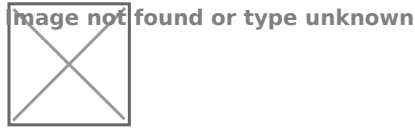


ADDRESS By His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America To His Beatitude Theodoros II Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa At the Divine Liturgy



Your Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria and All Africa,

On behalf of all the brothers and sisters of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America:

The Most Reverend Metropolitans of the Holy Eparchial Synod;

The Bishops, Priests, Presvyteres, Deacons and Diakonisses;

The Leadership of All Archdiocesan and Metropolis Institutions;

The Parish Councils, Greek Schools and Youth Organizations;

And all the Orthodox Christian Faithful who are gathered this Sunday at the Divine Services – wherever they may be:

We celebrate this historic Patriarchal Divine Liturgy with Your Beatitude with especial joy and gladness. For it is the Eighteenth Anniversary of Your ascension to the Thone of Saint Mark, whose Winged Lion's Roar resounds throughout the ages.

Your Beatitude – You fill our hearts with courage from the example of your bravery in the face of those who oppose the canonical traditions of the Church.

You give us hope and optimism, because You manifest the true fraternity of the Elder Patriarchates – with your love and respect for the Mother Church of Constantinople, and the sacred person of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

The faithful gathered here today in this Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, and those watching around the globe, await from You the word of wisdom. For You are the Shepherd of the lands that gave birth to the great monastic traditions of:

Saints Paul of Thebes, Anthony the Great, the two Makarioi, Poimen the Great, Arsenios the Great, Moses the Ethiopian, and all the others of this Heavenly Choir. Their wisdom lives on in the Most Holy Patriarchate of Alexandria, and in the person of Your Beatitude.

And beyond the deserts of the Sahara, Your Beatitude's holy ministry extends throughout all of Africa – a marvelous Continent of amazing cultures, languages and peoples.

There You defend the flock of our Lord Jesus Christ against the wolves and the thieves who come, as the Lord said, “only to steal and kill and destroy.”[*]

You stand as a pillar upon the Ground of Truth, together with Your illustrious spiritual forebears:

Saint Alexander,

Saint Athanasios the Great,

Saint Cyril,

Saint Cyril Loukaris,

And all who have served even unto martyrdom upon the Throne of the Apostle and Evangelist Mark.

Therefore, with this most respectful salutation, on behalf of the plenitude of the Church, I ask for Your Patriarchal Blessing upon all the faithful, and a word of life and wisdom from Your Beatitude.

Photo: GOARCH/Dimitrios S. Panagos

[*] John 10:10 (Greek: ἵνα κλέψῃ καὶ θύσῃ καὶ ἀπολέσῃ).

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