



Department of Justice

REMARKS

BY

HONORABLE WILLIAM P. ROGERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

Prepared for Delivery

at

The Testimonial Dinner

Honoring

Archbishop James

Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church

Waldorf Astoria Hotel

New York, New York

Wednesday, April 1, 1959

Your Eminence, Archbishop James; Reverend Clergy; Mr. Ambassador;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great privilege to attend this testimonial dinner and to extend my warmest greetings to Archbishop James, the new Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church. Eminent churchmen and others here this evening, who are well qualified fully to appreciate his work, have emphasized his extraordinary qualifications that prompted his election to this new position. The presence here tonight of so many prominent leaders of different faiths and different backgrounds is itself a most impressive demonstration of the deep respect that is felt for Archbishop James and for the Church which has given him such awesome new responsibilities -- responsibilities which include the leadership and spiritual guidance of more than seven million people in North and South America.

The Greek Orthodox Church is recognized today as one of the major faiths in our country. It is an old and venerable church. Dating from the very birth of Christianity, it has survived, with its tradition and sacredness intact, through twenty centuries of every trial and tribulation known to man.

You will recall that President Eisenhower, as a gesture of recognition and to indicate his great respect for the great contributions and services of this Church in the United States, invited the late Archbishop Michael to be present at his inauguration and later to offer a prayer at his second inaugural. The President has not only worshipped at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saint Sophia, but laid the cornerstone for that most beautiful edifice in Washington.

All who attended, I am sure, were deeply moved by the impressive and colorful enthronement ceremonies at Holy Trinity Cathedral this morning -- a striking reminder that the American people are a devoutly religious people and that we are one in our belief in God.

As an official daily concerned with the administration of justice, I am particularly impressed and pleased by Archbishop James' great interest in working with young people. To meet him is to understand why his Sunday School, in Boston, became the largest in the Archdiocese. He has also been a strong supporter of the youth movement which culminated in the highly successful Greek Orthodox Youth of America. But his work with youngsters has not been confined exclusively to activities of the Church as such. I am told that, as time permits, he can also be found on the baseball diamond.

It is of the utmost importance that our churches play an active role in the development of our youth so that they become responsible, decent citizens. In the Department of Justice, we have all too frequent contact with youngsters who have gotten into trouble with the law. One of the most disturbing developments is the steady rise in the major crimes committed by young people. Almost one-half of the arrests for major crimes in the United States are of persons under 18 years of age. Almost 3 percent of our youth are involved.

Plainly, there has been some failure properly to inculcate many of our young people with a sense of moral and religious values. Yet, these values are at the very core of a free society which seeks to make meaningful individual rights and liberties. We can never over-emphasize the importance of work, such as that undertaken by Archbishop James, which seeks to instill in our youth a greater appreciation of the significance and true meaning of religion and the role of our churches in our way of life.

It is often said that we are a nation dedicated to the rule of law. But it is sometimes overlooked that law and religion have much in common. Our laws are a part of the moral code of a free people -- they express what we regard as right and what we regard as wrong. Almost every major substantive legal concept has an ethical basis. It is because our system of justice has this moral foundation that it is respected and supported by the overwhelming majority of our people.

Archbishop James brings to his new assignment a keen insight and understanding, not only of moral and religious concepts, but of law and justice. And this is of vital importance, for there is no greater force working for peace than the yearning of people everywhere for freedom, justice, and religious tolerance.

The Greek Orthodox Church and the other Eastern Orthodox Churches exercise a great spiritual influence throughout the world. With over 200 million members, many of them in the Near East and

Southeastern Europe and behind the Iron Curtain, your venerable faith cannot help but play a vital role in the struggle against atheistic communism. With traditions rooted deep in history, the Greek Orthodox Church stands today in the forefront of the guardians of religious liberty and our democratic heritage.

We are all grateful that Archbishop James has returned to make his home in America. Your Eminence, we welcome your leadership of this great Church. As a representative of the government of the United States may I extend to you deepest expressions of respect and best wishes for every success in the years ahead.