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## His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros Homily on the Thronal Feast of the Ecumenical Patriarchate



November 30, 2020

Archdiocesan Chapel of Saint Paul

New York, New York

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Τὸν κήρυκα τῆς πίστεως, καὶ ὑπηρέτην τοῦ Λόγου, Ἀνδρέαν εὐφημήσωμεν! [\*]

Indeed, let us praise with worthy hymns the Preacher of the Faith and the Servant of the Logos, Andrew the First-Called Disciple of the Lord.

On this, the Thronal Feast of the Mother Church of Constantinople, when we recall the Apostolic foundation upon which the entire Great Church of Christ is built, we rejoice to behold a most worthy successor upon the Throne of this Patriarchal See, one worthy of the ministry of Andrew himself: His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

For as the Hymnographer sings, Andrew was the Preacher of the Faith and the Servant of the Logos, and there is no doubt that the martyric and unassailable Patriarchal ministry of His All-Holiness Bartholomew follows in the footsteps of the

First-Called Disciple.

Like Saint Andrew, Patriarch Bartholomew is always seeking ways to bring his brother to Christ.[†]

Like Saint Andrew, Patriarch Bartholomew finds the miracles in the most humble of offerings.[‡]

Like Saint Andrew, Patriarch Bartholomew counsels his fellow Preachers of the Faith and the Servants of the Logos – the Primates of Orthodoxy, and with them brings more people to Christ.[§]

For nearly thirty years, His All-Holiness has led the worldwide Orthodox Church from the beacon of light that we call Phanar. Through crises and troubles, he has never wavered, but has stood firm and held fast in the Orthodox Faith of Christ. He has kept his hand steady on the rudder of the Ark of Salvation, and navigated the Church through the Scylla of nationalism and the Charybdis of fundamentalism, so that we can all arrive at the spiritual Ithaki of our homecoming, our νόστος into the safe harbor of unity of Faith and union with God.

Therefore, on this Feast of the See of the First Throne of Orthodoxy – established by the Ecumenical Councils and bearing witness for two millennia, let us rejoice in the diakonia of the First-Called Disciple, and in all his successors down through the ages. The ministry of Andrew is never done, because it is a ministry of love, a ministry of conciliation, and a ministry of renewal.

The ministry of love is borne out by the constant appeal of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to every Christian for unity above all in their witness for Christ. This unity is beyond even the confines of Orthodoxy. It is a call for all who would claim the name “Christian” to live in the harmony and the solidarity of the Gospel that bends the arc of history toward the Kingdom of Heaven.

The ministry of conciliation is borne out by the ceaseless work of His All-Holiness not to allow the Orthodox Church to fall into political structures that place national identity above our identity in Christ. Despite those who would use the Holy Sacraments of the Church as tools to advance ethnic and nationalistic agendas, the Ecumenical Patriarch constantly seeks a return to an understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ, the Body of all Believers, and not a federation of national ecclesiastical structures.

The ministry of renewal is borne out by the prophetic voice that was raised in the desert by His All-Holiness, calling all Christians to take seriously their vocation to be

stewards of creation, by being stewards of the environment. He has been the preeminent voice among Christians in the world to embrace an ecological theology consistent with the teachings of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments.

The See of Saint Andrew has been, and will ever be, “the Preacher of the Faith and the Servant of the Logos,” for the Mother Church is both speaker and a doer of the word of truth.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

On this Feast of the Throne, let us give thanks to Almighty God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that the light of the Phanar burns brightly, and the years of our Ecumenical Patriarch are many! Εἰς Πολλὰ Ἴετη!

[\*] Doxastikon of the Liti, Great Vespers of the Feast.

[†] Cf. John 1:40-42.

[‡] Cf. John 6:8.

[§] Cf. John 12:20-22.

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