



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

June 30, 2009

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS` REFLECTIONS ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

"Where liberty dwells, there is my country."

~Benjamin Franklin

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

On Saturday, we will commemorate Independence Day, because it was on July 4, 1776, that the final draft of the Declaration of Independence was adopted. The Declaration was read publically in various American cities, and whenever they heard it, American patriots responded with cheers and celebrations. Since that day, the philosophy and ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence have inspired freedom-loving people all over the world with the words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Of course, along with our fellow Americans, we will celebrate this important day as a holiday, with picnics and fireworks and music, but more importantly we should also pause a moment to give thanks and praise for God`s great gift of true freedom that we as Greek-Americans hold so near and dear to our hearts. As Christians, we are blessed to enjoy "the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). As Greek Orthodox Christians and citizens of this great

country, we cherish our common dedication to freedom, equality and the rule of law.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will enlighten us and guide us to use the gift of freedom in the service of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for the good of our fellow man. May Almighty God bless us and keep us free of tyranny and oppression so that we may live in liberty, prosperity, and peace, and may our celebration of Independence Day be a beacon of hope for all the oppressed and enslaved peoples around the world.