

31/01/2024

## **Homily By Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Three Hierarchs Holy Trinity Archdiocesan Cathedral**



Beloved Children of our Church and of our Precious Schools,

Seeing your shining faces this morning, as we celebrate together Greek Letters and the Feast of the Three Hierarchs, brings a song to my heart. I look upon all of you, and I see what the Lord Jesus meant when He said (and as we read in today's Gospel): "You are the light of the world."\*

And you are! Because you are training in the very best wisdom and philosophy that that this world can offer - exemplified by the three great Church Fathers we celebrate today: Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint John Chrysostom.

These Holy Three Hierarchs represent how to combine - in a seamless texture - the Eternal wisdom of God that is manifest in the Holy Scripture, with the rich learning that the natural world can supply. For each of these Fathers was among the most educated persons of their time.

Saint Basil and Saint Gregory attended the Academy of Plato, founded in Athens

over 700 years before either of them was born. Can you imagine?

Saint John Chrysostom, perhaps the greatest preacher of the Gospel in the history of the Church, studied the rhetorical sciences – what it means to truly communicate – with the greatest pagan scholar of his day.

So, what do these educational programs of the Three Hierarchs tell us about how we should approach education today? Clearly, that we should take all of the good learning about the world we live in, and put it in the service of the Gospel. That is what the Three Saints did. But you don't have to be an ordained person to put your knowledge in service to God.

As Saint Basil wrote in his essay, *To Young People*, about the usefulness of pagan literature:

Just as in harvesting roses we avoid the thorns, from such writings as these we will gather everything useful, and guard against the harmful. †

It is a most simple and indeed elegant approach to knowledge of any kind.

You, the young people of today, and the leaders of tomorrow, have more access to the world's information than any other generation in history. Even Artificial Intelligence is being put at your disposal, which will give you the ability to harness billions and even trillions of pieces of data and facts, and put them at your service. Yet, as the Great Holy Hierarchs knew, the wisdom to use such power only comes by grace from God. It is your spiritual formation that will empower you to use all the gifts of knowledge, which you will acquire for your own benefit and the benefit of others.

Therefore, my beloved children,

I urge you to always approach your studies through the lens of these Three Holy Hierarchs, so that the knowledge you gain through your lifetime is always exercised in accordance with the wisdom of God, which makes the application of learning truly profitable and fruitful.

Through their intercessions, may you be enlightened with the True Light, so that you also may be lights in the world, and bring glory and honor to God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen!



Photos: GOARCH/Dimitrios Panagos

\* Matthew 5:14.

† Address to Young People, para. 4

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