



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

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**Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Sunday of the Parable of the Sower
Dedicated to Sunday School Teachers and Religious Educators**

October 12, 2025

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 Sacred Archdiocese of America:

Υμῖν δέδοται γνῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ (κατὰ Λουκᾶν 8:10)
Unto you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. (Luke 8:10)

Beloved brethren in the Lord,

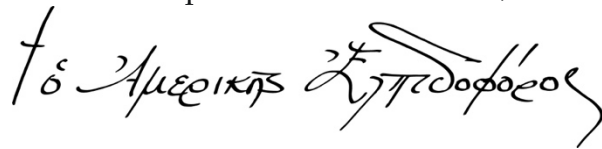
Today, we inaugurate a new celebration of a most vital portion of our Archdiocese here in America — our Sunday School Teachers and Religious Educators. Together with the Holy Eparchial Synod, we have selected the Fourth Sunday of Saint Luke, whose Gospel Reading is the Parable of Sower, which also happily concurs with the commencement of the Catechetical Year in the Church of Greece. This year, this Sunday coincides with the commemoration of the Sunday of the 350 Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, the bookend to the First Council in Nicaea, whose seventeen hundredth anniversary we are observing this year. And it is an auspicious sign that the Gospel reading for both occasions is exactly the same.

The Parable of the Sower is the ideal text to honor our Sunday School Teachers and Religious Educators. For they are the ones who provide catechesis to our communities, constantly casting the word-seeds of the Faith — *σπερματικοί λόγοι* —

which are the life-giving teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Very Logos of God, upon the good earth of our faithful people. Where the seed of the Divine Sower falls to the wayside, our teachers gather it up to redistribute it in the Middle Way, as per the commandment of Moses to the Children of Israel (cf. Deuteronomy 5:32-33). Where some has fallen in rocky places, our teachers work diligently to clear the land of the soul from all obstacles to the truth of the Gospel. And where some falls among the thorns of life, they strive to untangle our children and catechumens through patience, compassion and love. Indeed, their devotion to making all of us who are earthen vessels products of the “good earth” is to be admired and encouraged.

Therefore, my dear sisters and brothers, let us dedicate this Sunday to honoring and celebrating our Educators and Teachers who labor for the good of our communities by teaching in both word and deed. For they are truly worthy of our deepest gratitude. And let us work to establish models of ministry and teaching that are compatible with the lifestyles our people are living in the modern world, such that our pedagogy is comprehensible to our faithful and the mysteries of the Kingdom of God are revealed in their lives.

With paternal love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in Greek script, reading "Ὁ Ἀμερικᾶς Ἐλπίδοφορος", which translates to "The American Elpidophoros". The signature is written in a fluid, cursive style with dark ink.

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America