

09/01/2023

REMARKS By His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the AHEPA Banquet Theophilos Hall at the Spanos Pappas Saint Nicholas Community Center



Your Grace(s), dear Fathers and Presvyteres,

Distinguished Guests,

Esteemed Brothers and Sisters of the AHEPA Family,

Once again, we come together for the festivities of Theophany here in Tarpon Springs, and AHEPA's presence is most vital, and most welcome. AHEPA, which shared its Centennial with the Sacred Archdiocese of America last year, brings an added dimension to Epiphany here in Tarpon, as it does to every Church event in which it participates.

I look around this room, and I see many, many friends. I see co-workers and fellow laborers in the Divine Vineyard of our Lord and Master. I see patriots of America, Greece and Cyprus. I see the strong foundations of our communities across America. And I see the bright future of our Γένος.

AHEPA not only supports the Omogeneia, through its many chapters and programs, but it also supports our parishes. It is not surprising to find that many individuals in local parish leadership are also leaders in the local AHEPA chapters.

There is a true interdependence between the two. And as our institutions have traveled together over the last one hundred years, we have learned how to support and enhance each other's mission. I am very proud of these two Pillars of the Omogeneia in this blessed land of ours - the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. Together, we uphold what is best and most noble in our shared Greek Orthodox tradition.

My beloved brothers and sisters,

I take these holy days of Theophany as an opportunity for all of us to look ahead to the next one hundred years of our institutions. This feast is the inauguration of the public ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is a beginning of sorts for us as well.

Both of us – the Archdiocese and AHEPA – stand upon the shoulders of true giants in our community. We both have firm and deep foundations that have withstood the test of time.

As we look to the future, we must concentrate our efforts on manifesting a relevant and energetic way of life for our young people. We all know that the days of our community being the principal source of social relationships are over.

When we look out tomorrow at the hearty young people who will dive for the Cross, we are looking at our future. Everyone who dives is seeking something. Because the Cross is more than its material substance, or even its precious symbolism.

These intrepid young people are looking for meaning and purpose. And the institutions of the Church and AHEPA provide contexts where that meaning can be explored.

Therefore, my beloved friends,

Let us enjoy our celebrations tonight and those to come tomorrow. And let us continue to work together – hand in hand – to bring benefit, meaning and purpose to all those who come to us to express their love for the Orthodox Christian faith and for all things Hellenic.

Thank you, and may the Lord bless us all!

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