

REMARKS By His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the Clergy Family Luncheon of the Hellenic Dance Festival 2024



Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers,

Dear Presvyteres and Beloved Children,

It is a delight to be with you at the Clergy Family Luncheon of the Hellenic Dance Festival of the Holy Metropolis of Atlanta. I am always impressed at the number of clergy and their families who attend the Dance Festivals throughout our Sacred Archdiocese. It tells me that these occasions have become deeply woven into your Parishes, and that these cultural events are woven into the fabric of the Church.

The inspired dream of your beloved Metropolitan, His Eminence Alexios, HDF has clearly become an institution of our National Church. It is leading the way with other such celebrations of our faith and culture in different Metropolises. You are giving these celebrations a preeminence that is deserved, for they bring our community together.

I feel that there is a certain genius in scheduling such events in proximity before

Great Lent, which is still two months away.

They serve as a grand expression of our people for the values of our faith and culture. They give voice to the aspirations for connection and meaning that are intensified by the weeks of abstinence leading to Pascha.

It is not without significance that one of the most joyous hymns of the Resurrection is the Ninth Ode, which we all know:

Χόρευε νῦν, καὶ ἀγάλλου Σιών· σὺ δὲ ἀγνή, τέρπου, Θεοτόκε, ἐν τῇ ἐγέρσει τοῦ τόκου σου.

Dance now and rejoice O Zion; and you, or Pure Theotokos, delight in the rising of your Child!

We, who are the children of Holy Zion, are called to the divine dance that celebrates the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. These children of your parishes, who have come here to Orlando to rejoice in their heritage and customs, are already in the flow of that dance.

As you return to your communities, then, I ask that you keep these young people in the flow of God's dance of love with creation in the year ahead. May your ministries always encourage them to pursue His Righteousness, His Light, His Truth and His Kingdom. I wish all of you a very fruitful and spiritually prosperous new year, and a blessed Leave-taking of Theophany tomorrow!

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