03/10/2020

Bishop Irinej celebrates the Elevation of the Cross in Elizabeth



His Grace Bishop Irinej of Eastern America, on Sunday, September 27, 2020, celebrated the Great Feast of the Elevation of the Holy and Life-giving Cross in the Church of the Holy Ascension in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Concelebrating in the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, were Protopresbyter Aleksa Micich, Parish Administrator, and Protodeacon Milos Zdralic, Diocesan Financial Secretary.

Before the beginning of the Holy Liturgy, and during the Great Doxology, as is particular to the hierarchical celebration of the Feast, the Bishop processed with the Cross, embellished with Sweet Basil and Flowers, to the center of the church. There he elevated the Cross to the four corners of the universe, as the Protodeacon intoned the appointed petitions. Thereafter, he placed the Cross in the middle of the church, likened unto the Tree of Life planted in the midst of the Garden of Eden.

During his sermon, Bishop Irinej movingly spoke of how the Cross, always viewed

as an instrument of suffering and death, has been transfigured by Christ's voluntary death on the Cross. For through His death and resurrection, He destroyed death, opening for us the path to Life Eternal.

Teaching us all, the Bishop emphasized, how we are to allow the Cross to be planted in us, as did the Theotokos, thus becoming herself the image of the Church, ***"more spacious than the heavens"***. In like manner, we are all summoned by St. Paul to become temples of the Holy Spirit, earthen vessels for the reception of Christ's Most Holy Body and Precious Blood.

One could observe how His Grace truly rejoices in the fulfillment of these words, as the faithful draw near to receive Holy Communion, most notably the children. For in our common union with each other, we become one with Christ.

Truly, as we sing in our hymnography: "***Through the Cross, joy has come into all the world".***

Later that afternoon, His Grace visited the neighbouring parish of St. George in Elizabeth, where he was received by host priest, Protopresbyter Zoran Radovic and family. The Bishop met with visiting Hierodeacon Sergije from the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral. A talented woodcarver, Hierodeacon Sergije is best known for his carving of the sarcophagus of St. Basil of Ostrog.

Source: Eastern American Diocese

— spc.rs