20/09/2021

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America Saturday after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross



My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, I witness the fruits of your extraordinary labors for the sake of our Lord and for your community. I behold the beauty and glory of the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the rebuilding and reopening of this precious and historic community of Corona.

Over four years ago, your Ναός was devastated by a fire that caused as much damage to your hearts as it did to the building. This vital community was crushed by the news of a fire that had raged through the Church and destroyed most of its interior.

Through the past four years, with your former Proïstamenos and now with Father Chrysostom, you have bravely, methodically, and diligently pursued the course of reconstruction and adornment of this Temple of the Transfiguration. I rejoice to be with you today, to enjoy this harvest of your heroism. For you never gave up, you never gave in; but you did give of yourselves to being about this miracle of rebirth

of your Parish. You should be very, very proud of yourselves today. I am very certain that it has not been easy; nothing important as this ever is.

But you have triumphed, and in a spectacular way. As you look around the Temple, you see how this has truly been, as Saint Paul says in Today's Epistle Reading:

… a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.[*]

What I feel the most about you today, my friends of this beloved Corona Community, and especially on this Saturday after the Exaltation of the Precious Cross of the Lord, is that you have passed through your own Passion – your time of trial and testing. As it says in the Psalms:

For You have proved us, O God, and by fire You have tired us, even as silver is tired by fire. … We went through fire … and You have brought us out into refreshment. [†]

And now you have arrived at the consummation of your efforts – at your moment of refreshment, at the Resurrection of your precious Church.

Indeed, this is truly a moment of transfiguration, and let us not forget that the Shining Forth on Mount Tabor was done before the Crucifixion, as a promissory note on the Resurrection. Today, you have brought the story of your Church community full circle – from the loss of your Temple to its restoration. Our worship together is a sign that your faith, your devotion, your commitment, and your dedication know no bounds.

You did not allow the fire to define you and now you have arrived, by hard work and God's gracious favor, to the refreshment promised by the Lord.

On this day, when we celebrate the rebuilding and adornment of your Church, and we witness the love and generosity of the community that has transfigured this place once again, we remember all those who sacrificed for this blessèd Ekklesia. As the Greek reveals, you have been called out for this special service, and you have the gratitude of your brethren, your neighbors, and your Archbishop.

In this moment of thankfulness, I want to acknowledge someone who has gone on to eternal reward and rest, the late and ever-memorable Suzanne Mados, who has provided in her will a generous donation for the Greek Orthodox Schools of the Archdiocese, as well as the St. Michael's Home for the Aged. We conducted the Μνημόσυνον in her memory today, and as we remember her, let us also pause to

remember all the benefactors of this community.

My sisters and brothers in Christ:

We have all been abundantly blessed by the benefactors who came before us. I think of the great Archbishops before my time: Athenagoras, Michael, and Iakovos. May the Lord grant us to always be ready to build up His Church – just as you have done here in Corona, and never give up, no matter the challenge. By the prayers of the Theotokos and all the Saints!

Amen.

[*] I Corinthians 2:4b-5.

[†] Psalm 65:10,12 (LXX).

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