

Archbishop Elpidophoros Remarks at the Eleftheria Banquet The Federation of Hellenic Societies of Philadelphia and Greater Delaware Valley



Grand Marshall, the Honorable George Tsunis, Ambassador of the United States to the Hellenic Republic,

Eleftheria Medal Honoree and Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the United States, Your Excellency, Alexandra Papadopoulou

Distinguished Guests, Reverend Clergy,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Once again we have gathered as a united community – the κοινωμία of the Omogeneia – to celebrate our heritage and the legacy of liberty bestowed upon us by the Immortal heroes of 1821.

Just a few days ago, our community was honored by the President of the United States, who celebrated Greek Independence Day at the White House. Tonight, we

gather in our Eleftheria Banquet to give special recognition and appreciations. And tomorrow, we will proudly march as a united Γένος, carrying our ensign of victory in the City of Brotherly Love to manifest our patriotic love, and our eternal gratitude to God and the Panagia, for the free democracies that hold sway in our homelands.

I am so very proud of the Federation of Hellenic American Societies of Philadelphia and the Great Delaware Valley, for their tremendous efforts and accomplishments in celebrating the Re-Birth of Greece in this region. The sense of community and solidarity among all the organizations is reflected in each and every face here tonight. As your Archbishop, I commend you for this tremendous service to the Omogeneia. You bring together all the various bodies of Hellenic and Orthodox life, and you organize these festive observances that celebrate our freedom – both political and spiritual. Tomorrow, we will march as one, unified community, and share our love of liberty, democracy, and of our Greek heritage, with joy in our souls and pride in our hearts.

We Greeks are not the largest Γένος upon the planet, but, if you will allow me a sports metaphor: we punch way above our weight. We are the source and the root of so much of Western Civilization, because we reached for the stars from our earliest iterations. The Greek mind is a mind of inquiry, of examination, of seeking the nature of reality. Our philosophical traditions – before Socrates and after – are the fundamental building blocks of how we think in the modern era. Think about it! We taught the world to think!

And in that process, we invented the mode of government that is so deeply valued today, and is threatened by greed and lust for power today: Democracy. The Heroes of 1821 were not merely throwing off an oppressive yoke. They were seeking for a return to the glory of Greece.

That is the return we commemorate during this weekend, and which we hold dear in our hearts throughout the passing of time. We remember, because we are re-connecting to the values and the commitment of those inspired leaders who were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice.

When we hold our flags, when we march with pride, when we sing our songs and our hymns, when we read our poems – we are invoking the spirit of 1821 to live again in the world.

I think it is no accident that we honor the two Ambassadors who serve both America and Greece with such excellence tonight, because they are our exemplars of what it means to be emissaries of the Hellenic spirit to the world. Thank you

Ambassador Papadapoulou, and thank you Ambassador Tsunis, for your presence and the power of your example – both in Athens and in Washington, DC.

You inspire all of us to be ambassadors for Hellenism in our daily lives. Whether one comes from Greece, or Cyprus, or Asia Minor, or is a Philhellene – each of us carries a love for the fountainhead of Western Civilization. We can share this love with our circles of friends and neighbors, and increase the knowledge and appreciation for Hellas in society at-large. By doing so, we all can serve the mission and the vision that we celebrate this weekend, with our observances of March 25th.

Therefore, my friends, let us embrace this evening as one Community and as a loving family. Let us march together tomorrow as one Body of our proud Γένος and as the Church.

We have representation from the local Churches, and from the over forty Greek Organizations that make up this wonderful Federation of Hellenic Societies of Philadelphia and Greater Delaware Valley.

Let us march with pride, with joy, and with minds ablaze in thanksgiving for the Heroes of 1821!

Thank you.

Ζήτω τὸ Εἰκοσιένα!

Ζήτω τὸ Ἑλληνικὸ Ἔθνος!

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