

27/09/2020

Archbishop Elpidophoros of America ordained Deacon Sotiri Michalatos to the Holy Priesthood



On September 26, 2020, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America ordained Deacon Sotiri Michalatos to the Holy Priesthood at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. AXIOS!!

Before Deacon Sotiri entered into the Holy Altar, His Eminence reminded him of the importance of the Παρακαταθήκη, the “Divine Trust” that will be placed in his hands:

“It is His Body – the whole of His Body that you will care for,
that you will protect and guard,
that you will serve,
that you will love as you love your own flesh,
as your own spouse, as your own family.

This is what will be required from you when the Lord comes in glory with the Holy Angels.”

AXIOS!!

Address at the Ordination to the Priesthood of Deacon Sotirios Michalatos

Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity

New York, New York

September 26, 2019

My beloved spiritual son, Deacon Sotiri,

Today, in the presence of your beloved Katherine, your family, your friends, and the community you have been serving and will continue to serve, you are crossing over from the service of the Diaconate to the ministry of the Holy Priesthood.

It is a natural passage for most deacons, but it is also a supernatural event. Today, the grace of the Holy Spirit comes upon you in a new and special way, in a way that brings you even deeper into the ministry of the Order of Melchizedek. You remember him, of course, the first man to be called “priest” in Holy Scripture. He is the exemplar who prefigured and was fulfilled by our Great High Priest and Lord Jesus Christ. Melchizedek is, as the Epistle to the Hebrews says:

Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; he abides a priest continually.

And thus also is our Lord “without father” in respect to His humanity and “without mother” in respect to His Divinity. As the Son and Word of God, He is from everlasting: “having neither beginning of days, nor end of life.”

When the Patriarch Abraham with his 318 servants – the same number as the Holy Fathers of Nicea – was victorious at the “Battle of the Kings,” and rescued his nephew Lot, this same Melchizedek came forth to meet him. Melchizedek, called the “King of Salem,” which means “King of Peace,” offered Abraham bread and wine, a profound prototype of the Eucharist.

My beloved Deacon, today you join yourself to the Order of Melchizedek, which is perfected in the Great High Priest our Lord Jesus Christ. And your participation – your μετουσία – in this Order is one of offering.

As a priest of the Most High God, you are called above all else to offer the Divine Eucharist – the bread and the wine, as once did Melchizedek to Abraham. Now, instead of Abraham, the man of faith, you will offer the bread and wine to the Source and Well-spring of our Faith – the Holy and Divine Trinity. And you, who have both mother and father, and who are mortal by nature, will stand in the place of our Lord Jesus Christ Who is, as we pray in the Divine Liturgy:

“... ὁ προσφέρων καὶ προσφερόμενος, καὶ προσδεχόμενος, καὶ διαδιδόμενος ...”

“... the One Who both offers and is offered, the One Who is received and is distributed...”

This is an awesome gift – to stand in the place of Christ and re-create in time, indeed, time after time – that which was done once and for all – ἐφάπαξ – for the life of the world.

You will utter the very words that the Lord said on the night in which He offered Himself for the life of the world:

“Take, eat, this is My Body, which is broken for you for the remission of sins.”

And:

“Drink of this, all of you; this is My Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.”

* * *

This you will do in your ministry as a priest before the Holy Altar, my beloved Deacon. But first, you will receive the charge, the sacred deposit of the Faith – the Παρακαταθήκη; and only on this day – never to be repeated until the Day of Judgment.

I will say to you, as I place the Body of Christ – the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world – into your hands:

“Λάβε τὴν παρακαταθήκην ταύτην, καὶ φύλαξον αὐτήν, ἕως τῆς δευτέρας παρουσίας τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτε παρ’ αὐτοῦ μέλλεις ἀπαιτεῖσθαι αὐτήν.”

“Receive this Divine Trust, and guard it until the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, at which time He will demand It from you.”

And what is this “Divine Trust?” This Παρακαταθήκη?

It is His Body – the whole of His Body that you will care for,

that you will protect and guard,

that you will serve,

that you will love as you love your own flesh,

as your own spouse, as your own family.

This is what will be required from you when the Lord comes in glory with the Holy Angels.

You must return to the Master of the House – the Οἰκοδεσπότη – all that He has entrusted to you:

His people,
their souls and bodies.
His Church,
every parish and ministry you engage,
His Body,
His Bride.

You are called to return the It to the Lord of all:

“... a glorious Church, without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy, and without blemish.”

Therefore, my beloved Deacon Sotiri,
Enter now into the joy of your Lord.

Ascend the ranks deeper into the order of Melchizedek.

And may the Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – ever keep you and your family in His grace, in His strength, and in His wisdom:

That you may abide a faithful servant unto the end of your days, and receive the reward of all the Saints and Righteous, who from every age have been well-pleasing unto Him, when He comes again in His glory and with His love to bring righteousness and justice to all the earth.

Amen.