

St. Nicholas N.Y. - A Message from His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros



St. Nicholas October 2020 Monthly Update

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I have good news to share with you! Thanks to the efforts of the Friends of St. Nicholas, and the cooperative work of our Archdiocese's leading expert in Byzantine Iconography, Bishop Joachim of Amissos, and the renown iconographer, Father Loukas of the Holy Mountain (Xenophontos Monastery), we now are approaching – for the first time – an integrated and holistic iconographic program for the Saint Nicholas Shrine at Ground Zero. This has been a long time coming, because the vision of the interior of the Shrine is, in many ways, more important than even the exterior with its special architectural feature of illumination from within. Such 'illumination from within' is more pronounced in the Holy Iconography of the Church, as witnessed by the Παντοκράτωρ icon that you see here, that will adorn the interior of the dome.

Last week, Father Loukas traveled to New York from Mt. Athos, after working long-distance for weeks with Bishop Joachim to develop a program for the Church. Bishop Joachim prepared a remarkable presentation for the Friends of St. Nicholas, and together with Fr. Loukas, walked us (literally and figuratively) through the Shrine, in order to bring together the theological and aesthetic elements into a

unified vision. For the first time, we now have inclusion of themes from 9/11 and the wondrous life cycles of St. Nicholas himself included in the Church.

It will be exciting to reveal this plan as it becomes finalized and the work of Father Loukas progresses on Mount Athos. Our Church is blessed to have two such talents – theological and aesthetical – who are working together to bring about the liturgical vision of our National Shrine, “on earth, as it is in Heaven.”

With paternal love and gratitude in Christ,

Τὸ Ἀμερικανὸν Ἐλπίδοφορος

Archbishop Elpidophoros of America



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