25/07/2022

Remarks at the Daughters of Penelope Salute to Women, 100th AHEPA Supreme Convention



Your Excellency Alexandra Papadopoulou, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the United States

Dear and esteemed Kathy Bizoukas, Grand President of the Daughters of Penelope,

Beloved brothers of AHEPA and Sisters of the Daughters of Penelope,

What an honor it is to be gathered with you for the festivities celebrating the One Hundred Years of AHEPA, in which the Daughters of Penelope have stood side by side since 1929. Your founding in San Francisco reminds me that with the establishment of AHEPA in Atlanta, this wonderful brotherhood and sisterhood has always been national in scope. Just like the Sacred Archdiocese of America, you have always served the interests of all members of the Omogeneia.

This afternoon's special tribute, "Salute to Women," is a most meaningful award and recognition that you have celebrated for over fifty years. I am proud to be with you for this very special event.

The Daughters of Penelope have chosen to honor remarkable women from within

and without our community. All of your laureates have qualities and accomplishments that speak to the essence of what women offer to the human family. I think we can agree, it is much more than motherhood, which is the greatest contribution of all. We must never forget the hallowed position of women within God's creation. You are the source of life itself, and without you, life would not exist.

But women are so much more, and I see in the very name, "Daughters of Penelope," a vast ocean of your qualities and character.

All of you know the story of Penelope, the wife of Odysseus. It was she who held on to his kingdom on Ithaki during his twenty-year absence: ten years fighting against Troy, and ten years to find his way home.

And in those years, Penelope chose to maintain her own status and the status of the kingdom through a most simple but exquisite art – that of weaving. Every day she wove a tapestry, which when complete, would show her willingness to accept that Odysseus was never coming home and the kingdom would have to move on. And every night, she unraveled her handiwork, so that she would not be compelled to make a decision against her own interests, and that of her husband and son.

She was wise, clever and skilled. She wove a story that could only be fulfilled in the return of her partner, her spouse and beloved. The tapestry she unwound is the same tapestry that you, her Daughters, bring to life every day in the life of our communities. It is a tapestry of love.

Your partner, the Order of AHEPA, is not absent from you. And together, you form a powerful and meaningful force in the life of the Omogeneia, Greece, Cyprus and the world. The philanthropies you engage in and the charities you support are part of the grand texture of the Greek-American experience. Without you, our community would be all the poorer; for you enrich the life of parishes, cities, towns and ministries – both here and abroad – which benefit our friends and neighbors. You should be rightfully proud of your accomplishments, and the recognition of Janet Petro, which you celebrate this afternoon, is another jewel in the crown of your achievements.

And so, it gives me great pleasure to share this moment with you. Allow me to extend my heartfelt congratulations to every single Daughter of Penelope. In honoring this exceptionally skilled professional and truly talented leader, you honor yourselves as: women of vision, women of principle, women of industry and women of true philanthropy.

All of the qualities and characteristics that you single out this evening for your current honoree apply to all those women who came before her.

You, the Daughters of Penelope, are most worthy of your namesake. As the Great Homer sings, you share in her deeds of great beauty and nobility of spirit.1

May you ever prosper in all your works, with the blessings of Almighty God.

goarch.org