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# Remarks of Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the Greek Independence Day Gala – The Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York




Esteemed Leadership and Members of the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York,

Distinguished Guests,

Reverend Clergy,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am delighted to be with you on this glorious eve of our Greek Independence Day Parade, whose return has been so intensely anticipated by the Omogenia.

I am proud to have worked with the Ὁμοσπονδία to bring about this vital event of our community, especially in bringing the mighty Evzones to participate – something that every person who will line Fifth Avenue tomorrow is eagerly waiting to see. And we are eternally grateful to the President of the Hellenic Republic for

granting us their presence.

Tonight is truly an occasion for celebration. The Federation represents scores of Hellenic Organizations who serve differing interests and constituencies of our Community. Coming together for the Parade is more than a symbolic show of solidarity; it is an act of community engagement.

We gather as a family – young and old alike – and we all share in the pride and purpose of the parade. Parents prepare their children for their march down Fifth Avenue. Parishes organize their Greek Schools. Organizations build their floats and other tributes to the Immortal Heroes of 1821. And all of us wave flags of the Πατρίδα with smiles on our faces and the National Anthem of Greece in our hearts.

This is a great moment for the Omogeneia – a moment that we had to postpone during the worst of the pandemic. Now, taking the precautions that are still warranted, we can once again stride with pride down the premier Avenue of New York City, and manifest our love for Greece and our commitment to Her legacy and future.

I look around this room tonight, and I see the incredible variety and individual glory that is Greece. Every corner of our Motherland contains a profoundly deep history and gripping story of the very building blocks of Western Civilization.

Whether it is the Ionian or the Aegean,

the Taygetus or Olympus,

Meteora or Athos,

Rhodes or Crete,

Peloponnesus or Macedonia,

Athens or Patra,

Thessaloniki or Kalamata.

Wherever you go in Greece, you find one soul, inhabiting every stone, every olive tree, every current of sea, river and stream.

And so it is, my friends, in this room here tonight. We come from different regions – even countries – as did all those from Asia Minor and Pontus. We all have our own local customs and traditions.

We even have our own dialects and expressions – a marvel of language that we must strive to preserve and pass on. Thousands of years of our magnificent Greek language will not pass into oblivion in the Diaspora! We will keep what we have inherited, and prosper it among the coming generations.

But what we have above all else is one soul, one heart and one mind, which collectively treasure the legacy of Greece and strive to safeguard it!

And so, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, be proud of your unity and of your diversity! I congratulate all who have made this great day possible. And I thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Ζήτω Ἑλλάδα! Ζήτω τὸ Ἑλληνικὸ Ἔθνος!

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