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Archdiocesan District Assembly Hosts 300 Clergy and Delegates



The Archdiocesan District Clergy Laity Assembly and Archdiocesan District Philoptochos Assembly took place on Saturday, April 6th, 2024 at the Holy Resurrection Church in Brookville, New York. His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America greeted all of the 300 Clergy Laity Delegates and Ladies' Philoptochos Society delegates who represented every parish of the District in the continental United States. In his greeting, His Eminence remarked, "The truth of the Resurrection is the truth of our existence. In our parishes we have many things taking place, and we must all leave time for prayer, fasting, and acts of charity. Together we will all travel on this Lenten path, and all the ministries and good works of our communities will rejoice in the Resurrection! May we all be examples of Christ to all people as we prepare for the Kingdom of God!"

The Archdiocesan District Chancellor, Rev. Fr. Elias Villis welcomed all the delegates and guests, and thanked the host parish of Holy Resurrection, Proistamenos, Rev. Fr. Panteleimon Papadopoulos, and the lay leaders for their gracious hospitality. Fr. Elias also welcomed Bishop-Elect Nektarios Papazafiropoulos and congratulated him on his recent election as Bishop of Diokleia.

Fr. Elias thanked the various ministry leaders and representatives throughout the District giving special recognition to the Holy Transfiguration Church of Corona, who recently initiated an new Orthodox Spanish-speaking ministry whose goal it is to provide outreach to the local Hispanic community.

Bishop Andonios of Phasiane gave a report and update on St. Michael's Home currently being built in Uniondale, NY, bringing special attention to the recent progress in construction. The Board of Trustees extended an invitation to the faithful of our District to visit the site, see the recent construction achievements, and provide continued financial support to this noteworthy and vital project and ministry.

The Guest Speaker for the Assembly was Dr. Nicholas Kardaras, Ph.D., LCSW-R, Psychologist, who spoke on practical and spiritual approaches to counterbalance

the negative effects of social media. Dr. Kardaras' emphasis was on our understanding of the rapidly changing use of technology, devices, and social media, and how these devices can affect our youth and teens. As clergy, lay leaders, and parents, we have a responsibility to care for our youth, and help address issues of addiction, depression, and other negative effects of "screen time." His Eminence also reminded the attendees that all tools can be used in a dangerous way, however we as clergy, lay leaders, and parents can find ways to engage our youth to address these matters while engaging their emotions and leading them to Christ.

The Assembly welcomed Dr. Bruce Beck, Director of Enrollment and New Testament at Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, and congratulated the recent appointment of the new President, Dr. Demetrios Katos, a native of Astoria, NY. Dr. Beck highlighted the increased enrollment of new students and the academic options of the Semester of Faith. He also spoke about a number of new opportunities for continued education and online learning.

A new component to the Clergy Laity was the inclusion of break-out sessions and presentations. Clergy and lay leaders gave presentations and led discussions on Youth & Adult Ministry, Journey of Marriage Ministry, and Religious Education. All these presentations were made with an emphasis on the need to continue to advance all ministries to meet the needs of our faithful.

Updates were also provided on the Archdiocesan District's Clergy Syndesmos; Sisterhood of Presbyteres; Religious Education; Greek Education; Youth & Young Adult Ministry; Youth Safety; St. Anastasia's Fellowship; School of Byzantine Music; Oratorical Festival and Choir Federation.

The Archdiocesan District 2025 Operating Budget was also presented and passed unanimously. The meeting closed with thanks and prayers by Fr. Elias Villis, wishing everyone a blessed Holy Week and Pascha.

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