

## **Bishop Spyridon of Amastris Ordained in Belmont, California**



AXIOS was chanted with jubilant voices on Saturday, November 14 as Bishop-elect Spyridon (Kezios) of Amastris was ordained to the holy episcopacy. Clergy, family and friends traveled from near and far to join in prayer on this momentous day at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Belmont, CA, to witness this beautiful service and the continuation of Apostolic Succession which began with the founding of the Orthodox Christian Church by the Apostle Andrew in Constantinople nearly 2,000 years ago.

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America presided over the service, along with His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain, and His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco. Several clergy were in attendance that all had close ties with Bishop-elect Spyridon, many of whom served as Assistant Priests under then-Father Spencer T. Kezios, especially during his long and distinguished tenure as Proistamenos of Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Northridge, CA.

In addressing Bishop-elect Spyridon during the Ordination service, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros shared, "Today we gather in this church of the Holy Cross,

a parish well-known to you and served by your dear friend and collaborator, the late and ever memorable Father Leonidas Contos. We gather before the Holy Cross of the Lord, the place par excellence of sacrificial love, to receive your offering of service in the Holy High Priesthood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.” He continued on stating, “I pray that your episcopacy becomes the means of your sharing your many gifts with an even wider circle of the faithful. Thus, may your life and ministry attain the blessing uttered by the Holy Father we celebrated only yesterday, Saint John Chrysostom the Archbishop of Constantinople who said, ‘Glory to god for all things! Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ πάντων ἕνεκεν!’”

As Bishop-elect Spyridon stood on the Solea, he also offered a heartfelt message filled with humility and gratitude where he said, “I am no different than any other man being brought before three Hierarchs to be ordained into the sacred office of the episcopacy. I am no different in the emotion that I feel. And I am also no different in the awe that is within my heart and my mind.”

As he continued to address Archbishop Elpidophoros, Bishop-elect Spyridon recalled his childhood years walking to church, holding the hand of his yiayia and to attend Divine Liturgy. As he grew into his teenage years, he also shared pivotal moment when his parish priest, Father Peter Bithos, asked him, “Spencer, would you like to be an altar boy?” Bishop-elect Spyridon recalled his personal reaction, “My heart leapt for joy, I could not believe what was happening to me. That I would be within that altar and the Holy of the Holies. And perhaps most vividly of all as my teenage years began to develop in that altar remains indelibly marked in my mind and in my heart, and that moment I turn to whenever I may feel that I need to renew what brought me to the priesthood.”

His inspirational message continued as he shared, “I pray that what I felt as that young boy will carry me through the remainder of my life as a hierarch. And so today as I ask to be brought before the Holy Altar and to kneel, I want to be that little boy again. I want to be the little boy that will hold the hand, hopefully of an angel that will come on that awesome day and lead me to green pastures and place me behind still waters, and accept me in all my unworthiness, because He is a God of love and a God of mercy. And so in humility, both with a heart so full it overflows, I humbly ask O Lord, accept me into the hierarchy.”

Bishop Spyridon’s three sons, Mark, Trevon and Nick were in attendance, as well as his sister Helen Gooch. The newly assigned Consul General of San Francisco Socrates Sourvinos also joined in this day to both welcome His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, and to honor the episcopal ordination of His Grace Bishop Spyridon of Amastris. There were also several Archons from the Order

of Saint Andrew the Apostle, all of whom are close friends of Bishop Spyridon, who also participated in the service.

The clergy who served in the Holy Altar were: V. Rev, Archimandrite Athenagoras Ziliaskopoulos - Chaplain from Hellenic College Holy Cross; Rev. Father Peter Salmas - Holy Cross, Belmont, CA; Rev. Father Tom Zaferes - Ascension Cathedral, Oakland, CA; Rev. Father Michael Pallad - Saint Haralambos, Peoria, AZ; Rev. Father Peter Stratos - Saint Anthony, Pasadena, CA; and Rev. Father Haralambos Fox - Saint Barbara, CA.

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