

PATRIARCHAL ENCYCLICAL  
FOR THE FEAST OF THE HOLY PHYSICIANS

From ancient Christianity to modern times, doctors, nurses, and specialist healers, as well as other simple and conscientious faithful Christians have served “those in illness and suffering” by tangibly expressing God’s love for mankind, after the example and in the image of Christ.

A number of these were distinguished for their holiness, which the Church has recognized by officially canonizing them and including them to its Calendar of Saints. Many of them were physicians, while several others founded hospitals and philanthropic institutions, ministering the sick with humble dedication and meekness. Not only did they have excellent medical knowledge and skills, but they were additionally imbued by the sacrificial love of the Crucified Savior and profoundly grounded in the reality of the Church as the Body of Christ. In this way, medicine and philanthropy were consonant with the medical science of their age, but at the same time consistently incorporated in the ecclesial event.

As bearers of divine grace and imitators of the God-man Christ, who sanctified and renewed all creation through His incarnation, the objective of their endeavors was to introduce the fallen nature of humankind to the new creation by jointly healing body and soul, thereby demonstrating the value of human existence as a psychosomatic unity, but also the mutual unity between God and humanity. As preachers of truth, these Holy Physicians and Philanthropists understood that, in order for every human being to be healed, all the created world must be restored and integrated. Their philanthropy comprised an expression of the divine hospitality of the Father, who gathers His children under His bosom, the Church, the Hostel of mercy and joy. For the consolation, support and welfare of their patients, they intercede to the Great Physician and Loving God for the healing of our souls and bodies.

In the anguish, fear, pain and sorrow that emerged as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the eyes of the faithful are turned toward these Saints with their healing gifts. These Saints constitute the special anchor and example for doctors, nurses and all those serving in the medical field, who throughout the pandemic have offered extraordinary

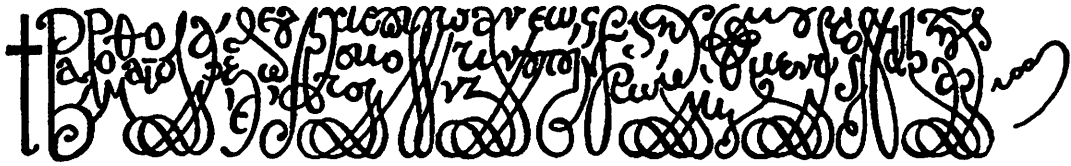
efforts in order to save lives and provide care, treatment and relief to their fellow human beings who were suffering.

The pandemic revealed the vulnerable dimension of human nature, the prevailing imbalance in the natural environment as a result of greed, the existing division and conflict within the wider society, as well as the tensions within the Church itself. It compelled us to reflect on the way we live out our faith before the tragic threat of death, the loss of our loved ones, and the loneliness created by illness and mourning. It directed us to seek the grace of our loving God through the assistance and intercession of the Saints. Moreover, the pandemic brought to the surface the authentic meaning of philanthropy, the need for collaboration and coordination of all social actors, as well as the mandatory cooperation between Church and medical science. Indeed, the pandemic highlighted eminent individuals in the field of medicine and health care, who, as the Saints, exercised their profession and afforded care and support to the sick, contributed their services with self-sacrifice and tenderness, surpassing human standards under difficult circumstances, in order to confront the multidimensional consequences of this health crisis.

Bearing all these things in mind, our Holy and Sacred Synod decided to establish the Sunday closest to October 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> each year (when we commemorate the Synaxis of the Holy Unmercenary Healers and the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke the Doctor) as the day of the *Synaxis of all the Holy Physicians* as an appreciation for the essential contribution of the medical science and its ministers toward humanity.

Beloved doctors and healers, we congratulate you for your invaluable service and thank you paternally, praying that the Lord God may support and strengthen you in your blessed work. We encourage you to show sincere love and compassion, to honor one another and cultivate earnest faith "serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, being patient in tribulation, remaining constant in prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, and practicing hospitality" (Rm 12.9-15) so that through you the Holy Trinity and Giver of all good things may be glorified.

September 28, 2021  
Ἐπισημοποιεῖται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁγίας καὶ ἁγιωτάτης Συνόδου τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος  
Ἡμερομηνία: 28 Σεπτεμβρίου 2021



ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ  
ΔΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΕΟΡΤΗΝ ΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΙΑΤΡΩΝ

Από τῆς χριστιανικῆς ἀρχαιότητος μέχρι τῶν νεωτέρων χρόνων, ἰατροί, νοσηλευταί, ἐξειδικευμένοι θεραπευταί καί πολλοί ἄλλοι ἀπλοῖ καί εὐσυνείδητοι Χριστιανοί διηκόνησαν τούς «ἐν ἀσθενείαις κατακειμένους καί ἐν θλίψεσιν ὄντας», ἐκφράζοντες ἐμπράκτως, ὡς τύπος καί εἰκὼν Χριστοῦ, τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Ἀρκετοὶ διεκρίθησαν διὰ τὴν ἀγιότητά των, τὴν ὁποῖαν ἀνεγνώρισεν ἡ Ἐκκλησία, κατατάξασα αὐτούς ἐπισήμως εἰς τὸ ἑορτολόγιόν της. Πολλοὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἦσαν ἰατροί, ἐνῶ δὲν εἶναι ὀλίγοι ὅσοι ἴδρυσαν νοσοκομεῖα καί φιλανθρωπικά καταστήματα, διακονοῦντες τούς ἀρρώστους, μὲ ταπεινὴν ἀφοσίωσιν καί πραότητα. Ὅμως, δὲν κατεῖχον μόνον ἀρίστας ἰατρικὰς γνώσεις καί ἰκανότητας, ἀλλὰ ἐπὶ πλέον ἦσαν διαποτισμένοι μὲ τὴν θυσιαστικὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ Ἐσταυρωμένου Σωτῆρος καί βαθέως τεθεμελιωμένοι εἰς τὸ γεγονός τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὡς Σώματος Χριστοῦ. Τοιοῦτοτρόπως, ἡ ἰατρικὴ καί ἡ φιλανθρωπία ἦσαν σύμφωνοι μὲ τὴν ἰατρικὴν ἐπιστήμην τῆς ἐποχῆς των, ἀλλὰ ἦσαν ἐν ταυτῷ ἀρμονικῶς ἐντεταγμένοι καί εἰς τὸ ἐκκλησιαστικόν γεγονός.

Ὡς φορεῖς τῆς Θείας Χάριτος καί μιμηταί τοῦ Θεανθρώπου Χριστοῦ, ὁ Ὅποιος καθηγίασε καί ἀνεκαίνισεν ὅλην τὴν δημιουργίαν μὲ τὴν ἐνσάρκωσίν Του, εἶχον ὡς ἀντικείμενον τῆς προσπαθείας των τὴν εἴσοδον τοῦ πεπτωκότος ἀνθρώπου εἰς τὴν καινὴν κτίσιν, μὲ ἀπὸ κοινοῦ θεραπείαν σώματος καί ψυχῆς, δηλοῦντες μὲ αὐτόν τὸν τρόπον τὴν ἀξίαν τῆς ὑποστάσεως τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὡς ψυχοσωματικῆς ἐνότητος, ἀλλὰ καί τὴν ἀμοιβαίαν ἐνότητα μεταξύ Θεοῦ καί ἀνθρώπου. Ὡς κήρυκες τῆς ἀληθείας, οἱ Ἅγιοι αὐτοὶ Ἰατροὶ καί Φιλάνθρωποι ἐγνώριζον ὅτι, διὰ νὰ θεραπευθῇ ὁ κάθε ἄνθρωπος, ὅλος ὁ κτιστός κόσμος πρέπει νὰ ἀνακαινισθῇ καί νὰ ἐνωθῇ. Ἡ δὲ φιλανθρωπία των ἀπετέλει ἐκφρασιν τῆς Θείας Φιλοξενίας τοῦ Πατρός, ὁ ὁποῖος συγκεντρώνει τὰ τέκνα Του εἰς τούς κόλπους Του, εἰς τὸ Πανδοχεῖον τοῦ ἐλέους καί τῆς χαρᾶς, εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν. Ὡς παρηγορία, ἀντίληψις καί βοήθεια πολλῶν, αὐτοὶ μεσιτεύουν πρὸς τὸν Μέγαν Ἰατρόν καί Φιλάνθρωπον Θεόν ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑγείας τῶν ψυχῶν καί τῶν σωμάτων ἡμῶν.

Μέσα εἰς τὴν ἀγωνίαν, τὸν φόβον, τὸν πόνον καί τὴ θλίψιν τῆς πανδημίας τοῦ κορωνοϊοῦ, τὰ ὄμματα τῶν πιστῶν εἶναι ἐστραμμένα πρὸς αὐτούς τούς Ἅγίους, τούς ἔχοντας χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων. Αὐτοὶ εἶναι καί τὸ ἰδιαίτερον στήριγμα καί παράδειγμα τῶν ἰατρῶν, τῶν νοσηλευτῶν καί πάντων τῶν διακονούντων ἐν τῷ χώρῳ τῆς ὑγείας, οἱ ὅποιοι, καθ' ὅλην τὴν διάρκειαν τῆς πανδημίας ἔχουν καταβάλλει ὑπερανθρώπους προσπάθειας διὰ νὰ σώσουν ζωὰς καί νὰ παράσχουν φροντίδα, περίθαλψιν καί ἀνακούφισιν εἰς τούς ἐμπεριστάτους συνανθρώπους των.

Ἡ πανδημία ἔφερεν εἰς τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν τὴν εὐθραυστον πλευράν τῆς φύσεως τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τὴν ἀνισορροπίαν ἢ ὁποία ὑπάρχει εἰς τὸ φυσικόν περιβάλλον λόγῳ τῆς πλεονεξίας μας, τὴν διάσπασιν καὶ διχόνοιαν πού ὑπάρχει εἰς τὴν εὐρύτεραν κοινωνίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἐντάσεις εἰς τοὺς κόλπους τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Μᾶς ἠνάγκασε νὰ ἀναλογισθῶμεν τὸ πῶς βιοῦμεν τὴν πίστιν μας ἐνώπιον τῆς τραγικῆς ἀπειλῆς τοῦ θανάτου, τῆς ἀπωλείας τῶν ἠγαπημένων μας καὶ τῆς μοναξιάς πού ἐνυπάρχει εἰς τὴν ἀσθένειαν καὶ τὸ πένθος. Μᾶς ὠδήγησεν εἰς τὸ νὰ ἀναζητήσωμεν, μέ τὴν βοήθειαν καὶ τὴ μεσιτείαν τῶν Ἁγίων, τὴν χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης. Συνάμα, ἡ πανδημία ἔφερεν εἰς τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν τὴν πραγματικὴν ἔννοιαν τῆς φιλανθρωπίας· τὴν ἀνάγκην διὰ συσπείρωσιν καὶ συντονισμόν ὅλων τῶν φορέων τῆς κοινωνίας· τὴν ἀπαραίτητον συνεργασίαν μεταξὺ Ἐκκλησίας καὶ ἰατρικῆς ἐπιστήμης. Εἰς τὴν πανδημίαν ἀνεδείχθησαν λαμπραὶ προσωπικότητες εἰς τὸν ἰατρονοσηλευτικόν χῶρον, αἵτινες ὡς οἱ Ἅγιοι, οἱ ὁποῖοι ἐξήσκουν τὴν ἰατρικὴν ἐπιστήμην καὶ παρεῖχον φροντίδα καὶ συμπράσασιν εἰς τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς, προσέφερον τὰς ὑπηρεσίας των μέ αὐτοθυσίαν καὶ στοργήν, ὑπερβαίνοντες τὸ ἀνθρώπινον μέτρον ὑπὸ δυσκόλους συνθήκας, διὰ νὰ ἀντιμετωπισθοῦν αἱ πολυδιάστατοι συνέπειαι τῆς ὑγειονομικῆς κρίσεως.

Λαμβάνουσα πάντα ταῦτα ὑπ' ὄψιν της, ἡ περὶ ἡμᾶς Ἁγία καὶ Ἱερά Σύνοδος ἀπεφάσισε νὰ καθιερωθῇ ἡ πλησιεστέρα πρὸς τὴν 17ην καὶ τὴν 18ην Οκτωβρίου ἐκάστου ἔτους (Σύναξις τῶν Ἁγίων Αναργύρων καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀποστόλου καὶ Εὐαγγελιστοῦ Λουκᾶ τοῦ Ἰατροῦ) Κυριακή, ὡς ἡμέρα τῆς *Συνάξεως πάντων τῶν Ἁγίων Ἰατρῶν*, καὶ οὕτω νὰ ἐκτιμηθῇ ἡ οὐσιαστικὴ προσφορά τῆς ἰατρικῆς ἐπιστήμης καὶ τῶν θεραπόντων της πρὸς τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα.

Συγχαίροντες ὑμῖν διὰ τὴν πολῦτιμον συμβολήν σας, ἀγαπητοὶ ἰατροὶ καὶ θεραπευταί, πατρικῶς σᾶς εὐχαριστοῦμεν καὶ δεόμεθα, ὅπως Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς στηρίξῃ καὶ ἐνδυναμώσῃ ὑμᾶς εἰς τὸ εὐλογημένον ἔργον σας. Σᾶς ἐνθαρρύνομεν νὰ ἔχετε ἀγάπην ἀνυπόκριτον, νὰ εἴσθε φιλόστοργοι, νὰ τιμᾶ ὁ εἷς τὸν ἄλλον, νὰ καλλιεργῆτε φλογεράν πίστιν, «τῷ Κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες, τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες, τῇ θλίψει ὑπομένοντες, τῇ προσευχῇ προσκατεροῦντες, ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων κοινωνοῦντες, τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες» (Ρωμ. 12:9-15), ὥστε νὰ δοξάζεται δι' ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν Τριάδι Θεός, ὁ Δοτὴρ παντός ἀγαθοῦ.

Γ.βκα' Σεπτεμβρίου κη'

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