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Kimisis tis Theotokou Church welcomes Archbishop Elpidophoros for Third Bridegroom Service in Brooklyn, NY



The community of Kimisis tis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church in Brooklyn, New York welcomed His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America on the evening of Tuesday, April 7, for the Orthros of Great and Holy Wednesday, the Third Bridegroom Service. Celebrating alongside His Eminence was Proistamenos the V. Rev. Arch. Damaskinos V. Ganas.

In his homily, Archbishop Elpidophoros reflected on the striking contrast at the heart of the evening's liturgy: the figure of Judas, a disciple who had walked with the Lord for three years and yet betrayed Him nonetheless, and the Sinful Woman of the Hymn of Kassiani, whose life had been lived in darkness, yet who perceived Christ's divinity in her heart.

"The Chosen Disciple chooses his own fate," Archbishop Elpidophoros said, "and the Sinful Woman's action has the exact opposite effect of Judas' perfidy."

"She foreshadows revelation of the Resurrection, because, as Saint Kassiani tells us, she 'takes upon herself the rank of a Myrrh-Bearer,'" His Eminence continued. "For it was the Myrrh-bearers, led by Mary Magdalene, who first announced the Resurrection of the Lord to the Disciples. Thus, this Woman who anointed the Lord before His Passion, became a foreteller of His Arising."

The Archbishop invited the faithful to see in both figures a mirror of their own possibilities. "We can be reared close to the Church and Her Holy Teachings, Sacraments, and Community. But we can fall far, far away through our own terrible choices," His Eminence said. "And we can live out our lives outside the Communion of Grace that is the life of our Ecclesia, and in a moment–through one act of genuine faith, find ourselves enveloped in the power of the Resurrection."

"The choice is ours. It is our freedom that is the determinant," the Archbishop concluded. "For as Saint Kassiani tells us in the final words of her magnificent and moving hymn, the God Who is always appealing to us, reaching out to us, and inviting us, is–ὁ ἀμέτρητον ἔχων τὸ ἔλεος –the One Whose mercy is without measure."



Read His Eminence’s full homily here

Beginning on the evening of Palm Sunday and continuing through the evening of Holy Tuesday, the Orthodox Church observes a special service known as the Service of the Bridegroom. Each evening service is the Matins or Orthros service of the following day—(e.g. the service held on Tuesday evening is the Orthros service for Holy Wednesday). The name of the service is drawn from the figure of the Bridegroom in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, found in Matthew 25:1-13.

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