29/05/2024

Archbishop Elpidophoros Remarks at the Reception at the American School of Classical Studies The 4th Archon International Conference on Religious Freedom



Distinguished Hosts and Dear Friends of the American School of Classical Studies,

Brother Hierarch and Clergy of the Mother Church and the Church of Greece,

Most Honorable Archons of the Mother Church of Constantinople,

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in the Lord,

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη!

It is such a pleasure to be within the hallowed precincts of the American School of Classical Studies, which has offered so much to Greece and to the world throughout its long and storied history. The Stoa of Attalos, in which we gathered yesterday for

the opening of this all-important Conference, is a gift of the American School to the People of Greece. The excavations of the Ancient Agora, and the seemingly numberless sites around Greece where scholars and students ply their archaeological craft, are an extraordinary boon to this country. And standing here, connected to the only library Andrew Carnegie built outside of the United States – is the famed Gennadius Library.

For those of you who noticed as you approached this temple of wisdom, carved in monumental letters in the frieze of the façade is a most profound notion from the Panygericus of Isocrates, who was a contemporary of Socrates, of Plato, and Xenophon:

ΕΛΛΗΝΕΣ ΚΑΛΟΥΝΤΑΙ ΟΙ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΕΩΣ ΤΗΣ ΗΜΕΤΕΡΑΣ ΜΕΤΕΧΟΝΤΕΣ.

This inscription must surely give us all pause, in a spirit of wonder and gratitude. For here is a principle – twenty-five hundred years old – that binds us all together around the globe. Hellenes of the homeland, Hellenes of the Diaspora, and Philhellenes from every corner of the globe are bound in the solidarity of substance that is the Paideia of Greece. Truly, those worthy of the name of “Hellene” are those who do partake of the vast civilizational culture that is called the “Paideia” of Greece. And where is this legacy to be found today? Literally, everywhere in the world. In all the sciences, the arts – music, plastic and visual iconography and architecture – philosophy, logic, the entire gamut of intellectual endeavor.

But there is another very special place where this legacy resides and abides – within the sacred environs of our Holy Church. For the ancient wisdom of the Greeks passed into the Christian Roman Empire, known to the world as Byzantium, and is held to this day in the seventeen hundred year old spiritual continuum of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Thus, the Archons of the Mother Church bear a weighty responsibility to this history and legacy.

We feel it here at the Gennadeion. We feel it in every stone of Athens – whether the mighty Pentelic marble of the Parthenon or a cobbled side street of Athens. We feel it in every mountain, valley, river, and coastline of Greece.

And so, with the same dedication that the American School has for the legacy of Greece, the Archons of the Ecumenical Throne will prosper the profound heritage of the Mother Church of Constantinople.

The Archons will continue to reveal to the world the spiritual treasures and riches of

the Most Holy Ecumenical Patriarchate, for She is the trustee of the Orthodox Faith and Paideia – the spiritual culture that emerged when the Gospel and Hellenism became a syzygy joined by the Holy Spirit.

And as the American School creates a living legacy through its educational programs, the Archons propagate the living logos of the Mother Church throughout the Diaspora.

We are grateful tonight for being received in these enlightened precincts, and we pledge to bring the light of Phanar throughout the world, to illumine the Church and our fellow human beings with the logos – the message of love, peace, forgiveness, mercy, and responsibility for God's glorious creation that is the message of the See of Saint Andrew.

Athens gave the world Archons in millennia past. And we are here to let the whole world know that in Athens, the Archons of New Rome have returned, as a new embassy for the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Church and to the world. Thank you! Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη!

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