



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 281/2026

Archiepiscopal Encyclical for Father's Day

June 21, 2026 - Father's Day

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Presvyteres and Diakonisses, 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 Sacred Archdiocese of America.

For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers.

(I Corinthians 4:15a)

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today is Father's Day, a day when we remember the earthly parent who has begotten us, protected us, and provided for us. We all must be the children of someone – as the Gospel says, 'by blood, by desire of the flesh, or by human desire' (cf. John 1:13). Indeed, this verse covers a multitude of ways that fatherhood can exist in our world. But above every paternal figure in our lives, there is our Heavenly Father, to Whom we pray, and upon Whom we depend for our very existence. He is our Creator, and is so fundamental to our lives that the Lord Jesus said the following: *And do not call anyone on earth your 'father,' for one is your Father, Who is in Heaven* (Matthew 23:9).

And yet, we do call our earthly parent, "father;" we call our Baptismal Sponsor, "godfather;" and we call our priest, "Father." Do we therefore violate the saying of the Lord? By no means! Rather, we honor them by recognizing how they reflect our Heavenly Father. As Saint Paul observes to the Christians of Corinth, spiritual parentage is a rare

and precious gift. The Apostle did not have children of his own body, but he had a vast spiritually begotten family of sons and daughters. As he writes in the same Letter, “For in Christ Jesus, I have become a father to you through the Gospel” (4:15b).

Therefore, on this Father’s Day, let us remember our clergy, who beget us through the Gospel. There are many who take the role of teacher upon themselves, but fatherhood in Christ is an extraordinary relationship, to be revered and honored (thus we refer to the clergy as “Reverend”). And let us not forget their needs, especially to sustain them in their retirements. Whatever you can contribute to their material sustenance by means of the Clergy pension Fund will certainly be returned to you spiritually in “good measure, pressed together, shaken down, and overflowing” (Luke 6:38).

Happy Father’s Day!

With Gratitude and Fatherly Blessings in Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, written in Greek. The text reads "To Αμερικανς Ελπιδοφορος". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

†ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America