



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 484/2025

**Archeiscopal Encyclical
Prayer for Peace in the Middle East**

October 15, 2025

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, 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:

*“Καρπὸς δὲ δικαιοσύνης ἐν εἰρήνῃ σπείρεται τοῖς ποιοῦσιν εἰρήνην.”
(Ἰακώβου 3:18)*

*“And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”
(James 3:18)*

My beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

In recent days, the attention of the world has once again turned toward the Middle East. With profound relief and heartfelt thanksgiving, we learned the news of a ceasefire agreement and exchange of hostages, marking an end to the devastating bloodshed in the region. Coming as it does near the second anniversary of the tragic events of October 7,

2023, this development marks an initial yet decisive step toward what we fervently pray will lead to lasting peace in the Middle East. For this, I call upon all of our communities to lift our hearts in thanksgiving to the Almighty God.

We echo the words of the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, who recently declared: “In this spirit, we join with our fellow Christians and others of goodwill around the world in giving thanks to the Almighty for leading us to this auspicious moment, even as we realize that the work of peacebuilding has only just begun. May God grant us all the grace to rededicate ourselves to this vital task, shepherding us toward that golden age of peace so long envisioned by the prophets and sages of old—and for which our Lord Jesus Christ himself gave up his own life, rising to new life beyond the grave.”¹

Needless to say, the needs of the people remain immense. The call for humanitarian relief and reconstruction is urgent and undeniable. For this reason, in my new capacity as Chair of the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches, I have also called upon all humanitarian agencies within our member communions—including the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)—to renew and coordinate their efforts to bring relief and healing to Gaza. Moreover, I take this opportunity to highlight the Archdiocese’s collaboration with Churches for Middle East Peace through the [*Let Children Live*](#) campaign, which seeks to safeguard and uplift children in Gaza and the West Bank—innocent victims who bear the heaviest burdens of war.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As we welcome these seeds of peace with thanksgiving, let us remain steadfast in prayer and compassion. The suffering of the region is far from over, and the wounds of generations will not be healed overnight. Yet, as Orthodox Christians, we are called to be ministers of reconciliation and instruments of divine mercy. Let us, therefore, continue to pray and strive for a just and enduring peace, one that embraces all peoples of the Holy Land – Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike – so that harmony, justice, and mutual respect may prevail.

¹ <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/website-announcements/statement-on-the-recent-ceasefire-hopefully-signaling-the-end-of-the-gaza-war/>

May the Prince of Peace, our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us to be peacemakers and co-workers in His Kingdom.

With paternal love in the Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "to Elpidophoros".

† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America,
Chair of the Governing Board
National Council of Churches of Christ