

19/12/2024

Archbishop Elpidophoros Remarks at the Saint Nicholas National Shrine Christmas Party



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America

Remarks at the Saint Nicholas National Shrine Christmas Party

December 18, 2024

Saint Nicholas National Shrine & Greek Orthodox Church

New York, New York

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am so pleased to be with you all and to celebrate this Christmas here at the Saint Nicholas National Shrine, which is dedicated to the historical figure and Saint who stands behind the traditional secular symbol of the Season, Santa Claus. Just by saying his name you can hear the echo of Saint Nicholas.

This holiday time, as we all know, is especially significant for children. And for the adults, there truly is no other holiday that brings out the child in us like the Feast of Christmas.

For Christmas not only gathers our communities together around this preeminent Feast, but it focuses us on the importance of family. The story of the Nativity opens our minds and hearts to the children in our midst, who might remind us of the Innocent New-Born Babe of Bethlehem, but also the child in each of our hearts.

Wherever I go during these holy days, I look forward to being inspired by the presence of our children. They surely call to mind the happy memories of our own childhoods and our own first Christmases.

For Christmas is a time when we all have the opportunity to get back in touch with the child within – the child of God, who has God for a Father, and the Church for a Mother.

If our Lord Jesus Christ was born in a Cave, He is also born anew within the caves of our hearts, which is prepared to receive the good things of God. For the heart of a human being can never be truly satisfied by material things – possessions, money, even relationships.

Only God can fill our hearts:

with joy,

with hope,

with faith,

with satisfaction,

and ultimately, with love.

Therefore, my beloved friends:

Let us open our eyes and ears to the message that our fellowship brings us today.

I commend all of you for coming from near and far to honor the Patron of our National Shrine, and to share in the abundance of love that is the core of this sacred place. Unlike the inn in the Gospel story, the door of Saint Nicholas Shrine is always open, as it is in all our churches from coast to coast.

I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy and Healthy New Year of 2025! May God bless us all!

goarch.org