is in every stone in this blesséd land.

And thank you for your service to both America and Greece as a true son of both lands, bringing your skills, faith, and intelligence to bear for the benefit of each.

May the Lord continue to bless you, your beloved spouse and children, and your mission of peace and statecraft for the sake of democracy and the world.

Now since for many of us in this room who are from the USA, as our Ambassador reminded us, it is Memorial Day. Let us honor and memorialize the men and women of the United States Armed Forces who gave the last full measure to protect our freedom.

Remembering their commitment and sacrifice let us take a moment of silence.

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May their memory be eternal!

Αιωνία η μνήμη!

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