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Encyclical on the Feast of Saint Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America has issued an encyclical on the Feast of Saint Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople.

The encyclical reads:

Encyclical on the Feast of Saint Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople

February 6, 2021

Prot. No. 34/2021

As a brilliant revelator of wisdom, you have been shown forth

as the front-line defender of Orthodoxy, O great Photios, adornment of the Fathers...

(Apolytikion of Saint Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople)

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 Brethren in the Lord,

Our annual celebration of the great and holy Patriarch Photios is an occasion to remember the Saint who presided in love on the First Throne of Orthodoxy, and whose mission to bring the Faith of Christ to the world was one of the most ambitious and successful in history. The Slavic Peoples are forever in debt to him for his vision, courage, and persistence to share the great Light of Christ with all the peoples who were sitting in darkness and in the regions of the shadow of death (cf. Matthew 4:16).

In our own day, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has been shown forth as a most worthy successor to the Saintly Photios. For His All-Holiness led the way in restoring millions of pious Ukrainians to the fullness of Orthodoxy, by his bold and visionary granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. He teaches us that we must never stop sharing the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ. And our Patriarch shows us that to be a “front-line defender of Orthodoxy,” like his holy predecessor, you must be as courageous as a lion, even as you are as innocent as the lamb.

Throughout our Holy Archdiocese, we celebrate the Feast of Saint Photios the Great by calling to mind the mission of our National Saint Photios Shrine, in St. Augustine, Florida. The Shrine reminds us of the sacrifices and courage of the πρωτοπόροι, all those who came before us bearing their Faith and Culture in their bosom. Regardless of our origin, we are the heirs of their legacy, and we all bear a responsibility to pass this glorious inheritance to future generations.

Therefore, let us support the work of the National Saint Photios Shrine, and glorify God Who grants to the Church such “front line defenders of Orthodoxy,” that we may ever be strengthened to share the Gospel of our Lord, and the treasures of our

ancestors.

With paternal love in Christ Jesus,

† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America