



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ARCHIEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

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Archiepiscopal Encyclical for the Feast of the Holy Unmercenaries, Saints Cosmas and Damian

October 31, 2021

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.

*Honor your father and your mother, which is the first commandment with a promise,
that it may be well with you, and you may live long in the land. (Ephesians 6:3-4)*

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, as we commemorate the patrons of our National Philoptochos, the Holy Unmercenary Saints Cosmas and Damian — whose feast we celebrate tomorrow, on the first of November — we have the blessing of the paternal presence in our land of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. All around the country, our Philoptochos Societies are dedicating their collections today for the needs and the support of the benevolent and philanthropic ministries of our Mother Church of Constantinople.

Therefore, let us honor the presence of our Spiritual Father within the Archdiocese of America, and honor our Mother, the Great Church of Christ — the Ecumenical Patriarchate — and, as St. Paul instructs us, seize the promise of the Commandment of



God. Not only is this commandment the first one with promise, it is also a positive commandment. We do not hear “Thou shalt not,” but rather, “Honor!”

And when we honor our Spiritual Father and our Mother Church, we receive the blessing of Almighty God upon our Nation and upon all of our parishes. We bring our offerings to the philanthropic ministries of the Ecumenical Patriarchate – ministries that offer medical assistance and all kinds of support to those in need. We reach across the ocean and embrace brothers and sisters that we may never meet in this life, but with whom we shall surely be acquainted in the Kingdom of Heaven.

On this Sunday when our Philoptochos leads the way through their awesome generosity, I ask each and every one of you to show your honor for our Father in Christ and the Mother of our Orthodox Faith. I thank you for the love you have for our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and express the deep gratitude of our Mother Church for your stewardship in support of these vital ministries.

With paternal love in our Lord Jesus Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America