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Archbishop Elpidophoros of America issues Encyclical on Thanksgiving

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Ἐξομολογεῖσθε τῷ Κυρίῳ, ὅτι ἀγαθός, ὅτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ. Ἀλληλούϊα. (Ψαλμός 135:1)

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever. Alleluia. (Psalm 135:1)

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,

Let us give thanks unto the Lord! Let us celebrate this National Day of Thanksgiving, a time when we remember that the opposite of scarcity is not abundance, but gratitude. President John F. Kennedy's words ring as true today as they did in his Proclamation of 1963: "Over three centuries ago, our forefathers in Virginia and in Massachusetts, far from home in a lonely wilderness, set aside a time of thanksgiving. On the appointed day, they gave reverent thanks for their safety, for the health of their children, for the fertility of their fields, for the love which bound them together, and for the faith which united them with their God." This National Holiday has become associated with a time of feasting and family gatherings, but in this year of pandemic, the feasting of many is threatened by food insecurity, and the gathering of families is in question, as we try to keep those we love healthy and safe.

Therefore, I beseech all of you, as you are able, give thanks in your communities by your generosity to those less fortunate than you. Share your blessings, for they are from God Who shines His sun upon all people, just as the rain falls upon the just and the unjust alike (cf. Matthew 5:45). Look into your abundance and see more than the result of of your hard work and natural advantages. See the treasury of God's blessings that he has gifted to you for you to bestow on others, remembering the word of the Lord: "generously you have received, generously give" (Matthew 10:8).

And if you are unable to gather with your loved ones and families, hold the space in your hearts wide and open for them and all people. There is need in our world for love to be manifest, and your openness to others is a good first step. At every Divine Liturgy, we express our gratitude to God, and we can show that thankfulness by our love for and generosity to others. Εὐχαριστήσωμεν τῷ Κυρίῳ!

With paternal love in our Lord Jesus Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America

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