16/10/2024

Center for Family Care Receives Grant for New Initiative “On Behalf of All: Toward an Accessible Divine Liturgy for Children with Disabilities”



The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Center for Family Care announces the awarding of a generous grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. for the establishment of a new initiative On Behalf of All: Toward an Accessible Divine Liturgy for Children with Disabilities.

The grant of $1,250,000 will provide funding for a period of five years for this project that has as its purpose to bring together people with disabilities, caregivers, priests, pastoral leaders, and others with disability ministry expertise, to chart and address barriers to participation, foster collaboration among parishes working toward this effort, provide education and professional development for clergy and pastoral leaders, pilot best practices, design and gather resources, and create replicable models for use in and beyond the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America expressed his gratitude for the support from Lilly Endowment, stating, “We are deeply honored to receive this grant through the Nurturing Children Through Worship and Prayer Initiative for a first-of-its-kind national project focused on ensuring engaged and supportive participation of children with disabilities in Orthodox Christian worship. I am confident that the work of the pilot parishes will result in the full participation of these children and their families and caregivers into the heart of Orthodox Christian faith and practice.”

On Behalf of All is a five-year program that has as its centerpiece the creation of a cohort of at least 12 pilot parishes across the Archdiocese which will engage deeply with the question of how to ensure the accessible participation of children with disabilities in the Divine Liturgy. The other components of the project will nest around the core Accessible Parish Pilot program to support it through resource design, gathering, and implementation; assessment and evaluation; collaboration; dissemination of learning; and building capacity for project replication beyond the

grant period.

The grant is funded by Lilly Endowment’s Nurturing Children Through Worship and Prayer Initiative, a national initiative designed to help Christian congregations more fully and intentionally engage children in intergenerational worship and prayer practices.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is a private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts by Eli Lilly and Company. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion. The principal aim of the Endowment’s religion grantmaking is to deepen and enrich the lives of Christians in the United States, by seeking out and supporting efforts that enhance the vitality of congregations and strengthen the pastoral and lay leadership of Christian communities. The Endowment also seeks to improve public understanding of diverse religious traditions by supporting fair and accurate portrayals of the role religion plays in the United States and across the globe.

Photo: Alyssa Kyritsis.

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