

Archbishop Elpidophoros gives benediction at Port Authority Memorial dedication



As the nation begins a week of remembrance marking the 25th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America joined public officials, Port Authority police officers, and community leaders for the dedication of the new Port Authority Memorial in Lower Manhattan. The memorial stands beside the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine, overlooking the 9/11 Memorial at Ground Zero.

Among those attending the ceremony were New York Governor Kathy Hochul, Port Authority Executive Director Kathryn Garcia, Port Authority Board Chairman Kevin O'Toole, Congressman Dan Goldman, State Senator Brian Kavanagh, Assemblymember Grace Lee, Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal, World Trade Center Memorial Fund President Paul Iannacone, as well as current and retired Port Authority police officers, family members, friends, and supporters.



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros joined New York Gov. Kathy Hochul in the dedication of the Port Authority Memorial at Saint Nicholas Shrine. (Photo by Orthodox Observer)

The ceremony opened with the Presentation of Colors and the singing of the National Anthem, followed by remarks from civic and community leaders. Several speakers reflected on the symbolic location of the memorial, situated beside St. Nicholas National Shrine, the only house of worship destroyed in the attacks of September 11, and overlooking the footprints of the former World Trade Center.

Speaking before hundreds gathered beneath a clear September sky, Archbishop Elpidophoros reflected on the lives lost that day and the enduring responsibility to honor their memory. He emphasized the courage of those who placed the safety of others above their own during the attacks and acknowledged the families who have carried the weight of loss for a quarter century.



At the dedication, speakers drew on the memory of the first responders who lost their lives on 9/11, as well as the 1993 World Trade Center Bombings. (Photo by Orthodox Observer/Tom Galanis)

“It is deeply meaningful that we gather here beside our Saint Nicholas National Shrine,” the Archbishop said. “This little church was itself lost on September 11. Today, it stands again overlooking Ground Zero, not as though the tragedy never happened, but precisely because it did.”

Drawing a connection between the rebuilding of St. Nicholas and the resilience of the city and nation, Archbishop Elpidophoros described the shrine as a powerful symbol of hope born from tragedy.

“Saint Nicholas stands here as a witness that destruction need not have the final word; that from the deepest wounds can come renewed purpose; and that remembrance, joined with faith, can become hope,” he said. “As we dedicate this memorial and prepare to mark twenty-five years since that terrible day, we remember the sacrifice of those who ran toward danger to save others, the lives that were forever changed, and the enduring spirit that continues to unite us. It is in that hope, and in that spirit of remembrance, that we now pray.”

The new memorial will serve as a permanent tribute to the Port Authority police officers and all those whose lives were affected by the attacks, ensuring that their sacrifice and service remain part of the nation’s collective memory for generations

to come.

orthodoxobserver.org