27/07/2021

Remarks of Thanksgiving to Archbishop Elpidophoros from V. Rev. Archimandrite George Nikas



On July 25, 2021, the V. Rev. Archimandrite George Nikas delivered remarks of thanksgiving to His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America at both the Divine Liturgy and the Luncheon that followed.

From the Divine Liturgy:
Σεβασμιώτατε Ἅγιε Αμερικής, κ.κ. Ελπιδοφόρε,
ὡς εὖ παρέστητε!!
Ὄντως, μὲ ξεχωριστή χαρά καὶ βαθία συγκίνηση σᾶς καλωσορίζουμε στην εὐλογημένη μας ἐνορία του Ἱεροῦ Καθεδρικοῦ Ναοῦ τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος τῆς πόλεως Salt Lake City, τῆς πολιτείας Utah, σὲ αὐτὴν τὴν πρώτη σας ἱστορικήν ἐπίσκεψιν. Η σεβασμία ὑμῶν ἀρχιερατική παρουσία μᾶς ἐμπνέει ποικιλοτρόπως καὶ μᾶς καθοδηγεῖ πρὸς τὰ Ἄνωθεν, καὶ μᾶς ἐνυσχύει ἐν σώματι καὶ πνεύματι, ὥστε οὕτως νὰ συνεχίσουμε τὸν ἀγώνα τὸν καλόν πρὸς δόξαν τοῦ Παναγάθου Θεοῦ και πρὸς τὴν εξάπλωση τοῦ Ἱεροῦ Εὐαγγελικοῦ Λόγου μέσω τῆς ἀθανάτου Ὀρθοδόξου πίστεώς μας καί τῆς ἑλληνικῆς ἡμῶν γλώσσης καὶ παραδόσεως.
Τὸ εὐλογημένο ποίμνιο τῆς SLC και μείζονος Utah, τὸ ὁποίο ἐντάσσεται στὸν

ἀμπελώνα τοῦ Κυρίου, ξεχωρίζει διὰ τὴν βαθία του πίστη καὶ ἀφοσίωση πρὸ τὸ ἔργο τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας μας καὶ τὴν ἀποστολήν Αὐτῆς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ὁλόκληρον, τὸν ὑπερήφανον ἐναγκαλισμό του πρὸς τὰ ἤθη καὶ ἔθημα τοῦ ελληνικοῦ γένους καὶ τῆς ὁμογενείας, ἀλλά καὶ γιὰ τὴν αἰσιόδοξο προσέγγισή του σε θέματα ποῦ ἀφοροῦν τὴν μελλοντική πορεία τῆς Ὀρθοδόξου μας Ἐκκλησίας, μέσω τῆς δυναμικῆς καὶ πολυδιάστατης παρουσίας τῆς νεολαίας μας ἐν Ἀμερικῇ.
Σεβασμιώτατε, εὔχομαι ὃ,τι μέσω τῶν διαφόρων ἐπισκέψεών σας καὶ ἐπαφῶν μὲ ἐκπροσώπους καὶ μέλη τῶν διαφόρων κοινοτήτων τῆς περιοχῆς μας, τὴν διηλθήσαν ἐβδομάδα, διαπιστώσατε τὸ γεγονός τῆς πλὴρους ἀφοσιώσεως καὶ ἀγάπης τῶν πιστών τῆς περιοχῆς αὐτῆς πρὸς τὴν Ἱερᾶν Ἀρχιεπισκοπήν Ἀμερικῆς, ὃπως καὶ ἡ καρδία ὅλων μας ἐφράνθη από τὴν ἀγάπην σας και υψηλή σας παρουσίαν, εὐελπισθήσα εἰς ἕνα προσοδοφόρο και ἐλπιδοφόρο μέλλον.
Κατακλείοντας Σεβασμιώτατε, εὔχομαι καὶ προσεύχομαι ὁλοθύμως εἰς τὸν Πανάγαθον Θεόν, καὶ μετά πάντων τῶν τῆς περιοχῆς SLC χριστιανῶν πιστῶν, ὅπως ἡ Σεβασμία σας μορφή ἐπιτύχῃ εἰς τό ὑψηλόν, πολυεύθυνον καί δυσχερές αὐτῆς ἔργον, καὶ μετὰ τῆς βοηθείας τοῦ εν Τριάδι προσκυνούμενου Θεού, νὰ αὐξάνη τὴν δύναμην καὶ τὴν ἔμ\πνευσήν της στὴν σταυρική της πορεία, γιὰ νὰ ἐκφράζη καὶ ὁμολογή τὸ σταυρικό φρόνημα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ποὺ ὁδηγεῖ στὴν ἀναστάσιμον ζωήν.
Ἐλπιδοφόρου τοῦ Σεβασμιωτάτου καὶ Θεοπροβλήτου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀμερικῆς πολλά τὰ ἔτη, καὶ εἰς ὅλα ΑΞΙΟΣ!!

From the Luncheon:
Your Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America,
Beloved Rev. Presbyter Patrick O’Rourke and Brother Clergy,
Mr. George Karahalios, Parish Council President and Devoted Parish Council Members,
Mr. Nicholas Bapis, Archon of the Ecumenical Throne
Mr. Christos Mantas, St. Paul Medal Honoree
Mrs. Cathy Neofitos, Madame President of the St. Philothea Philoptochos and beloved Sisterhood Members,
Devout Orthodox Faithful of our historic parish and greater Salt Lake Valley
Christ is in our midst!
This past week has indeed been a truly historic week for our Salt Lake Community and for the Greek Orthodox Faithful across the State of Utah as we have welcomed our Spiritual Father and Chief Shepherd, the Exarch of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America. It has been over 20 years since the Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America has visited Salt Lake City – this hierarchical thirst has been quenched by Your Eminence, who like Jacob’s Well, bestows upon us refreshment and spiritual rejuvenation.

Your Eminence, it is challenging to express not only my personal joy, but especially the collective jubilation and emotion of all our faithful stewards. We are extremely grateful that you have taken time to visit, break bread, exchange ideas, and bless us with your genuine Archpastoral love and concern. The beautiful and grand Hierarchical Divine Liturgy that we just celebrated was the pinnacle of a week that saw Your Eminence received with much excitement, respect and pomp by government and religious leaders as well as the pure love and reverence of our Youth and Faithful Orthodox Christians.

The faithful of Salt Lake City have an extraordinary pioneering spirit. It has ensured the survival of Orthodoxy and Hellenism in this Mecca of Mormonism. Moreover, this indomitable spirit is the catalyst that has propelled our community to be a shining beacon of Christian Faith and devotion, blossoming into one of the most dynamic and important parishes of not only the Holy Metropolis of Denver, but I dare say the entire Archdiocese of America. I am confident that Your Eminence has experienced this firsthand during these last several days and that we may be a cause for Your Eminence to boast about his spiritual children in the Mountain West.

As the local Spiritual Father entrusted with the care of this flock in this vineyard of our Lord, I could not be more proud or thankful for what I have inherited here from my predecessors. Allow me a moment to thank all who labored tirelessly for the success of this most historic visit. Although I cannot express my gratitude to everyone, I need to single out a few:

1. Brother Clergy and Communities for their support and prayers…
2. Chefs: Jim Fouskandrakis, John Lyhnakis, Dimitri Tsagaris, Dionysios Neofitos and all who assisted
3. Decorating Committee: George Miller, Chyrsoula Lyhnakis and Elpitha Votsis and all who assisted
4. Maria Papadakis our Office Secretary
5. Archon Nicholas and Dr. Elaine Bapis for hosting the Welcome Dinner and numerous events this past week
6. George Karahalios, PC President and PC Members
7. Fr. Patrick O’Rourke, Assistant Priest and most beloved Brother in Christ

Sevasmiotate, we hope that you have enjoyed your substantial and unprecedented 6-day visit to our Parish and that you will remember us in your prayers as you return to New York and resume your manifold responsibilities in shepherding this Holy Archdiocese, with the zeal and precision that has distinguished your dynamic Archpastoral ministry. We pray that you will especially remember us each time you see the kalimata used for the Diskopotira during today’s service – that we humbly present to Your Eminence as a gift of appreciation and profound respect – and that they will also become a catalyst for fond memories of your visit to the Greek

Orthodox Church of Greater Salt Lake – Holy Trinity Cathedral and Prophet Elias Church.

EIS POLLA ETI DESPOTA!!!

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