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Elpidophoros is a 21st Century Archbishop



BOSTON – His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco in an interview with the National Herald, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the enthronement of Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, characterized him as a 21st century Archbishop. We note that Archbishop Elpidophoros has visited the Metropolis of San Francisco more than any other Metropolis of the Archdiocese.

The interview in its entirety follows:

The National Herald: What are your thoughts about the first anniversary of Archbishop Elpidophoros' enthronement as Archbishop of America?

Metropolitan Gerasimos: First of all, I would like to thank you for affording me the opportunity to share with you and with your readers a few thoughts about this past year, amid unprecedented circumstances for all of us, which are now associated with the completion of one year since Archbishop Elpidophoros' enthronement as Archbishop of America.

Although much has been written on different occasions during the course of this year, I think it must be stated, once again, that the name of the new Archbishop

says it all. It’s the literal meaning of his name, which evokes strong sentiments in those who had the opportunity to get to know him: Archbishop Elpidophoros brings hope!



Archbishop Elpidophoros has risen to the heights of the responsibilities which his office as Archbishop of America demands, with hope and with vision. His Eminence has been at the helm of the Archdiocese of America from the first day of his enthronement at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New York. He did not have the luxury of taking it easy, due to the well-known difficulties which our Archdiocese was facing. He arranged and prioritized the Archdiocese’s agenda from the first day. From that time, I see that he has not ceased steering the ship, because he knows well the seriousness of the issues. From this viewpoint the past year has been productive, fruitful, and hopeful.

He ambitiously took charge, as he promoted the stature of the Archdiocese at many levels. This past year has produced many auspicious examples, with respect to the future of both Archbishop Elpidophoros and our Archdiocese. It has demonstrated his capabilities, with his firm hand upon the wheel of the Archdiocese, with love and understanding. Forethought and action, goals and dreams for the future of our Church in America have already been put into motion by his deeds.

TNH: Where do you think the Archdiocese of America is going under his leadership?

Metropolitan Gerasimos: His faith, his forthrightness, his proven love for the `other', his decisiveness, these are a few of the qualities which have already become manifest, and they have borne fruit for the benefit of the reverend clergy and the pious faithful.

The Archdiocese has to present a multifaceted ministry. The Archbishop's co-workers are individuals dedicated to the Triune God and with our Orthodox Faith and Heritage. They are co-workers in the service of the Archbishop and the devout people of God. Every worthy Leader of the Church and especially the Archbishop, needs to be knowledgeable of all the components which comprise the entirety of the Archdiocese.

Archbishop Elpidophoros has begun this course, and he is not alone. Already, clergy and faithful have been impressed by his affable nature, his joyful smile, and the decisiveness of his undertakings. He is a 21st Century Archbishop!

A few years ago, I had the opportunity of personally getting to know the attributes of his personality. A personality filled and nurtured in the waters of the Mother Church. Having as his mentor the first-ranking bishop of the Orthodox Church, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, in one year's time Archbishop Elpidophoros has shown signs of substantive leadership of our Greek Orthodox Church here in America.



TNH: Do you recall when, where, and how you met the Archbishop? What was your first impression when you met him and got to know him?

Metropolitan Gerasimos: My acquaintance with His Eminence began when I was a member of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, at the Phanar, when he was Chief Secretary of the Synod. Before that, we had a long association, so to speak, given that our Archbishop was an admirer of our local Church on the West Coast, inasmuch as he was connected to the Metropolis of San Francisco through my predecessor, the late Metropolitan Anthony.

Our friendly, personal acquaintance at the Phanar evolved into a brotherly relationship. From the very beginning, the Archbishop demonstrated courtesy, love and understanding, the same characteristics which he shows now as Archbishop of America.

TNH: What do the priests and the faithful of the Metropolis of San Francisco tell you about the Archbishop?

Metropolitan Gerasimos: Clergy and faithful who had the opportunity to meet him have been thrilled by his amiable personality and the calm manner with which he often responds to difficult questions. He is a man who loves his fellow man!

One example: In August of 2019, during his visit to Arizona, he greeted some 600 faithful who had come to meet him, one by one.

Another example: His presence at the Young Adult Conference last September in Long Beach, California signaled his willingness to embrace the new generation, and the youth responded with enthusiasm to Archbishop Elpidophoros’ embrace.

TNH: Do you think he properly handled the COVID-19 crisis?

Metropolitan Gerasimos: The way with which the Archbishop has handled the pandemic demonstrates that the Church has to be prepared to respond to and calm the anxieties of our faithful, on the basis and in the essence of our Orthodox Faith and theological understanding.

TNH: What would you like to wish him on the occasion of the first anniversary of his enthronement?

Metropolitan Gerasimos: My personal wish for the new Archbishop is that that he always walks gazing upon Christ on the Cross, that he conveys to all the members of our Archdiocese the hope which comes from the Empty Tomb of the Risen Christ, in other words, the Resurrection.

My prayers to Almighty God are that He abundantly protect His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, and grant him strength and robustness, physically and spiritually, that he may fulfill the God-blessed Archpastorate which he has undertaken.

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