

07/03/2024

Archbishop Elpidophoros Archpastoral Address Annual Metropolis of San Francisco Clergy Retreat Contemplate, Reconcile, and Unify



Your Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos, Beloved Brother in Christ,

Your Graces, Bishops John and Spyridon,

Dear Protopresbyter Nicholas,

Beloved and Reverend Fathers,

These past few days being with the Ecclesia of the West have been not only gratifying, but truly edifying. The synergy of Clergy and Laity in this Metropolis, manifest in your Clergy Laity Assembly, is a model of Church ministry and governance.

I have enjoyed my time with you and the teachings around the theme of “Contemplate, Reconcile, & Unify” – all worthy subjects for reflection.

For us, who are clergy and are responsible for leading the liturgical life of the Church and providing sound pastoral guidance to the Faithful, the consideration of this theme has been both informative and illuminating. I want to thank Father

Nicholas for his efforts on our behalf, and for the very well-made presentations.

I commenced the invocation yesterday with that most beautiful and familiar Psalm, numbered 132 in the Septuagint, which speaks of our brotherhood. The wonderful Greek expression, “ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό,” reminds us that wherever we find ourselves gathered in unity, we experience the fulness of the God. The same expression is used to locate, physically and spiritually, the Disciples on the Day of Pentecost:

Καὶ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ἦσαν ἅπαντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. *

When we say, “in one place,” we mean much more than the Upper Room. This is the place of the heart, where the Disciples beat as one.

And so it can be for us, who stand in the Order of Melchizedek with our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ. When we recognize our dependence on the Lord and our interdependence with one another, the Spirit can flow through and from us to bring transformation to the lives of our People.

We are priests of the Most High – not to fulfill some ritual purpose. We are called to preach and teach the same Logos, the same Message of transfiguration that manifested on Mount Tabor! That is it possible for human beings to be capable of love, of forgiveness, of compassion, of mercy. That we are – each and every one of us – capax Dei – capable of receiving God.

* Acts 2:1.

† Psalm 133 (LXX).

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