

28 catechumens received into the Orthodox Church by Archbishop Elpidophoros at St. Nicholas Shrine Church in Flushing



28 catechumens were received into the Orthodox Church this past Sunday through Holy Baptism and Chrismation at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Shrine Church in Flushing, New York. His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America presided over the service, which marked a milestone in Orthodox Christian outreach across the Western Hemisphere.

The baptisms were the culmination of missionary work led by Fr. Samuel Davis and Archimandrite Chrysostom Onyekakeyah, directors of the Apostolic Mission to the African Diaspora in the Americas, West Indies, and Caribbean. Their ministry has focused on bringing the Orthodox faith to diverse communities, particularly members of the African Diaspora across the Americas, the West Indies, and the Caribbean, as well as African immigrants.



In the narthex of the church, the then-catechumens professed their allegiance to Christ. Photo by Orthodox Observer/Brittany Newman

Through pastoral care, catechetical instruction, and community outreach, Fr. Samuel and Archimandrite Chrysostom have built missionary networks that welcome seekers from a range of backgrounds. The 28 newly illumined, children and adults, are the result of that work.

At the start of the service, the two priests led the catechumens into the narthex, where they professed their allegiance to Christ. Archbishop Elpidophoros then invoked the Holy Spirit upon the baptismal waters, anointed the water with oil, and immersed each catechumen three times. He then sealed each with the gift of the Holy Spirit in Chrismation, and the newly baptized received their first Holy Communion. Clothed in white robes and bearing candles, they were welcomed into full communion with the Church.

In his address, the Archbishop said the day reflected the essential apostolic mission of the Church: to go forth and make disciples of all nations.

“Before our very eyes, so many beloved souls have been united to Christ and incorporated into His Holy Body, the Church. Through the waters of Holy Baptism and the seal and the Gift of the Holy Spirit—Holy Chrismation, you have been born anew. You have put on Christ. You have entered into the Communion of the

Saints,” Archbishop Elpidophoros said.



“And now I say to you: This is your Church. This is your family. This is your home,” His Eminence said.

The service at St. Nicholas, a parish known for its cultural breadth and deep community roots, celebrates a part of a broader trend of converts to Orthodoxy in America. The mission reaches communities throughout North America, the West Indies, and the Caribbean basin, and it brings people of diverse ethnic backgrounds into one Eucharistic assembly at St. Nicholas.

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