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His Eminence Archbishop Sotirios of Canada issues his Encyclical for Greek Letters Day



His Eminence Archbishop Sotirios of Canada has released his Encyclical for Greek Letters Day. Read the full text below:

JANUARY 2020

Reverend Fathers, Honourable Presidents and
Esteemed Members of the Boards of Directors,
Members of the Philoptochos Societies,
Teachers, Students, Youth of the Communities and to the
Entire Plenitude of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Canada

GREEK LETTERS

Plain, but Clear Words

ENCYCLICAL FOR GREEK LETTERS

Archbishop Sotirios

The celebration of the Three Hierarchs corresponds to the celebration of Greek Letters and Arts. And when we say Greek Letters today, we mean Greek Christian education.

We have often stated that in the end, only the Church and the Orthodox faith will survive in the diaspora. Everything else will gradually be ignored and forgotten. Everything else will cease to exist. This will not happen immediately. It will take many years, but in the end, only the Church and the ethos of Greek Christianity will remain. At that point, we will be content to maintain our faith and our Greek Christian education.

Greek education is divinely inspired, it embodies God within. This is not something new. Our ancestors, the great philosophers, all believed in some god. The final words of Socrates are astounding. Addressing the jury, he said the following: “I am to die and you to live, but which of us has the happier prospect is unknown to anyone but God.”

In these words of Socrates, as well as all of the other ancient philosophers, we could see that our ancestors believed in a god or gods. In this case, what Socrates says proves that he was a monotheist, that is, he believed in one God.

If we here in Canada, or in any other country, do not pay close attention to the cause of Greek education, we will greatly harm ourselves. We will injure the cause of Greek education, an education whose profile which must be Greek Orthodox. We will condemn our children and future generations. We will damage humanity by not setting the good example.

The Feast of the Three Hierarchs, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom, was established around the 11th century AD. The consideration of the Feast of the Three Hierarchs as a celebration of Greek Letters started about a century and a half ago. In recent years, we

see that there are many discussions on this issue and various decisions are being taken. We here abroad will unequivocally maintain the celebration of the Three Hierarchs as a celebration of Greek Letters.

With these simple thoughts I address everyone: priests, presidents and directors, Greek school teachers, all communities and all organizations. And I humbly request that we not only celebrate Greek Letters this week, but that we place the cause of Greek Orthodox education firmly within our minds and hearts. This will help us stand upright. This will lead us to the safe harbour. This will fill us with the truth of God and the wisdom of our ancestors.

My beloved Christians, promote the cause of Greek Orthodox education. Sacrifice time and money for it. Give your best for Greek Orthodox education. You will not lose anything, but stand to gain a tremendous amount. This is true for all of us. Young and old. Educated and not. Wealthy and less fortunate. We all have something to offer to Greek Orthodox education and we must do it wholeheartedly. With the entirety of our hearts and minds. So, we can honestly say that: “I put my very life into it.” I put this effort with every inch of my soul. I expended myself for this cause. I did whatever was possible, and then some. Only then, will we not only have our conscience at peace, but we will also see the results of this great endeavor shine brightly. We will then witness Greek Orthodox education growing strong roots, blossoming and bearing much fruit.

The cause of Greek Orthodox education requires effort. Action is needed. Let us not dwell just on words.

With fatherly love and blessings,

ARCHBISHOP SOTIRIOS OF CANADA