

08/12/2020

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America Address at the Ordination of Bishop-Elect Timothy of Hexamilion



Saints Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Cathedral

Merrillville, Illinois

Your Eminence Archbishop Athenagoras of Mexico,

Your Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta,

Your Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago,

Your Grace Bishop Sevastianos of Zela,

My Beloved Brothers in the Holy Spirit,

Dear Clergy and Faithful of Metropolis of Chicago,

Beloved Bishop-Elect of Hexamilion, Your Grace Timothy,

My dear brother Timothy, today we gather in this Cathedral with the pleroma of the Church – the fullness of the Clergy and Laity, and with the Heavenly Ranks of the Angels and Saints, led by the Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. We are gathered for you, dear brother, to raise our prayers on high, as you are raised to the Episcopal Dignity.

Beloved Bishop-Elect Timothy, your name means “the honor of God” and it is the name of a renown and saintly Bishop, a spiritual son of the Apostle Paul, who is mentioned numerous times in the New Testament. In his Epistle to the Philippians, Saint Paul speaks of him thus:

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you ... for I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.[*]

This comparison echoes through the ages, as a standard for the episcopacy. Our minds should be faithful like that of the Apostle himself, and our natural instinct should always be to care for the state of the souls entrusted to us.

Therefore, beloved brother in the Lord, we Bishops, we who will lay our hands upon you to elevate you to the ministry of the High Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, are those who are trusting in the Lord Jesus. We are trusting in His mercy that He will guide you in this new ministry. We look forward to the next stage of your journey of service and love here in the Metropolis of Chicago.

For you are a true blue son of this wonderful Metropolis; your entire priestly diakonia has been within this ecclesiastical territory. Now you serve as Chancellor, assisting Metropolitan Nathanael in the administration and good order of the Metropolis, and for this we are very grateful.

But your See and Title of Hexamilion, the ecclesiastical territory selected for you by the Ecumenical Patriarch himself, has a deep history in ancient Anatolia, in the region of Gallipoli. Founded in the 4th Century BC by Lysimachus, a successor of Alexander the Great, it became known as Hexamilion after the time that Justinian the Great built a fortress there.

There are three aspects of this ancient See that I wish to commend to you, for you to bring to your ministry as a bishop. First, the restoration of Hexamilion that was done by Justinian, the same Emperor who built the Hagia Sophia. Justinian rebuilt the city and fortified it on every side. Let this be an example to you: Surround this

Metropolis with a powerful ministry of love. As Chancellor, you have a particular responsibility to the parish clergy. Let your episcopacy be marked as a strong and bold diakonia of real ἀγάπη that transforms their ministries for the better.

Second, one of your predecessors, Methodios by name, participated in the famous Council of Constantinople of the year 879. This Council was a truly ecumenical event, for it affirmed the Patriarchy of Saint Photios the Great, and created peace between the Sees of Elder Rome and New Rome, the Queen of Cities, our Constantinople. This ecumenical example is important, especially in a place like Chicago. Our engagement with other Christian communities is vital for our mission in this country – to share our faith without condemning others, and to bear witness to the timeless truth of Orthodoxy in dialogues of both love and truth.

Finally, I would tell you, beloved Bishop-Elect Timothy, that another of your predecessors participated in a later Synod of Constantinople, the Palamite Council of 1351. This Council affirmed the possibility of the direct experience of God, as explained most brilliantly by the great Archbishop of Thessaloniki, Gregory Palamas. Your Grace, this third aspect of Hexamilion is especially significant for you in your Hierarchical ministry.

As a Bishop of the Church of God, you are called to inspire the Faithful to seek after the experience of the one, true God. Your life is to be an open book to the clergy and laity alike, where they may read the narrative of your virtues that will spur them on in their spiritual life: through the Sacraments, through prayer, through the whole liturgy of the Church, and through their deep yearning for transfiguration in Christ.

Bishop-Elect Timothy:

You remember your namesake, the ever-memorable Bishop Timothy of Rodostolon, who was renown as a dynamic Bishop in this See, when it was still a District of the Holy Archdiocese of America. You served under Metropolitan Iakovos of blessed memory with loyalty and great diligence. And now you serve with Metropolitan Nathanael in the position of Chancellor. As you prepare to ascend these steps and take your place in the ranks of the Episcopacy, I leave you with this exhortation of the Apostle Paul to Saint Timothy himself:

I charge you therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season ... be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. Fight the good fight. Finish the course. Keep

the faith.[†]

Ἀμήν.

[*] Philippians 2:19-20.

[†] II Timothy 4: 1,2,5,7.

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