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H.E. Archbishop Elpidophoros of America issues his Encyclical for the Feast of the Annunciation and the Day of Greek Independence (2020)



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America has issued his Encyclical for the Feast of the Annunciation and the Day of Greek Independence (2020). Read the full text:

Greek Independence Day, 2020

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Σήμερον τῆς σωτηρίας ἡμῶν τὸ κεφάλαιον – Today is the beginning of

our salvation!

Thus we chant in the Apolytikion of the Day, March 25th, both in praise of the Annunciation and in grateful thanksgiving for the heroes and spirit of 1821. The blessing of freedom, both spiritual and physical, is the legacy of this day of days, and we embrace this inheritance which is a gift that we receive from the past, but also a responsibility to pay forward.

The struggle for the independence of Greece was not a single event, even though we single out this day. March 25, 1821 was just the first chapter in a history that is still being written, not only in Hellas but around the world. It is not without significance that the word, κεφάλαιον, can mean “chapter” as well as a starting point, for the Heroes of 1821 wrote the first chapter in the history of modern Greece in the ink of their own blood.

The freedom that they purchased is being put to the test today in this extraordinary time when we are facing the first global pandemic in memory. Freedom of movement and freedom of association are being reasonably restricted, as we seek to slow the spread and preserve the health of our communities. Thus, we must remember that our most precious liberty is that of conscience, our God-given right to think and believe freely. This freedom of the inner person can never be taken away by any external conditions.

Therefore, let us honor the Heroes of 1821 – not with parades and public manifestations of these past glories, but within the privacy of our homes, and celebrate the greatest freedom of all – the freedom to be a human being endowed with faith, reason, and conscience. May we always hold these as the precious heritage exemplified by the sacrifice of others.

With paternal love in our Lord Jesus Christ,

†ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America