



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

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Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos and the Celebration of Greek Independence Day

March 25, 2023

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America:

Hail, unwavering tower of the Church, hail impenetrable wall of the Kingdom!

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This Day of Greek Independence — when throughout Greece, Cyprus and the Hellenic Diaspora, the people of God celebrate freedom and remember the cost thereof — let us train our minds on the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, who is the model for what that freedom truly means. We sing her praises throughout Great Lent in the magnificent Akathist Hymn, because March 25 is the date we observe her Annunciation of the Glad Tidings of the Lord’s Incarnation, and because the Rebirth of the *Genos* is bound to her mighty intercessions.

The Theotokos is truly our “unwavering tower” and “impenetrable wall;” for she stands fast at the Throne of God in constant supplication for her People, the People of the Church, and the citizens of the coming Kingdom. She is the guarantor of our Faith; for she is the one who offered her humanity to God, so that God, in turn, could offer His Divinity to us. She manifests that each of us has a place in the work of salvation, for through her, we are consubstantial with the Son of God in His humanity, just as He is consubstantial with the Father and the Spirit in divinity.



The fact that the struggle for freedom is forever linked to the exercise of her own freedom, is a cause for celebration every day, and not only on March 25. We can hold in our minds and hearts the champions of 1821 in every *kairos*, for their example is ever-new and ever-young. Their sacrifices remind us of the costly price of liberty, so that we might never take for granted the freedoms won and what it takes to preserve them.

Therefore, my beloved brethren in the Lord, let us chant and magnify the Theotokos with joyous hymns and heartfelt supplications that may ever be worthy of the “unwavering tower” and “impenetrable wall” that surrounds us with love and spiritual protection. And may we ever bring to the exercise of our democracies of Greece, Cyprus, America, and everywhere in the Diaspora where “government of the people, by the people, for the people” is honored, the determination and responsibility to make us worthy of the freedoms that were gifted to us by the Heroes of 1821.

Long live Greece!

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America