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Green GOYA Initiative Blooms at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity Saturday of Lazarus Retreat



During this year's Saturday of Lazarus Youth Retreat, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity hosted the inaugural pilot of the Green GOYA initiative, a continuation of the Greening the Parish effort of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. This marks a significant step toward environmentally conscious practices within Orthodox communities across the United States. This program was developed by GOYAn Demetra Chudley, a GOA Girl Delegate to the UN, in collaboration with Rev. Protopresbyter Nicolas Kazarian and Ms. Niki Devaris-Morgulis of the Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Relations, and aims to instigate a dialogue and action on environmental issues, with a focus on engaging Orthodox youth.

As a GOA Girl Delegate, Demetra Chudley explored her interest in the intersection of her Greek Orthodox faith and protecting our environment by presenting her project on eutrophication at an Intergenerational Conversation Circle held during the 66th Commission on the Status of Women and co-leading the International Day of the Girl Speakout, where she discussed the issues of climate change and girls' rights. With her knowledge and passion for combating environmental issues, Demetra sought to help like-minded young Greek Orthodox Christians fulfill their

vocations as stewards of creation and work towards greening her parish.

The pilot program served as a springboard for this ambitious endeavor, empowering GOYA members to lead climate projects within their respective parishes. The GOYAns spent the day discussing how the Orthodox faith relates to our environment, and then lived out their Orthodox ideals by completing a church beautification project. By intertwining faith and environmental stewardship, the initiative endeavors to cultivate a sense of responsibility towards the planet among parishioners.

V. Rev. Archimandrite Chrysostomos Gilbert, Dean of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, underscored the importance of integrating environmental consciousness into Orthodox communities, stating, “It is our duty to heed the call of our spiritual leader, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who has long championed environmental stewardship. The youth are vital in carrying forward his vision and bringing about positive change.”

Acknowledging the pivotal role of GOYA in advancing this initiative, Father Chrysostomos Gilbert remarked, “GOYA members possess a unique passion and energy that can ignite transformative action within our communities. By embracing the ideals of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew, they can lead us towards a greener and more sustainable future.” Ms. Niki Devaris-Morgulis highlighted the leadership role of GOYA in driving this initiative forward. “GOYA members are uniquely positioned to inspire change within their communities. By harnessing their passion and energy, we can catalyze meaningful action towards sustainability,” she remarked.

The Green GOYA project invites interested individuals and parishes to join the movement and incorporate environmentally friendly practices into their faith communities. For those seeking further information or interested in implementing the initiative in their parish, inquiries can be directed to or visit the Greening the Parish Resource Page.

Photo: Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity

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