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## **REMARKS By His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros At the 19th Biennial National Philoptochos Children's Medical Fund Luncheon**



November 11, 2023

Your Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver, Beloved Brother in Christ,  
Your Grace Bishop Constantine of Sassima,  
National Philoptochos President, Arlene Siavelis Kehl,  
Metropolis of Denver Philoptochos President, Stella Piches,  
Luncheon Co-Chairs Maria Stefanidakis, Marian Catechis, and Barbara Vittas,  
Our Emcees, John and Joni Zavitsanos,  
Our Speaker, Dr. Lara Shekerdemian,

Beloved Philoptochos Sisters in Christ,

Dear Friends,

As some of you know, tomorrow is the Sunday of the Good Samaritan, and I cannot think of a more perfect image for this Children's Medical Fund Luncheon. Because when I look around this room, I see Samaritans at every table.

In the Lord's telling of the parable, He was making a point to a young man who sought to justify himself, by asking our Lord: "And who is my neighbor?" But for Philoptochos, everyone is your neighbor.

And we know that in the world that Jesus inhabited, Samaritans were looked down upon. Yet, through this parable, the Lord elevated them to the highest moral and ethical character, and we forever remember him as "Good."

And so ... that is who fills this banquet room today - Samaritans - the best of the best. For you, the members and supporters of Philoptochos, are meeting the needs of those who require medical care and comfort, just as that nameless man, who was attacked on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho, was ministered to by the "Good Samaritan."

The injured man was taken to an inn where he was cared for. The CMF Luncheon provides for the care of young innocents in hospitals, whose very name comes from the Latin word for "stranger" - hospes, or ξένος in Greek.

The Good Samaritan rescued a man who was a total stranger to him, and you, the compassionate and loving members of Philoptochos, engage in this, and so many other ministries, to serve children whom you may never meet - who are strangers to you.

But in truth, they are not strangers. This Luncheon answers the questions of that young lawyer who was seeking his own justification by asking the age-old question: "And who is my neighbor?"

Philoptochos knows that every human being in need is their neighbor. Every child who lacks proper medical care, nourishment, clothing and the basics of life - that child is their neighbor. As the Lord said:

“‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your thoughts.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like the first, ‘You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself.’”[\*]

The Ladies Philoptochos Society fulfills both of these greatest of all commandments. For, as He said: “the second is like the first.”

I rejoice in your spiritual lineage of being Samaritans this day. You are all most worthy of the title and the name, for you have manifested the very same virtues that the Good Samaritan did.

You did not pass by when you saw a need.

You did not cross the road to avoid the pain.

You are engaged in the work of Christ and His Holy Church, and you should be very proud and very humbled at the same time, because the Lord has granted you His grace to be true “lovers of the poor.”

My beloved sisters of Philoptochos,

I am so grateful for this Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon and the tremendous impact you have in the lives of so many children who are in need of your caring and your compassion.

May the Lord always bless you – His valiant and virtuous Samaritans – to always serve and please Him, by your loving service to others.

[\*] Matthew 22:37-39.

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