

Archbishop Elpidophoros Remarks at Holy Trinity 96th Anniversary Annual Gala Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Father Nicholas Anctil's Ordination to the Holy Priesthood



Dear Father Nicholas and Presvytera Cyndi,

Parish Council President George Kondos and

All the Representatives of this Parish's many Organizations,

Reverend Clergy,

Honorable Archons and Members of Leadership One Hundred,

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

What a marvelous double celebration we observe this evening. This wonderful Parish, dedicated to the Most Sacred name of the Holy Trinity, is observing the Ninety-Sixth Anniversary since its incorporation as the "Hellenic Orthodox Community of Westchester County, Inc." Though the decades, the location and

shape of the parish has evolved and grown, manifesting a splendid spiritual and community life.

But as you know, it was in 1922 – the year that our Sacred Archdiocese of America was formed by the Mother Church of Constantinople – that the first Greek families in this region began to meet and to discuss how to form a Church community.

From the East Coast to the West Coast, I have always been impressed how the seeds of our Church were germinating in this critical year of 1922. In the same year as the Καταστροφή της Σμύρνης, and the subsequent mass deportations of Greeks from Asia Minor, here in this Hemisphere, the foundations for Church life were being established by courageous and hardworking Πρωτοπόροι. As we gather to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of this Parish, with reverence and gratitude, we also call to mind your spiritual and physical ancestors whose sacrifices made all this possible. May their memory be eternal!

At the same time, we have a very special observance this evening – the celebration of your pastor's Fortieth Anniversary of Ordination. Protopresbyter Nicholas Anctil is one of the leading clergymen of our National Church, and a force for good and spiritual progress right here in the Archdiocese District. And he has spent twenty-eight of those forty year right here in New Rochelle – a profound blessing both for him and for you.

In one of his last official actions as Primate of North and South America, the ever-memorable and blessed Archbishop Iakovos, appointed Father Nick to be your daily shepherd. The Archbishop was always very close to this parish and to your prior pastor, the blessed Father Peter Kyriakos, who continued as your pastor emeritus for another decade.

Thus, your community was blessed twofold – to have the energetic and highly skilled Father Nick, and the continuing wisdom and experience of Father Peter.

Father Nicholas and Presvytera Cyndi – you have brought to this community a spirit of grace-filled ministry and true Christian service. I know how grateful the Holy Trinity Parish of New Rochelle is for your abiding and prayerful presence.

Forty years of ministry in the Holy Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ is a very significant milestone. Everywhere in Scripture, the number “Forty” appears in decisive moments. Whether it is the journey of the Israelites in the Desert of Sinai, or the years of King David’s reign over Israel, or the span of days that our Lord fasted in the wilderness, or the number of days between His Glorious Resurrection and His Ascension into Heaven – “forty” appears again and again.

For you, Father Nicholas, your fortieth anniversary of ascending into the Order of Melchizedek is an opportunity to both look back and to look forward. The majority of your years of ministry have been here in New Rochelle, where you have excelled in every aspect of pastoral service. You can look back with gratitude to the Hierarchs and Clergy who inspired you. Many of passed on into eternity, and many are still with us. Nevertheless, your talents and gifts have yet much to give to the Church at large, and to this most excellent parish.

As we celebrate tonight with this Agape Banquet, replete with the music and dancing that is the hallmark of our Γένοϋ, let us raise a glass in testimony to the devoted and dedicated ministry of Forty Years of our beloved Father Nick. And pray that God will continue to bless him, Presvytera, and this Parish with ever-increasing spiritual joy and fulfillment in Divine Providence.

Many Years!

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