13/12/2021

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America Homily for the Feast of Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker



Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today is a day of great rejoicing and gladness for the Church worldwide! But especially for all who bear the name, “Spyridon,” whether they be individuals or Churches of God.

And here – in Washington Heights – in this magnificent Church dedicated to the Bishop of Trimythous, this blessèd community celebrates today with glory. And I glorify and give thanks to God as well that I am with you to share in your joy.

Truly, this Parish worthily glorifies Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker, for you have also worked wonders right here! The restoration project has been a real miracle of faith and dedication. And I can say without hesitation that this Parish is among the most beautiful in the Archdiocese – a sublime example of the very best of our Greek Orthodox tradition.

But even more than the physical and spiritual beauty of the church, is the beauty of

the community. And I say beautiful because your devotion and dedication to this Church – in a neighborhood that was once the pride of the Hellenes – has never waned, even if the surroundings have. Your devotion to Saint Spyridon is truly beautiful in every way.

You have stayed the course and preserved this Parish. You have held fast to the traditions of the generations that came before you and bequeathed to you this most excellent church. Many of you have remained in the neighborhood, but many more come from far and wide, because this is your spiritual home. Like the Saint whom we honor today, and whom you honor at every service, your steadfast faith is not elaborated in words, but in actions.

And speaking of actions, you all know the story of how Saint Spyridon demonstrated the truth of the Holy Trinity by his miraculous deed at the First Ecumenical Council. There were many words exchanged between the Holy Fathers – many debates and arguments, as they strove to achieve a verbal definition that matched their experience of the Triune God.

But Saint Spyridon was not so much a man of words, as he was of deeds! He bore witness to the Holy Trinity by bringing a clay tile into the chamber of the Council, where he held it in his hand before the assembled Fathers. As he opened his palm – behold, the three elements of the one tile appeared! Resting in his hand was the earth. Rising above his hand was the flame that baked the clay. And falling from his fingers was the water that mixed and formed the clay. This was his message to the Council. The One was Three, and the Three, One.

Is it any wonder that the Lord has preserved his relics all these centuries? Is it any marvel that the slippers on his holy feet must be constantly changed, as he continues to perform great deeds to this day?

Deeds, my beloved Christians; it is actions that prove our faith. We may not think we are wonder-workers like Saint Spyridon, but we have our own miracles to perform.

To love those who are hateful to us.

To forgive those who are mean to us.

To show kindness to those whom we do not know.

To be generous to those who have not asked.

These are all miracles – and I do not say “little miracles.” Because raising love in

your heart for someone who has been hateful to you, may require more spiritual energy than raising the dead.

My beloved Christians,

This community is a real blessing, not only to you, but to our whole Archdiocese. You have such a beautiful Church. But what is even more extravagantly beautiful is your devotion, your faith and your dedication to this Parish. And so, I congratulate all of you on this blessèd feast of your Heavenly Patron.

Through the prayers of the Wonderworker and Great Father of our Church, the Holy Spyridon, may we all be blessed to arrive to Christmas, the New Year, and Holy Epiphany, in good health and spiritual prosperity, and in the mercy, faith, and love of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

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