03/08/2021

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America Homily for the Service of the Paraklesis to the Theotokos



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have now arrived at our little Lent that precedes our Little Pascha for the All-Holy Virgin Mother of God. Throughout these days of the Holy Fast for her Dormition, we chant with fervor and love the Canon we know as the Paraklesis.

In one of the first hymns we hear these words:

Τῇ Θεοτόκῳ ἐκτενῶς νῦν προσδράμωμεν….

To the Theotokos let us now run most fervently ….

This is how we worship in these intense days that precede her Feast of the Dormition. We run to the Mother of God – with fervor and love, ever-stretching out our hands to her – so that she might embrace us with her prayers and intercessions.

She is our advocate with her Son. No one has more access to the ear of a child than its mother. She sees our pain, our struggles, our challenges; and with her

compassionate heart she pours forth intercessions on our behalf. Remember, the prophecy that said her soul would be pierced by a sword. As Symeon uttered when she was presented to the Lord on the Fortieth day:

Καὶ σοῦ δὲ αὐτῆς τὴν ψυχὴν διελεύσεται ῥομφαία, ὅπως ἂν ἀποκαλυφθῶσιν ἐκ πολλῶν καρδιῶν διαλογισμοί.

And a sword shall pass through your soul as well, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. [1]

And this came to pass, when she beheld her Son and God upon the Cross. From this pain, the Panagia is able to identify with us. Her compassionate loving-kindness opens our hearts, and we can come to truly understand our own thoughts and motivations.

Tonight, then, in this Paraklesis to our most merciful Lady and Ever-Virgin Mary, let us meditate upon her suffering. Let us concentrate our mind's eye upon the Hill of Golgotha, when she was standing next to her Divine Son. Let us be with her when she heard the Lord Jesus say:

Γύναι, ἴδε ὁ υἱός σου.

My Lady, behold your son. [2]

This moment is when the Lord Jesus Christ entrusted all of us forever to the care and the watchful eye of His Most Holy Mother. From this point forward she became the Mother of all Christians. For the Lord also said to the Beloved Disciple, and in doing so, He said to all of us:

Ἰδοὺ ἡ μήτηρ σου.

Behold your Mother. [3]

My beloved Christians,

She is our Mother, who loves us as every mother loves her own child. When a child is sick, the mother suffers. When a child is lost, the mother weeps. When a child is without hope, the mother perseveres in hope, and in faith, and in love. Because a mother's love is never exhausted. Her faith cannot be compromised. And her hope will never die. Because just as the Virgin knew the Resurrection after the Crucifixion, every mother knows there is redemption for every child.

Therefore, let us run eagerly and earnestly to the Mother of God as to our very own

mother. And let us cry aloud to her, for she will hear us:

Δέσποινα, βοήθησον ἐφ’ ἡμῖν σπλαγχνισθεῖσα,

σπεῦσον, ἀπολλύμεθα ὑπὸ πλήθους πταισμάτων,

μὴ ἀποστρέψῃς σοὺς δούλους κενούς·

σὲ γὰρ καὶ μόνην ἐλπίδα κεκτήμεθα.

Lady, come and help us, have compassion upon us;
hasten now for we are lost in the host of our errors;
Do not turn your servants away empty,
For you alone are our only hope.

Amen.

[1] Luke 2:35.

[2] John 19:26.

[3] John 19:27.

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