

25/11/2024

Archbishop Elpidophoros Remarks at the 50th Anniversary Gala of the Chian Federation



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Invocation:

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Let us commence with prayer.

Let us pray to the Lord. Kyrie Eleison.

We give thanks to You, O Christ our God, for the Chian Federation and for their Fifty Years of its dignified and loving representation of this distinguished Island, the home of greatness and grace.

Bless the Federation and all their endeavors. Bless all those in attendance this evening, their families and friends.

And bless the food and drink of your servants, increasing them in all the world, for You are the Bread of Life and to You do we ascribe glory, together with Your Eternal Father and the All-Holy Spirit, with Whom You are glorified; now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

Remarks:

President Kyriaki Kalogeras and Esteemed members of the Executive Committee of the Chian Federation,

Honorable Representatives of the Governments of Greece and Cyprus,

Gala Chairlady Athena Kromidas, and Members of the 50th Anniversary Committee,

Masters of Ceremonies: Joanna Almiroudis and Alexis Padeloukas,

Honored Guests,

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Tonight, we gather together in solidarity to celebrate this Golden Anniversary of the Federation, which is a profound expression of Chian pride and dignity. As you all know, some of my own ancestry hails from Chios, so I feel very much at home – not only on the wondrous Island, but always among you, my fellow Chians!

Fifty Years! Truly, a worthy occasion for celebration. If you will allow the expression, it is a “pentecostal” moment for your ομοσπονδία, for we know that Πεντηκοστή means “Fifty.” And it is a moment of jubilee – a time to reflect with great appreciation on the past and those who built this organization, and to dream about your future.

Your founders, the pioneers who forged this society, would be very proud. For you have preserved your bonds with that ancient Island that gave birth to your souls, if not your bodies. Your fifty years of continuous operation testify to your devotion to your spiritual and temporal homeland.

But when we speak of history as regards the Island of Chios, we must speak in thousands of years. Chios has been home to people for over ten thousand years, stretching back to the Neolithic Era. We honor the classical era of the Island: the creator of epic poetry, the unsurpassable Homer, and the philosopher and playwright, Ion of Chios (Ίων ὁ Χῖος).

And we can never forget the martyric sacrifice of Chios in 1822– Ἡ σφαγή τῆς Χίου — which witnessed the loss and disappearance of so many lives in death and enslavement. Their bones can be seen to this very day at Νέα Μονή, where thousands sought refuge, only to die by hateful and unmerciful hands.

The history of this magnificent Island has peaks and valleys, and even abysses with no discernible end, but one thing is certain. The people of Chios – Χιώτες – never give up. You never give up and you never give in. You are a proud and strong Γένος, and here in the United States, Chians have been a force for good throughout the Diaspora, and in every nook and cranny of American life.

Therefore, my beloved friends – take pride in this marvelous anniversary! A lot of love and sacrifice has brought you to this very special moment, when you celebrate the successes and achievements of which you should all be very proud in. Yet, within the passage of these five decades – now gone in the blink of an eye – is included a moment of reflection on where your ομοσπονδία is going. Come together in unity of mind and heart, and dream even bigger dreams for the next fifty years.

Make sure to pass down to the coming generations the story of your Island and this Federation. In the next fifty years, let us see how your marvelous Community can promote the wonders of Chios even more!

You are led by the glorious martyr Markella! And she is joined by her fellow saints:

Saint Matrona; Saint Anthimos, Saint Isidore the Martyred Soldier and the Martyr Myrope, and Father Nicephoros, whose Holy Relics abide in the Church of Saint George in Resta.

Through their holy prayers, may this jubilee be an auspicious beginning for even greater heights.

Thank you for your faithfulness to Chios.

Here is to the next fifty years!

Benediction (at the conclusion of the meeting):

Let us close our evening, by giving thanks and praise to God

With thanksgiving in our hearts for this half century of the Chian Federation, let us go forth from this gathering of love and appreciation, praying that:

The Lord will bless us and keep us,

That the Lord will make His face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us,

That the Lord will lift up His countenance upon us, and give us peace,

Now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

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