23/11/2020

Archbishop Elpidophoros of America Homily



Homily at the Divine Liturgy

November 22, 2020

Saint Matrona of Moscow Cathedral of Miami

Dania Beach, Florida

Your Eminence Metropolitan Alexios, dear brother in Christ,

Beloved Fathers, and Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

It is a great joy to be with the clergy and faithful of the Slavic Vicariate, and especially to have the additional blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta joining us in prayer.

Today we celebrate a most significant moment in the life of this Cathedral of Saint Matrona, the blessing of the central dome of the Temple. For any church edifice, the dome is the visual reminder of the canopy of Heaven, under which all creation dwells. It is an extraordinary element of architecture, the symbol of God's all-embracing and all-pervasive love for the world and everyone and everything in it.

It is a visionary experience, meant to transport the mind and heart of the worshipper to the realm of Heaven, and to give us an aspiration for "things above," even as we dwell here below. This visual purpose is made even more poignant by the fact that your Heavenly intercessor, the blessed Saint Matrona of Moscow, was

born blind, like the man who cried aloud:

All my life I have beheld neither the sun shining forth, nor laid eyes on the bright luminescence of the moon. Yet since You were born of an immaculate Virgin so as to fill all things with light, now fill me with Your light, because you are compassionate.

While the Man Born Blind that we read of in the Gospel of John received his sight from the Lord, Saint Matrona was even more blessed to receive the interior vision that surpasses the spectrum of visible light. She beheld in her inmost depths the brilliance of the Noetic Sun of Righteousness, and the Spiritual Moon that reflects His glory, whom we call the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. Her blindness was a revelation for her, of the Heavenly realities that we can only approximate.

And so today, beloved Faithful, we dedicate this dome in Saint Matrona's honor, for the glory of God that she beheld in her mind and held in her heart every moment of her remarkable and truly miraculous life. The Saints of God are truly the "great cloud of witnesses" spoken of in the Letter to the Hebrews. And today, the Saints of God join the Heavenly Hosts and all the Ranks of the Celestial Kingdom in being reflected in this newly blessed and consecrated dome. If I may, I would add one more Holy Personage to our rejoicing on this occasion.

For today, on the New Calendar, is the feast of Saint Iakovos Tsalikis, a very special righteous and sanctified monastic who is near and dear to my heart. As many of you may know, because I have borne witness to him many times, Saint Iakovos played a very important role when I was elected Archbishop of America.

In the moments before the formal acceptance of my election as Archbishop, I had one last act to perform as the then Metropolitan of Bursa and a member of the Holy and Sacred Synod of a prior term. I had to sign the canonical act that proclaimed the Righteous Monk Iakovos Tsalikis a Saint. This was especially moving to me in those seconds before becoming Archbishop of America, as it brought full circle the vision of the Saint that I had beheld the night before I commenced my Synodal tenure in 2017, even though I did not identify the Saint at that time.

You see, my beloved Christians, the Saints are with us. They are in us. They adorn the walls of our Churches and they adorn our hearts with their virtuous examples. Their relics bring us blessings and the stories of their lives give us courage to face the day.

As we bless this dome, which symbolizes the Heaven that the Holy Ones of God now inhabit, let us see their presence as well, with the spiritual eyes of Saint

Matrona of Moscow, with the pure piety of Saint Iakovos Tsalikis. And through their prayers and those of the Holy Theotokos and all the Saints, may we all attain the Dome that is above, the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

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