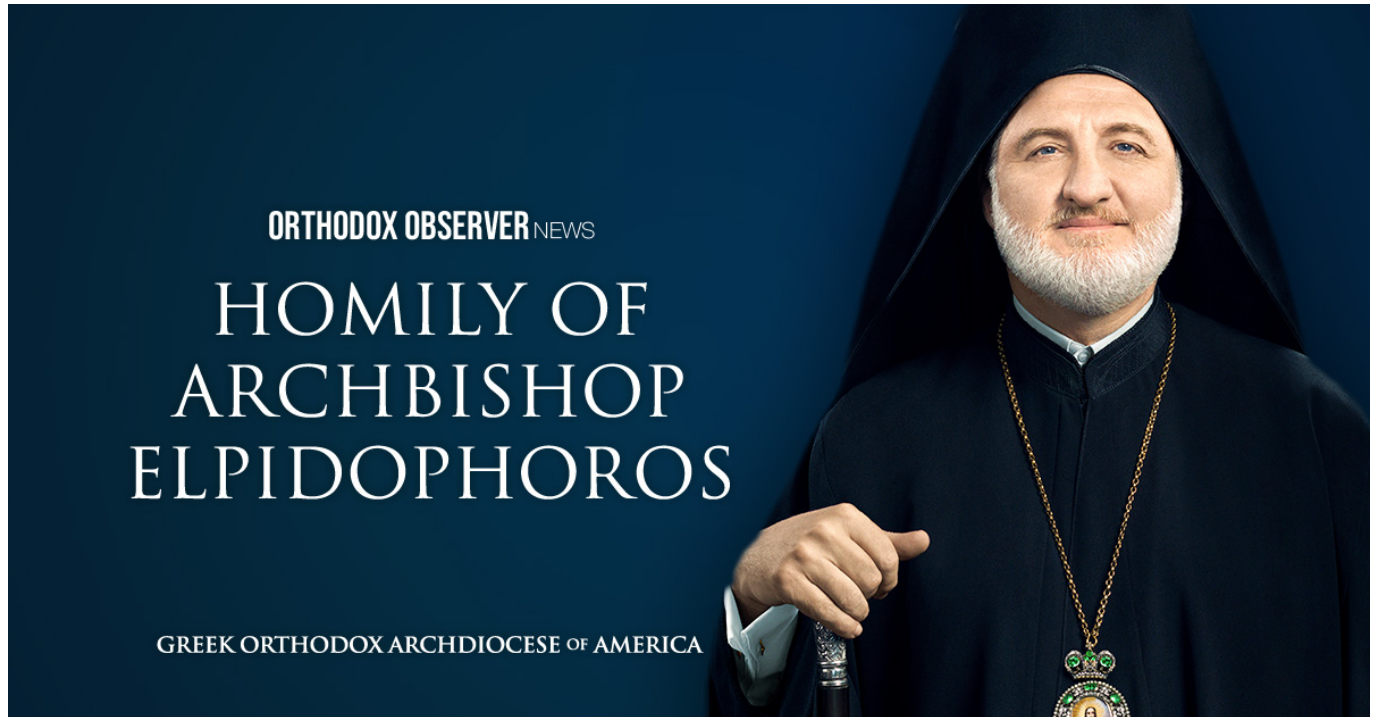


21/07/2020

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros - Homily for the Sunday of the Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council



Holy Resurrection Greek Orthodox Church

Brookville, New York

My Beloved Christians,

We come together this morning – in this Church of the Resurrection, of the One Risen from the dead, to raise our hopes, to raise our cries unto heaven, and to raise our spirits in these dark days for our Church, our Nation, and our world.

We come together in this most sacred act of Memory, as the “Children of Memory,” in the words of our Ecumenical Patriarch,[*] to celebrate the most radical and important memorial of all, the Holy and Divine Liturgy. For our Lord said: “Τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν; Do this in remembrance of Me.”[†]

The Eucharist is the ultimate act of remembering, because, as we prayed just before the Consecration of the Holy Gifts:

Μεμνημένοι τοίνυν τῆς σωτηρίου ταύτης ἐντολῆς καὶ πάντων τῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν γεγενημένων, τοῦ Σταυροῦ, τοῦ τάφου, τῆς τριημέρου ἀναστάσεως, τῆς εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀναβάσεως, τῆς ἐκ δεξιῶν καθέδρας, τῆς δευτέρας καὶ ἐνδόξου πάλιν παρουσίας,

Remembering, therefore, this saving commandment and all that has been done for our sake: the Cross, the tomb, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the enthronement at the right hand, and the second and glorious coming again.[‡]

What a miraculous prayer! Not only do we commemorate the saving acts of God that are in the past, we even ‘remember’ the Second and Glorious Coming Again of the Lord, which has not happened yet in history, but has already happened in the Divine Will for our salvation. As His All-Holiness said, on his very first visit to America as Ecumenical Patriarch, speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ:

“He is the sum of all memory and He exceeds all memory, because He is the memory of the future.”[§]

And, my beloved Christians, it is for the memory of all that has ever been, and will ever be, that we pray to the Lord of Glory today, as we remember what has been lost to us, but which is surely found in God.

We pray for the souls of our lost brothers and sisters who perished in the invasion of Cyprus forty-six years ago, and for whom we offer our memorial chants and prayers today.

We remember the lost churches and icons of Cyprus, the sacred objects and sacred stones that were lost in the unjust division of this island Nation.

And we pray, because of the regrettable and lamentable decision to convert our Hagia Sophia into a mosque, as was done after the Fall of the City on May 29, 1453. This stance of conquest and domination is destructive to any civilized understanding of the world. Hagia Sophia is the Great Church of Christ and will always be so. Because we will remember!

Therefore, my beloved Christians, we stand together today, united in solidarity of the Faith, in our love for one another, and in the hope of the Resurrection.

We hope in the resurrection of our fallen brothers and sisters, and thus we pray:
Αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη αὐτῶν.

We hope in righteousness and justice for Cyprus, for the restoration of our Churches and Shrines, and for our people to return home. And we pray for those who have given their lives for this cause. They passed on to eternal life without seeing the fruition of our just purpose, and before a righteous and peaceful solution was found for Cyprus: Αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη αὐτῶν.

And we hope that the status quo for Hagia Sophia will somehow find its way back through sanity, mutual respect, and dialogue. But we are prepared to be the Great Church throughout the whole world – εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης – to the uttermost parts of the earth![*] For wherever two or three of us are gathered together in the Lord Jesus Christ's Holy Name, He is in our midst.[†] His Kingdom is not of this world, but within our hearts.[‡]

Therefore, because our hope is in the Lord, we are not afraid of what anyone will do to us.[§§] This is why with confidence in the hope of the Resurrection, we pray for all the souls who gave themselves defending the Great Church throughout history: Αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη αὐτῶν.

Brothers and Sisters, today we remember – faith, hope and love. This coming Friday, we prepare to mourn, because memory is so often based in loss and bereavement.

Nevertheless, we bound together as a community of faith, and we are strong in the Holy God Who says to us:

Ἐγώ εἰμι μεθ' ὑμῶν, καὶ οὐδεὶς καθ' ὑμῶν.

I am with you, and no one can be against you![**]

Γένοιτο! Amen!

[*] "'Mnemosyne' and the Children of Memory," Address at the British Museum, November 12, 1993.

[†] Luke 22:19.

[‡] Prayer before the Elevation of the Gifts; Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.

[§] Remarks at the Library of Congress, October 20, 1997, (privately published by the then Librarian of Congress, James Billington).

[**] Psalm 18:4 (LXX).

[††] Cf. Matthew 18:20.

[‡‡] Cf. John 18:36 and Luke 17:21.

[§§] Cf. Psalm 55:11 (LXX).

[***] Kontakion of the Ascension.

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