22/12/2021

Archbishop Elpidophoros Greetings at Archdiocese Christmas Open House



My dear friends,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to our Sacred Archdiocesan Headquarters this evening for our annual Christmas Open House. We have gathered together – with a degree of caution and being as careful as possible – to affirm our faith in the spirit of the season, as well as our hopes for the future.

We affirm our commitment to the Gospel of the One Who was born in Bethlehem of Judea for our sake and for our salvation. Even with our social distancing, we make room for the Newborn Lord of Glory in our lives; we make room for each other in our hearts.

In Bethlehem two thousand years ago, a young woman – fully nine months pregnant and protected only by an old man – sought a place to deliver Her Child. She could only find a room with the beasts of the field, who welcomed the Mother of their Creator.

Tonight, we open the doors of our Archdiocese to all of you in order to symbolize our welcome to the whole world. Our Church may be a small one, in comparison to

others in the United States.

But like the Cave in Bethlehem, which received the God of All, we contain a message that the whole world needs. Orthodoxy is not some antiquated version of the Christian Gospel – it is the Gospel!

The fullness of the faith that we possess by God's grace – not because we are any better or any more worthy than anyone else – is a fullness and a completeness that we have a responsibility to share.

From this Archdiocese – right here on East 79th Street – we have an opportunity to send out "light and truth" throughout our Nation and the world.

We have a mission and a profound purpose to which God has called us. And we have a gifted and extraordinary community from which to pull talent and resources.

In welcoming all of you to the Archdiocese this evening, I welcome you to that mission and purpose. We are in this service to God together as one family in Christ.

We are not the biggest flock, but as the Lord said:

Μὴ φοβοῦ τὸ μικρὸν ποίμνιον ….

Let the little flock not be afraid ….

Mary and Joseph were not afraid as they settled down with God's creatures in the Cave, for as the Prophet Isaiah said:

The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his Master's crib….

Therefore, welcome to the place where God dwells, which is, indeed, your Church and the Master's crib. And enjoy these holidays as much as you can, for they are precious moments of spiritual blessing.

May God grant unto you and your families to arrive in safety and peace at the glorious Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and may all of you enjoy a Happy and Healthy New Year of 2022.

Καλά Χριστούγεννα!

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