27/01/2025

The enthronement of Metropolitan Sevastianos of Atlanta



Exclamations of “Axios!” were cried as His Eminence Metropolitan Sevastianos of Atlanta was enthroned on Saturday, 25 January 2025 at the Annunciation Cathedral in Atlanta, Georgia by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America and in the presence of hundreds of faithful.

Metropolitan Sevastianos, has served as a beloved hierarch in the Metropolis of Atlanta since December 2018. He succeeds Metropolitan Alexios, who served as presiding hierarch of Atlanta since 1997 until November 2024.

Metropolitan Sevastianos is the 2nd Metropolitan for the Metropolis, which covers more than 70 parishes in the states of Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was represented at the Enthronement by Archbishop Daniel of Pamphilon of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA, who

read the Official Address of the Ecumenical Patriarch for this auspicious occasion.

Hierarchs from across the country gathered to be present at this momentous service included, Metropolitan Alexios, formerly of Atlanta; Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, Locum Tenens for the Metropolis of Atlanta; Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago; Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey; Metropolitan Dimitrios of Xanthos; Metropolitan Vasilios of Constantia and Ammochostos; Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa; Bishop Irinej (Serbian Orthodox Church); as well as Bishop Nicholas (Antiochian); Bishop Andrei (OCA); Bishop Spyridon of Amastris; Bishop Timothy of Hexamillion; Bishop Nektarios of Diokleia; Bishop Anthony of Synada; Bishop Theofanis of Philomelion and Bishop-elect Alexander of Nicopolis.

Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, Chief Secretary of the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, delivered the Patriarchal and Synodical letter of the Announcement of the Election of Metropolitan Sevastianos of Atlanta.

Filling the church to capacity were dozens of clergy, family members, and faithful from the Metropolis of Atlanta and from around the country and the world.

Ecumenical and civic leaders attending were Most Reverend Gregory John Hartmayer, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Atlanta; Right Reverend Peter Eaton, Episcopal Bishop of Southeast Florida; The Honorable Michalis Firillas, Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus in New York; The Honorable Konstantinos Adamopoulos, Consul of the Hellenic Republic; The Honorable Polyxeni Potter, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Cyprus; The Honorable Congressman Gus Bilirakis; The Honorable Savas Tsivicos, Supreme President of AHEPA; and Kyriacos Papastylianou, President of the Federation of Cypriot American Organizations, and many representatives from organizations and institutions of the Archdiocese including Philoptochos, Leadership 100 and the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council.

Archbishop Elpidophoros addressed the new Metropolitan and the faithful, recognizing the enthusiasm and outpouring of love for their new Metropolitan. His Eminence noted his assurance that Metropolitan Sevastianos will nourish the Metropolis of Atlanta’s flock, shepherding them with love, compassion, mercy, and goodness:

“You, my dear Metropolitan, have demonstrated your love for our Lord through a lifetime of service. Now, He entrusts to you the care and the feeding of His flock here in the Metropolis of Atlanta. You will nourish them by the teaching of the unalloyed Faith of Jesus Christ as taught in our Holy Church for two thousand years.

You will shepherd them with love and compassion, with mercy and goodness, just

as the Psalmist speaks of our Lord's pastorate with us. You will lead them to dwell in green pastures, and nurture them besides waters of rest. You will show them that even when shadows of evil and death fall upon us, we will not be afraid; because the staff of the Lord – His Precious and Life-giving Cross, is our everlasting comfort.

Metropolitan Sevastianos, speaking with heartfelt emotion, remarked, "Some of you have met me as a priest, others as a Bishop. From now on, I assure you all, that as Metropolitan, I will remain the same enthusiastic and always eager co-worker of yours, striving to serve the Church of Christ.

This is the mission of the Church to be the "Ecclessia" («ἐκ-καλῶ») that is to say, to be a vivid calling, an invitation: to togetherness in a communion of love, healing, and sanctifying. This togetherness is exemplified by what Saint Ignatius, the God-Bearer, taught, as he received it from the Apostles and wrote it down to be left as his legacy to the Early Church.

None of the Bishop's initiatives can reach completion without the people, nor can any work of the people come to fruition without the Bishop's blessing. With this legacy, I intend to start my work by adhering to the words of the Apostle Paul, who exhorted the Thessalonians: 'Stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle'(2 Thes 2:15).

Thus, together we will continue to serve Christ and tending His flock, building on the foundation of my predecessors, and welcoming everyone on our spiritual journey together." The Metropolitan continued his remarks with words of gratitude to many and addressed the Archbishop saying, "I thank His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros for leading our Archdiocese with dynamism and a steadfast understanding that we are all children of God.

His Eminence applies this understanding in real life through His words, His strategies, and primarily through His tireless work to ensure the well-being of the Archdiocese, the Hellenic Diaspora, and of all the faithful Orthodox Christians under His Omophorion. I have been blessed to know and work with His Eminence even before his elevation as a Bishop and coming to the United States, and I look forward and pledge to support His leadership and the unity of the Archdiocese."

Following the Enthronement, a Luncheon was held in the Thalia N. Carlos Hellenic Community Center Ballroom. which included many inspiring speakers and a video presentation.

On Sunday, January 26, the newly enthroned Metropolitan Sevastianos will preside

at his first Liturgy as the shepherd of the Metropolis of Atlanta at the Annunciation Cathedral in Atlanta. Livestream will be available at link in comments.

Photos: Orthodox Observer / Dimitrios Panagos

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