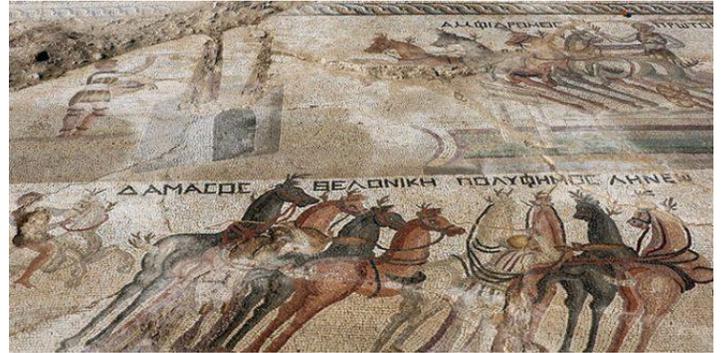


My Beloved Ones,

I greet you with love and joy in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I wish to share with you some fascinating news, which concerns our history and culture as proud Greek-Americans.



Last year, archaeologists uncovered an ancient mosaic on the island of Cyprus, in the Akaki area of Nicosia, and they are just now discovering more things about this magnificent piece of art.

The mosaic dates from the 4th century A.D. and it appears to depict the progress of an ancient chariot race from the beginning to end, in addition to bearing the names of the racers, one of the horses, as well other ancient Greek figures, like the nine Muses.

Work on the site began in 2013, when, prior to the uncovering of the mosaic, a primitive water tank was dug up. Now that a piping system has also been revealed, more excavation will help us understand how these ancient people lived their daily lives.

Perhaps you might wonder why I chose to speak to you about a topic that seems removed from the Orthodox ethos. In spite of the pagan dedication of this mosaic, I think of this discovery as a testament to the undefeatable spirit of the Greek people. These ancients lived, they created innovations to assist them in their work, and the mosaic surely demonstrates that they enjoyed their sporting events, like many in today's society.

Too often today, we see a society that is in such a rush towards the future, it seems too willing to forget the past. Lessons learned decades ago are cast aside, to say nothing of millennia. And so I bring this unique historical discovery to your minds, not simply to reinforce your pride in the strength of the Greek spirit, but also to remind you that the past is far from ancient. We are not so different from these people, in spite of all our supposed progress. Perhaps many generations from now, when excavating archaeologists will uncover our modern cities to discover the same things: that we lived, we worked and we played.

With this mind, I wonder who they will see of religious significance in these future ruins. As a spiritual leader, I only humbly hope that they recognize an icon of Christ as simply these archaeologists see the Muses.

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta