

# GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

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**Protocol 55/17**

**May 21, 2017**

## **AHEPA Sunday**

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen! Χριστός Ἀνέστη!

The joy and light of Pascha continue to fill our hearts as we proclaim to the world that our Lord is Risen, our hope is renewed, and the victory of life is ours through the grace of God. This glorious transfiguration from death to life that we celebrate is affirmed in the commemoration of this Sunday after Pascha as the Sunday of the Blind Man. Today we read from the Gospel of John about a man who was blind from birth. In His great compassion, Christ healed the man revealing the power of the grace of God and leading to our Lord's acclamation, *I am the light of the world*. (John 8:12) This miraculous event guides us to affirm the calling of Christ to be the light of the world, to have compassion for the needs of others and to give honor and glory to God for the marvelous works that are done in His name.

For almost a century this has been the focus of the members of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. Today we honor this legacy of compassion and service by observing AHEPA Sunday and offering our gratitude to the members of the AHEPA family. Throughout our Holy Archdiocese, these faithful servants of God are leaders in their parishes, in the institutions and organizations of the Church, and in using the strength and mission of AHEPA to meet vital needs around the world. Through social services, educational programs and scholarships, medical and philanthropic services, and advocacy, the members of AHEPA bring light to many who need hope, compassion to many in need, and give honor and glory to God through their witness of faith in Him.

I ask all of our parishes to observe this day as AHEPA Sunday and to recognize the members of AHEPA. May we continue to offer our prayers and support for the faithful service of AHEPA, and in the light of the Resurrection, may we serve in compassion, rejoice in the power of God's abundant grace, and give Him honor and glory for the great works that are done.

With paternal love in our Risen Lord,

†DEMETRIOS

Archbishop of America