03/06/2024

Archepiscopal Encyclical on the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres Sunday



June 2, 2024

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Presvyteres and Diakonisses, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ-loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

Come! See a man who told me everything I have ever done! Could this be the Christ? (John 4:29)

My beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

Christ is Risen!

The fact that this year's National Sisterhood of Presvyteres Sunday falls on the

Sunday of the Samaritan Woman is most auspicious, indeed. For in the narrative of Saint Photini, who was ultimately martyred for her faith with her companions, we behold a wisdom-holder of the highest order, even though her beginnings were less than ideal — certainly far less than those wondrous women of our Church who are the spouses of our clergy.

The Presvyteres of our Church are wisdom-holders, ones whose contribution to the life of our parishes is truly indispensable. Many possess deep theological education, and all have the profound experiential knowledge of seeing the parish from a panoramic perspective, i.e., from the point of view of the minister and those ministered unto. The offerings of our Presvyteres to our communities are invaluable; for they manifest a perspective that is inherent in the Church through the Panagia and countless women Saints, but is sometimes diminished on account of the clergy. Together with all their sisters in the parishes, who assume roles from the Parish Council to the philanthropies of Philoptochos, our Presvyteres call the entire Body of the Faithful to see God’s activities and energies in persons, places and events, as they query along with Saint Photini, “Could this be the Christ?”

Therefore, let us listen with attention and respect to our Presvyteres, and benefit from the well-gained wisdom that they hold. Let us hold them in honor on this National Sisterhood of Presvyteres Sunday, thankful for their many and diverse contributions to the life of our Church.

With paternal love in the Risen Lord,

† ELPIDOPHOROS Archbishop of America

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