

Archbishop Elpidophoros 2019 Athenagoras Human Rights Award Banquet Remarks Honoring The Prince's Trust



Most Esteemed Vice President of the Prince's Trust International, representing His Majesty King Charles III,

Most Reverend Metropolitans and Hierarchs,

Beloved Clergy and Presvyteres of our Church,

Honorable Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Esteemed Archons and Archons-elect,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Tonight we recognize, with our honor and high esteem, a remarkable initiative of King Charles III, an initiative that he conceived of and commenced when he was Prince of Wales, for the benefit of disadvantaged youth in the United Kingdom. To date, that number of young people both in England and around the world numbers over one million souls. The Prince's Trust, the Prince's Trust International, is represented here tonight by our dear friend, the Prince's Trust International's Vice-President and a leader in its global expansion.

Through its efforts, young men and women in twenty-two nations have shared in the promise of this remarkable vision, including many in Greece. These young people faced enormous employment challenges during the years of economic hardship, and we thank the Prince's Trust International for its investment in the human capital of Greece. Such a visionary venture in the future certainly merits our praise and esteem tonight.

The Patriarch Athenagoras Human Rights Award is most worthily bestowed upon the Prince's Trust, because this extraordinary endeavor has led the way for decades in preparing the youth of today for the challenges of tomorrow.

And if we are going to encourage human rights across the board for all people, we must instill in the coming generations the values and understanding of these rights, which are based in freedom of conscience and religious liberty – the very principles that the Order of Saint Andrew, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, exemplifies.

Our contemporary world is deeply troubled. Troubled by tribalism. Troubled by nihilism. Troubled by falsity. Troubled by unrelenting violence.

What we have been witnessing in Ukraine, and the utterly unjustified Russian aggression and cruelty against the noble People of Ukraine....

What we have witnessed in Israel and Gaza: barbarism of untold proportions, and the needless and heedless death of innocents, are stirring up old hatreds among the youngest who should be our hope.

In a world that needs stability and peace, only by cultivating the potential of our youth, and giving them opportunities for a decent and livable future – and not sending them to their deaths in wars and barbarities – are we going to give our civilization a fighting chance.

The Prince's Trust has granted such opportunities for over one million persons – all under the age of twenty. And through opening a myriad of doors with viability and promise, the Trust has given these young people the confidence, the faith – to make of themselves responsible and accountable citizens – not only of their own lands, but of the world.

This is how we create peacemakers for the future, and not cannon fodder for the short term goals of despots.

I want to thank the Archons of the Ecumenical Throne for their recognition of their of this amazing work of the Prince's Trust and the Trust International. Such noble efforts are an inspiration to us all.

And I want to challenge Order – to continue and expand the opportunities for young people to connect to the Mother Church of Constantinople, through the Pilgrimage of Discovery pilot program. Let us have one, national program for the entirety of the Archdiocese. And let us designate these young persons as “Archon-Branches,” Ἀρχοντοκλήματα, of the Vine of the Mother Church, that His All-Holiness evoked, when he first touched down on American soil as Ecumenical Patriarch for his Apostolic and Patriarchal Visit to the United States, more than twenty-five years

ago. He said on that blessed day:

“We come to you in love, beholding you as the newly planted branch of the ancient vine of Christ’s first called disciple Saint Andrew.”[1]

Therefore, let us have new branches forming throughout our Church in America. With our support and promotion, they will be trained well and shaped and pruned to, as the Lord said, “bring forth even more fruit.” [2]

Like the Prince’s Trust – this is an investment in our future.

As we praise King Charles for his foresight and the work of the Trust, let us also commit to following his example among our own.

And let us say, ΑΞΙΟΣ!

[1] HAH Arrival at Andrew’s Air Force Base October 19, 1997

[2] John 15:2.

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