

Pioneer of North American Orthodox Monasticism, Elder Ephraim of Arizona, laid to rest at monastery he founded in Sonoran Desert



Thousands of mourners from around the world on Wednesday paid their respects and bid farewell to the Elder Ephraim of Arizona, considered as a pioneer of Orthodox Monasticism in North America — and as a significant figure in reinvigorating Orthodoxy in the New World over the past four decades.

The 91-year-old Elder Archimandrite was interred on Wednesday at the St. Anthony Orthodox Monastery, outside Florence, Arizona, which he co-founded with six Athonite monks in 1995. Mourners included his numerous spiritual offspring and monks from around the world.

St. Anthony is one of 19 monasteries founded and co-founded by the reposed Elder of Arizona in the United States and Canada.

The Archbishop of America, His Eminence Elpidophoros, co-officiated at the funeral service, along with the Metropolitan of Atlanta, His Eminence Alexios, the

Metropolitan of San Francisco, His Eminence Gerassimos, and the Metropolitan of Denver, His Eminence Isaiah.

In a eulogy, His Eminence Elpidophoros referred to the “seeds of faith”, as he said, planted on North American soil by the Elder Ephraim.

The Abbot of the Monastery of Philotheou, the Elder Archimandite Nikodimos, represented the Mt. Athos Monastery, where the Elder Ephraim of Arizona was once the Abbot, along with several other Athonite Fathers also in attendance.

A message by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, on the passing of the reposed Elder, was read out by the Very Reverend Archimandrite Nikodimos.

Finally, the Abbot of the St. Anthony Monastery, the Elder Archimandrite Paisios, in an emotional eulogy, offered thanks for the reposed Elder of Arizona’s spiritual support towards his monastic offspring.

St. Anthony Monastery stands today as a spiritual “oasis” and as a venerable Orthodox Christian outpost in the barren Sonoran Desert.

The reposed Hieromonk first arrived in the United States in 1979.

He was born to pious and loving parents in the central Greece port city of Volos, in 1928, as Ioannis Moraitis.

At the age of 19, he traveled to Mount Athos to become a monk and was one of the spiritual pupils of the Elder Joseph the Hesychast.

In 1973, Ephraim was elected as the Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Philotheou on Mt. Athos.





