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His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Arrives for Official Visit



WASHINGTON, DC — His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was joyously welcomed today by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland. The Ecumenical Patriarch, spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians worldwide, will begin his 12-day official visit in Washington, DC.

Also in attendance to greet His All-Holiness and the Official Delegation were, according to State Department Protocol, His Excellency Marios Lysiotis, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the United States; His Excellency Arthur Sinodinos OA, Ambassador of Australia to the United States; Her Excellency Alexandra Papadopoulou, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the United States; Her Excellency Oksana Markarova Ambassador of Ukraine to the United States; members of the Holy Eparchial Synod; and clergy and faithful from the D.C. area and around the country. The Official Visit, postponed from May 2020 because of the global pandemic, is His All-Holiness' first visit to the United States since 2009.

At an official ceremony at the St. Regis Hotel His All-Holiness offered greetings stating, “With a heart filled with gratitude and great enthusiasm, we speak words of blessing and benediction for all of you, and for the great American Nation. It has been twelve years since we last visited the Holy Archdiocese of America, her devout clergy and the many friends in government that have become close to us during our Thirty-Year Patriarchal tenure.



“We begin again, as we did in 1997, and we come with the same message we imparted on that day, October Nineteenth: “We come to you in love, beholding you as the newly planted branch of the ancient vine of Christ’s first called disciple Saint Andrew. You, our most beloved daughters and sons, have transplanted the faith of the Apostles upon this blessed continent. America recognizes your deep commitment to living that faith fully, for she has enshrined in her Constitution the fundamental principles upon which the lasting qualities of the Church are founded.” (Full text www.goarch.org/-/2021-10-23-greeting-hah-arrival-usa)

In his welcome to His All-Holiness Archbishop Elpidophoros stated, “We, the devout children of the Mother Church of Constantinople, welcome You with open hearts into our midst for the seventh time in Your historic and renowned Patriarchal ministry…We are overcome with deep emotion and much joy, because we behold in Your venerable person the embodiment of the Holy Great Church of Christ, which You have now led for thirty years — the longest Patriarchal tenure in history.

Indeed, we await with great eagerness Your sage guidance, paternal wisdom and wise Patriarchal counsel, as we strive to live the life of our Orthodox Christian faith in the very heart of America. The coming days will certainly hold many experiences that we will all cherish, and which will inform our vision of the life of Christ in this land.

“We look to You, then, Your All-Holiness, to show us the way, and to give to us a renewed and inspired vision for the faith of the saints and the Apostles that You know so well.” (Full Text www.goarch.org/-/2021-10-23-welcome-archbishop-elpidophoros-to-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew-to-usa)

After the official welcome, His All-Holiness, the Archbishop and members of the Official Delegation departed for the residence of Her Excellency Alexandra Papadopoulou, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the United States, who will host a dinner in honor of the Ecumenical Patriarch this evening. Tomorrow, Sunday, October 24, 2021, His All-Holiness will preside at the Pan-Orthodox Chorostasia at Saint Sophia Cathedral in Washington, DC and induct the newly appointed Senators for Orthodoxy and Hellenism. Following will be the Pan-Orthodox Luncheon with the Saint Sophia Community. In the evening, His-All Holiness will be honored at the AHEPA Grand Banquet at the Mayflower Hotel.

For more information, photos and livestreams visit www.goarch.org/EPVisit2021

Photos: GOA / D. Panagos

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