

An air of Renewed Optimism and Hope at Archbishop Elpidophoros' First Archdiocesan Council Meeting



Archbishop Pledges Transparency, Accountability, and Responsibility

NEW YORK - His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America presided at the first Archdiocesan Council meeting following his election and enthronement as Archbishop.

The meetings of the Council were held over the span of two days, Thursday Oct. 17 and Friday Oct.18, at the New York Hilton Hotel, and the prevailing feeling and tone of the meetings was one of renewed optimism and hope for the affairs of the Archdiocese and the future of our Church.

[See photos](#)

The Executive Committee with its new Vice-Chairman John Catsimatidis, and new Secretary Judge Theodore Bozonelis, as well as the Standing Committees of the Council, met on Thursday. The Council convened as a body Thursday afternoon for its first session and Friday morning for the second and final session.

The Archbishop opened the plenary session with prayer and his [Keynote Address](#) that followed set the tone: “I can promise each of you that our beloved Archdiocese of America is back on course and headed to the safe harbor of stability, progress and growth,” he said while at a later point stated: “What we genuinely want and need for our Archdiocese is transparency, accountability, and responsibility.” ([Read full text](#))

Archbishop Elpidophoros reiterated his three main priorities outlined in his enthronement address, namely Youth, Hellenic College Holy Cross, and the completion of the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine.

“The Shrine will be a shining City on a Hill, and a beacon of hope for all people of good will, and it will be the most observed and visited Orthodox Church in the world, as long as we are faithful to its mission. We must re-commence the building of the Church immediately, and open the doors by September 11, 2021, as a tribute to those who perished that fateful day, and as a lead off to the centenary year of our Holy Archdiocese,” he said.

Following the Archbishop’s address, the Vice-President of the Council, John Catsimatidis conveyed his optimism and said that as a community we have the people and the resources to do the job well and we will succeed as long as we work hard all together and in unity. He also recommitted that Saint Nicholas will be completed by September 11, 2021.

The proceedings were presided over by the new Secretary of the Council Judge Theodore Bozonelis. He thanked the previous Secretary Catherine Bouffides-Walsh for her assistance during the transition and her long dedicated service to the body.

Additional presentations were made by George Cantonis who presented a detailed report on the state of Hellenic College Holy Cross and the actions taken to secure its future. Followed by Treasurer Elaine Allen and Lazaros Kircos, Chairman of the Finance Committee who presented the Financial Report and the 2020 Budget, while several resolutions concerning financial matters were discussed.

National Commander Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis of the Order of Saint Andrew Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate presented the Order’s Annual Report on the Order’s continuing efforts to promote religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and all Orthodox Christians worldwide.

The work of the Council continued on Friday morning and included reports and presentations on the following: Pension Plan, Audit Committee report, Saint

Nicholas Shrine, Youth Safety, Saint Photios Shrine and Spanish Ministry resources by His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, and a report by Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, on the 2020 Clergy Laity Congress to take place in Cleveland.

At the conclusion of the session, Archbishop Elpidophoros said he was very pleased and thankful from his first Archdiocesan Council meeting and expressed his gratitude to all the members of the Council for their dedication.

[See photos](#)

- Source: goarch.org