14/02/2020

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, in partnership with the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, held their first public event “Love Thy Neighbor”



On February 12, 2020, the Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, in partnership with the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, held their first public event at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. The event titled, “Love Thy Neighbor,” focused on homelessness and featured a panel of high-level experts on this issue.

His Grace Bishop Apostolos of Medeia, representing Archbishop Elpidophoros of America offered remarks at the top of the event. His Grace insisted on the spiritual meaning of home, as a safe space and the internal homelessness of the heart in our Christian journey towards Christ. “These new initiatives [of the Archdiocese] on homelessness challenge each of us to look internally at our own hearts, while also serving our neighbors, who may be vulnerable to homelessness or have lost their

homes.”

Dr. Sam Tsemberis, the Founder and CEO of *Pathways Housing First*, shared the simple approach of providing housing units to chronically homeless people, without any preconditions. James Carras, Adjunct Lecturer of Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, passionately spoke about the importance of government investment for affordable housing in national policy. Maria Logus, Esq., the President of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society shared the incredible work of over 400 Philoptochos chapters across the U.S. in serving the poor, and reminded everyone to look someone in the eyes when serving them and thus to recognize their inherent dignity.

The “Love Thy Neighbor” event was the first event of its kind on homelessness as part of the Archdiocese’s new initiatives to respond to this crisis. The event offered a brief education and understanding of homelessness, while giving Orthodox Christian faithful the opportunity to respond to the call to serve by engaging with volunteer opportunities in their communities.

Sixteen organizations from the New York Metro Area, both faith-based and secular, participated in the Service Opportunity Fair and offered various volunteer opportunities to the 200 people in attendance.

— Source: goarch.org