

Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos Hosts Stellar Virtual Light the Path Celebration



Event Supported the Bishop Anthony Philoptochos Student Aid Endowment Fund

The goal was simple. Help the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos “Light the Path” from the West Coast to East Coast through the generosity of donors. So, what is “Light the Path”? It is an annual fundraiser presented by the Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos to benefit the Bishop Anthony Philoptochos Student Aid Endowment Fund, which provides financial assistance to the seminarians and students from the Metropolis of San Francisco who are attending Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA.

Usually this event is filled with festive Christmas trees and holiday décor, Christmas carolers, and attendees enjoying a sumptuous luncheon and making donations to support this worthwhile cause. COVID-19 put an end to this in-person event, but it did not dampen the spirit of Philoptochos and their commitment to supporting the seminarians and students from the Metropolis of San Francisco.

It was a flurry of activity which started in mid-October to launch an online crowd-

funding platform to begin on November 1 in conjunction with the Feast of Saints Cosmas and Damianos, the Holy Unmercenaries and patron saints of Philoptochos, but these fabulous ladies did it! In a special message to faithful on this day, Metropolitan Gerasimos commented that Philoptochos has, “made a significant difference in the lives of others, caring for the body and soul of those who are the grateful recipients of their unconditional love and support.”

With a team of Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos board members who quickly immersed themselves in event planning, a virtual Light the Path gathering was created which was held on Saturday, December 5, 2020. Nearly 400 Philoptochos women and men joined online for an uplifting, entertaining and informative program that featured videos of some students, sharing their feelings about the impact of Hellenic College Holy Cross on their lives. They expressed their gratitude to Philoptochos, how the Bishop Anthony Philoptochos Student Aid Endowment Fund has alleviated a significant portion of their financial burden, and how Philoptochos has truly embraced them and their families with love and compassion.

The committee was led by Metropolis Philoptochos President Jeannie Ranglas, with the assistance of Stacia Counelis, Vickie Demos, Vickie Holloway, Cynthia Kezos, Tim McGuire, Christine Psefteas and Christine Zeppos.



In her opening remarks, Metropolis Philoptochos President Jeannie Ranglas spoke about the importance of Light the Path with this powerful message, “Philoptochos is part of that light, bringing hope to the hopeless, help to those in need, love to those who are alone. That light also extends from coast to coast, from every corner

of our beautiful Metropolis all the way to Brookline, Massachusetts. Let us not focus on the challenges, but rather let us be a beacon of light that brings faith, hope and love for the future of our Church.”

Hellenic College Holy Cross President George Cantonis warmly greeted the attendees and stated, “When I think about the number of students the Metropolis of San Francisco supports through the annual generosity of the Philoptochos, I am truly humbled. Your support underscores the importance of our joint mission and spurs me on to strengthen our institution and partnership with you.”

In his message to the virtual attendees, Rev. Fr. Jon Magoulias, Vice Chairman of the Hellenic College Holy Cross Board of Trustees and proistamenos of the Annunciation Church in Modesto, CA, conveyed his gratitude to the Metropolis Philoptochos by saying, “Know that by your support there is great love to continue serving Christ; that they are entrusted with your support to bring Christ’s love and kindness and mercy and compassion to all. No other Philoptochos society across our Archdiocese offers support to our students like you do.”

The internationally acclaimed Citrus Singers from Citrus College in Glendora, California provided musical interludes with holiday favorites. The program began and ended with the talented Nicholas Fettis of Carmel, CA offering a piano concert of Greek and American Christmas music. Even Santa Claus stopped by a few times to give away gifts to lucky participants and spread Christmas cheer.



During his Archpastoral greeting, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos applauded the work of Philoptochos and Light the Path saying, “Beyond the raising of the funds, you have leveraged technology so that you can fulfill your ongoing

commitment to our seminarians and students attending Hellenic College Holy Cross. Whether they are on campus or attending virtually, there is still a financial responsibility for each student. And not even the pandemic can slow down Philoptochos as a true 'force of nature' to make sure that each and every one of our 13 students enrolled this academic year at Hellenic College Holy Cross know that they are loved, they are supported emotionally and financially, and that they have an entire army of women as their champions."

Over \$170,000 has been raised so far for the Bishop Anthony Philoptochos Student Aid Endowment Fund, with contributions continuing to be accepted to help them reach their goal of \$250,000. Visit www.sfphiloptochos.org to make your donation today!

In Case You Missed It – Watch a replay of the event on the Facebook page for the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco Ladies Philoptochos Society.

goarch.org