My Godfather was an archon, a "leader" within the community and the Greek Orthodox Church. He devoted his life to serving, both his fellow man and his Creator. In recognition of his commitment to bettering the quality of life and to preserving sacred traditions, he was designated an "Archon" by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and inducted into the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle with the title or "offikion" of Archon Depoutatos meaning "Patriarchal Summoner".

Archon Depoutatos is one of dozens of appellations based on ancient Greek and equally mystifying in sound denoting specific duties performed for Church and State by those exceptional citizens of the Byzantine Empire who were designated Archons. Among the responsibilities of Archon Depoutatos, for instance, were "to issue invitations to the Archons for audiences before the Patriarch and Bishops and to seat the congregants holding official titles and offices according to protocol."

My Godfather, a pious man, was one of some 800-900 Eastern Orthodox Christians from around the world (600 strong in the United States) who in recent years have been honored by the Mother Church with the highest accolade accorded a layman for exemplary dedication inside and outside the Church.

Archon. Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. St. Andrew, the Apostle. Offikion. Archon Depoutatos. Patriarchal Summoner. Mother Church. Among others, these terms, titles, institutions, and even Andrew, brother of St. Peter, are not altogether familiar to most Greek Orthodox parishioners in spite of the fact that Orthodox Christianity points to the year 33 A.D. as the Beginning. It is only recently that I have come to learn more about the Great Church of Christ, otherwise known as the Mother Church of Orthodoxy or the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the seat or see of our Christian Orthodox faith located in Istanbul, Turkey — yesteryear's Byzantium, "New Rome", Constantinople. In spite of relentless harassment through the centuries, the Patriarchate has upheld ecclesiastical and liturgical tradition and bound together the Greek people as no other force could have hoped to do.

It is only recently that I have learned something more about the Archons, the men who have been honored for their essential works in the private sector and for their generous contributions of time and money to the Church here, in the United States, and to the Mother Church, in Istanbul. I had never asked Godfather to tell me in any great detail about his role and responsibilities as Archon. I do know how very proud he was to serve as Archon. I do know that my Godmother, independently of my Godfather a most devout Christian and supporter of the Church, will continue to uphold the Faith. Now that I know more about the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle and the very important, indeed vital work it performs, I am so sorry that I cannot tell my nouno how proud I am that he was an Archon. He died last year, just as my interest in the Archons was awakening.

My interest developed through that of my husband, Michael Karras, who just about a year ago, asked Anastasios...
Manessis, Vice Commander of the Archons of the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle, to tell him all there was to know about the Order. Mr. Manessis spoke enthusiastically, devotedly. Little did Michael know that there was so very much to tell. The more involved Michael became, the more I, too, learned and wanted to learn. And, all the while, I remembered my Godfather.

Michael suggested that an interview be conducted and published so that many people could have the benefit of learning firsthand about the Order. Mr. Manessis suggested that Dr. Chris Philip, the Archon entrusted with the principal executive post within the Order, that of National Commander, be invited to answer our questions. Dr. Philip graciously accepted the invitation. It took many months for us all to get together, but we did, in the final days of September, 1991.

In the meantime, several events of historic magnitude took place and garnered worldwide interest in the Christian Orthodox Church, principal among them the arrival in the United States of His All Holiness Dimitrios I in July, 1990, which was his first official and, as it was to be, only visit to the western hemisphere, restricted as he had been by the government of Turkey with respect to his travels. Suddenly many questions were being asked: Why did Turkey continue to have so decisive a role in 1990, which was his first official and, as it was to be, only visit to the western hemisphere, restricted as he had been by the government of Turkey with respect to his travels. Suddenly many questions were being asked: Why did Turkey continue to have so decisive a role in

A number of sources offered valuable information with respect to the history of the Patriarchate, a little bit of which must be understood in order to appreciate the highly important work of the Archons. Of these, I wish to acknowledge an excellent and most engaging study, A Short History of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: First Among Equals in the Orthodox Church, written by Deno J. Geanakoplos (Archon Didaskalos Tou Genous, "Teacher of the People"), Professor of Byzantine History and Orthodox Church History, Yale University. As one can imagine, the Patriarchate has lived a long and often difficult life. It all began just following the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In spite of the warnings of its pagan emperors who banned Christianity, the Apostles traveled throughout the Roman Empire to spread the word. Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome, the city which would become the first among the world's Christian sees. Peter's brother, the Apostle Andrew, concentrated his efforts in the East — in what we know of today as Greece, southern Russia, and Istanbul. Andrew was crucified in Patras by a pagan Roman general, but not before he had laid the cornerstone of the Christian Orthodox Church and its center in Byzantium.

Byzantium was christened Constantinople by the first Christian Emperor, Constantine the Great, in the year 330, nearly three centuries following the death of the Apostle Andrew. The Byzantine Empire was declining. By the 5th century there were five important centers of Christianity: Rome, where Latin continued to be spoken; and Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, where Greek reigned. In the 6th century the Patriarchate of Constantinople became know as the "Ecumenical" Patriarchate, thereby more accurately expressing its spiritual authority over world Orthodoxy. By the 8th century, Islamic Arabs besieged Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, leaving only Rome and Constantinople to fend for Christianity.

From 726-843, a weary 107 years, Constantinople faced another threat: iconoclasm. Iconoclasts sought to destroy the icons of the church because, they argued, the icons were being worshipped as idols, not venerated, as they should be, as representations of Christ, the Virgin, the Saints. Some historians believe that the real reason why the iconoclasts raged on and on had nothing to do with icons and everything to do with the "chief protectors of the icons", the monks, who were exempt from paying taxes and military duty. If there were no icons to care for, these able men could serve the Empire more "usefully".

In the end, the iconoclasts did not have their way. To this day, the first Sunday of Lent celebrates the Victory of the icon and is set aside as the Feast of Orthodoxy or Sunday of Orthodoxy or Procession of the Holy Icons.

From 843 up to the 11th century, the Byzantine Empire thrived and with it so, too, did the Patriarchate and its magnificent cathedral church, Hagia Sophia (the "Great Church of Holy Wisdom"), which had also been named by Constantine the Great. In the year 988 envos of Prince Vladimir the Great of Russia, dispatched to Constantiople to consider Orthodoxy as a possible religion to be adopted by the Russian people, reported to their sovereign that, so in awe were they of Hagia Sophia and the mystical Greek Orthodox Liturgy, they believed they were in "Heaven itself". In 989 Prince Vladimir converted to Orthodoxy.

By the 11th century, the Byzantine Empire's strength, its power, its glory began to fade. The West continually exerted pressure on the East, tensions
between Pope and Patriarch increased, theological and liturgical differences grew. In 1054 the "definitive schism" between the churches of Rome and Constantinople occurred. (At the initiative largely of the late Patriarch Athenagoras, the "mutual excommunications" of 1054 were lifted on December 7, 1965 by Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI, who had met in Jerusalem the year before. This meeting was the first between Pope and Patriarch in 500 years. Patriarch Athenagoras's dream of uniting the two Churches never came to be, however.)

Constantinople was ravaged in 1204 by Crusader armies of the West on their way to recapture Jerusalem from the Muslims, but, in 1261, with Emperor Michael Paleologos in control, Constantinople was recovered. Not for long, however. Pressure from the greatest enemy of the Byzantines, the Ottoman Turks of Asia, was overpowering. By 1300 little remained of the Byzantine Empire, only Constantinople, Greece, Macedonia, Thrace, and a portion of Asia Minor. When the Pope offered to help the Patriarch against the Turks only if the Greeks accepted the Pope as head of their Church, the Byzantine people said no.

In 1453 Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks, and Constantine Paleologos, the last Greek Emperor, died fighting the invaders. Hagia Sophia, the "jewel" of Constantinople, the finest symbol of the power of Orthodoxy and the Byzantine Empire, was turned into a Turkish mosque. (In 1935, Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the state of Turkey, decreed that Hagia Sophia be converted into a museum. Aside from its immense presence, very little of its former glory remains.) None the less, the Patriarchate continued, but Patriarchs were deposed of at the whim of the Sultans. In spite of endless pressure, the Patriarchs refused to succumb to their conquerors and worked harder than ever to preserve Orthodoxy's liturgical and ecclesiastical traditions and to keep alive the sense of Hellenic identity among the Greeks, of Constantinople and everywhere. It was this strong ethnicity that inspired a man of the cloth, Paleon Patron Germanos, a Greek bishop of Kalavryta, to raise a flag bearing a cross and declare revolution. The year was 1821. The Greek War of Independence began.

The new nation of Hellas was enthusiastically supported by the Patriarchate. The Turkish state emerged in 1921, and Constantinople was renamed Istanbul. In 1923 the Treaty of Lausanne, entered into by Greece, Turkey, France, England, Italy, and the United States, called for the expulsion of all Greeks from Asia Minor, with the exception of Constantinople, and all the Turks from Greece, with the exception of western Thrace. Also, the Treaty guaranteed the unrestricted presence of the Patriarchate in its birthplace. In 1955 the Greek community of Constantinople, numbering some 100,000, was attacked. In 1972 the theological school established by the Patriarchate at Halki was permanently closed by the Turks. Just a few months ago, in June 1991, Turkish extremists barricaded the Patriarchate for several days. Harassment, in one form or another, has never subsided. Today there are only about 2,000 Greeks residing in Istanbul. The 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus has further broken down relations between the governments of Greece and Turkey.

Nearly 2,000 years after its establishment, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople continues as the "first among equals" among Orthodox Churches and the Ecumenical Patriarch is the first among the five hierarchs of the Orthodox Church. The Mother Church of Orthodoxy continues to have spiritual primacy over fourteen self-governing churches, including those of Greece, Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania. But, in order for the Ecumenical Patriarchate to function effectively, it needs the world's attention. It also needs, desperately, the Defender of the Faith, the Archons of the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle, whose devoted service and financial support are more crucial today than perhaps ever before.

What does the term "archon" mean?

Dr. Chris Philip: The term "archon" actually has its roots in ancient Greece. (The verb archo, from which "archon" is derived, means "I am the first", the leader.) In The Exploits of Alexander the Great, members of Alexander's elite guard are referred to as his "companions" and the leaders of this guard, the presiding officers, as "Archons". At that time, the term "archon" had not yet acquired its religious significance. During the Byzantine period the Patriarch and the Emperor sat side by side. The Emperor had his elite guard and the Patriarch had his, the Archons. Now, Archon takes on religious significance. Each Archon has specific responsibilities to perform in the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia. The Archon's role was then, as it is still, significant.

The "offikion" of Archon is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a
lay person of the Orthodox faith. When he has received this title he automatically becomes a member of the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle. Each title assigned has certain prescribed duties. The title designated depends on the profession of the individual. For example, I am Archon Aktouarios. Those in the health profession are usually known as Aktouarios. (In the last centuries of the Byzantine Empire, “Aktouarios”, which means “Recorder of the Court,” came to be known as “Court Physician”).

Mr. Anastasios Manessis: I am Archon Depoutatos, which refers to those in the political and business professions.

Do you find yourselves on a mission?

Dr. C.P. The word “Archon” is not just an historical notation. It is something living, symbolical of what we were at one time. In the words of His Eminence, Archbishop Iakovos: “The ancient titles of Archons of the Great Church of Christ are committed in conscience and purpose to the welfare and needs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.” Another part of our job, in addition to supporting the institutions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, is to spread the Word, to enlighten the Eastern Orthodox faithful — approximately 300 million worldwide — and the public at large, and the Greek-American community throughout the United States, throughout North and South America. Years ago very few people knew what an Archon stood for. Twenty years ago, if the average person were asked, who is the Patriarch?, I doubt he would have known. What is the Ecumenical Patriarchate? Very few knew. Within the last twenty years, the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle has accomplished a great deal in this respect.

A.M. Our primary objective, how-

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however, is to support the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its institutions, as well as the Church here in the Americas which is, of course, part of the Patriarchate.

Dr. C.P. We are referred to as the Defenders of the Faith, defending against any attacks, verbal and physical, but we are also Perpetuators of the Faith.

We stress the necessity never to break ties with the Mother Church or the Great Church of Christ. That's extremely important. Once we break the tie between the Great Church of Christ and here, then we become like another pentecostal church. We have too rich a religious heritage to break this tie.

What are examples of the “institutions” of the Ecumenical Patriarchate?

Dr. C.P. Among the institutions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate are Balukli Hospital, to which we send supplies, equipment, money. Throughout the years many people of our ethnic background and religion have been treated there. There is also a nursing home and an orphanage.

In addition, we are supporters of Hellenic College. In 1987 we produced and distributed a videotape entitled “In Wisdom Let Us Attend”, in English and in Greek, tracing the history of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the historic visit of His All Holiness Dimitrios I to the Vatican. Its purpose is to inform all denominations and faiths as to the significance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Within the last three or four years we have allocated almost half a million dollars to various projects.

The Archdiocese through the efforts of His Eminence, Archbishop Iakovos, along with the support of the Order of St. Andrew and the financial donation of the Panayiotes Angelopoulos family were behind the very successful diplomatic trip to Turkey of former President Jimmy Carter. As a consequence, the Patriarchal facilities, damaged by fire in 1940, were finally rebuilt.

How does one become an Archon?

Dr. C.P. Within the individual parish, Archons single out an individual whom they feel has rendered years of dedicated service and has unselfishly donated money to his individual parish, to the National Church (the Archdio-

**Procession of the Icons. M.S. Ambassador Micheal Sotirhos and fellow Archons, Holy Trinity Cathedral, New York City.**

cese), and to the Mother Church. Of course, his character must be beyond reproach. A confidential report or what we call the “Credential Form” is filled out by both the priest of the parish and the Regional Commander of the Order. After the Regional Commander signs, the Bishop of the diocese must also sign. Then this Credential form is sent to the National Office, located at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in New York City, where it is reviewed by the National Council and, then, forwarded to the Archbishop. The decision of the National Council must be unanimous; otherwise, the Credential Form never reaches the Archbishop.

A.M. This strict procedure went into effect recently, although we always have had a selection process. But as the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle grew and became more organized, the National Council augmented this selection procedure.

Dr. C.P. The individual doesn’t know, or rather he is not supposed to know, that he is being considered. The whole process is one of confidentiality. The individual’s name is then sent by the Archbishop to the Patriarchate, which gives the final approval to bestow upon the candidate the offikion of Archon. All candidates, no matter where they live, arrive in New York City to receive the offikion at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Trinity on the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

Being an Archon is the equivalent of being elected to the Hall of Fame, with one difference: when you’re selected, the most important consideration is not only what you have done or what you are now doing, but, rather, what your potential is.

A.M. The parallel equivalent of the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle in the Catholic Church is the Knights of Malta.

Dr. C.P. Ours is a much older, more historical order, however. In the 1960s it was decreed that the Archons of the United States should organize. There is more strength in numbers. The organization was referred to as the Knights of St. Andrew and the first National Commander was Pierre Austin DeMets (Archon Megas Skevophylax, “The Grand Sacristan,”) a Greek-born Chicag­

goan, who was a respected businessman and philanthropist. The National Council decided to change the name of this organization to the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle. Dr. Anthony G.B. Borden, Greek-born and educated, served as National Commander for 16 to 17 years until he retired. American-born of Greek parents, I am
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tης Greek-American
REVIEW

ΟΙΚΟΓΕΝΕΙΑ ΜΑΚΡΙΑ
PETER, CATHERINE, STEPHANIE, OLGA

Κι εφέτος, δεν θα στείλουμε Χριστούγεννατικές κάρτες στους πολυπληθείς φίλους μας. Το αντίτιμο των καρτών, όπως και πέρισσον, το ταχυδρομήσαμε στο

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The late John S. Linakis, addressing the general assembly of Archons during the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

The third National Commander. During the term of office of Commander Emeritus Dr. Anthony G.B. Borden, a national Council of Archons was formed in order to provide more organized leadership. The Commander is appointed by His Eminence and all other executive officers are elected by the National Council and approved by the Archbishop.

A.M. Regional and State Commanders are appointed by the National Commander.

Dr. C.P. We try to distribute responsibilities geographically to those whom we call the Regional Commanders within a diocese district. Within each state of that diocese there is a State Commander.

The National Council meets monthly at the Archdiocese. The Council consists of Archons from a wide geographic distribution. Archons from throughout the Western hemisphere attend our annual meeting, Saturday night banquet, and the church services on the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

Each year since 1986 we bestow the Athenagoras Humanitarian Award on one individual or an organization for outstanding contributions toward religious freedom and protection of human rights. This award is presented at the Saturday night banquet. Our past honorees have been: Archbishop Iakovos, in 1986; former president Jimmy Carter; Mother Teresa; Dr. Anthony G.B. Borden; Dr. John Brademas; and Andrew Athens. In March of 1992 we will be honoring the National Philoptochos Society.

Does the Archbishop intervene in your activities?

Dr. C.P. The Archbishop is our spiritual leader. He is the Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. If we feel that we need advice and counseling, we will seek his help. He doesn’t tell us what we must do. Ours is an independent relationship. If we feel we have a problem and need his assistance in terms of the wisdom he can provide, we will go to His Eminence. Despite his very hectic schedule, he always takes the time to see and advise us.

What do the Archons contribute to the Greek-American Community?

Dr. C.P. When an Archon is selected, he is selected not only for the service he has given to the Church, but because he is a leader in the community. He has already established himself as someone people can look up to. In today’s society, you know and I know that one of the big problems of other ethnic groups is one of identity crisis. As a consequence of our rich historical and religious heritage, we don’t have this type of problem. When distinguished leaders in the private sector, in business, politics, the professions, as well as academia, also distinguish themselves in the Church, the effect on all of us is beneficial.

A.M. A classical example is John S. Linakis, who was equally involved in the community, in politics, and in the church. He gave of himself as few individuals do. He was a role model for all, a true embodiment of the term Archon.

Dr. C.P: Others are Dr. Anthony G.B. Borden (Archon Megas Aktouarios), Commander Emeritus of the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle and renowned radiologist (“Megas” denotes an office that has a supervisory responsibility); former U.S. Congressman and New York University President John Brademas (Archon Megas Hatzophylax, “The Grand Archivist”); U.S. Ambassador to Greece, His Excellency Michael Sotirhos (Archon Depoutatos); Senator Paul S. Sarbanes (Archon Megas Logothetis, “The Grand Deputy”) and Andrew Athens (Archon Maestor), National Chairman of the United Hellenic American Congress and a life member of the Archdiocesan Council, the highest office a lay person can hold in the Greek Orthodox faith, who presently serves on the National Council and as a Regional Commander.

You each wear a distinctive rosette. Is that the cross of St. Andrew?

Dr. C.P: It is. Archons are also given a silver cross with semi-precious stones recreating the cross of Emperor Justin, a 5th century Byzantine design, and a breast pocket Byzantine double eagle with the Greek words “Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate” embroidered on it.

Can a humble, uneducated, underprivileged man, but a good man, become an Archon?

Dr. C.P: Yes. But, you must understand that an Archon must be a leader in the community besides being devoted and dedicated to the Church. If he's not a leader in the community, it will be rather difficult for him to become an
Archon. Education is not a criterion, nor is financial wealth. There are many individuals who have devoted so much time to the Church, but they never become Archons because they are not leaders of the community. However when I look upon these individuals whose piouness is greater than mine, there’s a certain amount of admiration that I have for them. I put them on a pedestal, not myself.

People “on the outside” may feel that an Archon is spiritually a level or two higher than the rest. Are they justified?

Dr. C.P.: I don’t feel any different or any greater than any Christian. We are not on a higher plateau than any other churchgoer. We are all Christians of the Orthodox faith and we all endeavor to serve Him as best we can.

Does an Archon feel a greater sense of responsibility?

Dr. C.P.: The process of becoming a true leader happens slowly, insidiously, without you even knowing it. So, when you have reached that particular stage, you don’t consciously say, Look what I have done. It’s been done and you have been designated as such, a leader. You don’t feel any different.

A.M.: When the offikion is bestowed, however, that person has a certain responsibility toward the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the church here, in the Americas. With the title comes more responsibility.

Dr. C.P.: Being an Archon is an awesome responsibility because that responsibility to the offikion will remain with the Archon for the remainder of his life.

Aside from your support of the Patriarchate, what makes you, the Archons, distinct from other organizations within the Greek-American community?

Dr. C.P.: I don’t think there’s anything that should separate us from any other organization. I think we’re all working for the whole, we’re just a part of the whole. We are not on any higher level than any other organization, such as the National Philoptochos Society. They perform their task for the church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and we perform ours. The only difference is one of history, regarding the term “Archon” and how far back it goes.

How connected are you to the Greek-American community?

A.M.: We are an integral part of the Greek-American Community.

Dr. C.P.: When Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974, the response of the Greek-American community was fantastic. And it still is. Greek-Americans have worked tirelessly to find a solution to this tragic situation.

A.M.: Greek-American political influence is very strong in this country.

Dr. C.P.: Problems that may unfortunately confront us as Archons are, for instance, the latest siege of the Patriarchate in Constantinople by Turkish extremists who barricaded the Patriarchate (September 1991). The day I received notification of this action, I sent a telegram condemning it to both President Bush and Secretary of State Dick Cheney. As a result, we held an emergency meeting and sent out a packet of information to all the Archons and asked them to contact their Congressmen to condemn this insurgence on the Patriarchate.

A.M.: The reason why the Turkish government insists that the Patriarch be a Turkish citizen and why it has veto power over selection of the Patriarch goes back to 1923 and the Treaty of Lausanne. The Turkish government viewed the Patriarchate not as Patriarchate but as a diocese of Constantinople. This is unfortunate, but this is the reality.

What is the future of the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle?

Dr. C.P.: The strength of the Archons we select will eventually determine the strength of the bond between here and the Mother Church.

What message would you like to pass on to today’s Greek-American youth?

Dr. C.P.: I sincerely hope that we as Archons can serve as role models for these young Greek-Americans. We would like to be the type of people they can look up to and emulate. We must show them that a meaningful life is much more than the accumulation of material goods. A meaningful life means total involvement in family, in community, and in Church activities. And total involvement means giving generously, unselfishly of oneself. There is no other way to achieve total happiness.

In his speech delivered last year at the Washington, D.C. luncheon hosted by the Archons in honor of His All Holiness Dimitrios I and his long awaited visit to America, coinciding with the meeting of the Clergy-Laity Congress, Dr. Chris Philip spoke eloquently about the great strides made by his Eminence Archbishop Iakovos in perpetuating the Faith and the promise of the Archons to continue to defend the Faith. Appropriately, then, I conclude this story about the Archons — which I would very much like to dedicate to the memory of my beloved Godfather, Archon Depoutatios John S. Linakis — with the words of the National Commander of the Archons of the Order of St. Andrew, the Apostle, Dr. Chris Philip. But not before I express my own deepest hope that our Faith be everlasting.

... Through the wisdom, visionary acumen and tireless efforts of Archbishop Iakovos, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Americas, the authorities of this government have recognized the established fact that the Eastern Orthodox faith in our country is indeed a major faith. This is one of many significant accomplishments of His Eminence.

As Archons of the Order of St. Andrew, we vow to continue our efforts in helping the holy mission of the spiritual leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for all Orthodoxy with devotion, dignity and integrity. From coast to coast, we are united as one body, as one voice, committed to serve the Great Church of Christ. We are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices to fulfill our solemn obligation as Defenders of the Faith. Our traditions are sacred to us and we will not tolerate any attack upon the Mother Church. This is our commitment, this is our promise, this is our destiny. . . .