



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 28/2023

Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of Saint Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople

February 6, 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:

An Angel among men, you have been shown forth to be, O Father.... (Oikos from the Matins of the Feast).

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As an “Angel among men,” Saint Photios the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, was truly a messenger of God. His defense of the Orthodox Faith against encroachments from all sides, together with his missionary zeal, which was grounded in his extensive learning, made him both famous in his day and the target of attacks. He was a man of his times, and yet, he was a man for all seasons. The hymns that celebrate his memory do not lack in either exuberance or praise, and justly so.

This is the Saint for whom our Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine is named. This year is the Fortieth Anniversary of the establishment of the Shrine as a National Institution of our Sacred Archdiocese of America, and every member of our Church should take pride in this significant milestone. The ever-memorable Archbishop Iakovos captained the efforts to bring about the Shrine in St. Augustine, Florida, together with lay leadership from the region. The purchase of the Avero House in 1966 ultimately led to the dedication of this first National Shrine of our Sacred Archdiocese in 1982. Thousands upon thousands of faithful and visitors have come to the Shrine to learn about the history of Greeks in America. Today, with the Shrine’s Fortieth Anniversary, we embark upon a new chapter.



Saint Photios himself is rightfully honored at the Shrine, because he was truly a messenger of the Gospel, an “Angel among men,” as the hymn says. I encourage everyone across the Archdiocese to visit the Shrine as they are able, and to support its vital work, continuing the vision of this Great Patriarch of Constantinople, to bring the message of the Gospel to all the world, and to remember those who have come before us as true spiritual giants, upon whose shoulders we stand.

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America