

St. Nicholas Shrine January 2022 Monthly Update



My Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Here at the commencement of the New Year of 2022 – which is the Centennial of our Greek Orthodox Church of America, we have once again celebrated the Great Feast of the Epiphany. The solemnities around the Feast of the Lord’s Baptism always include the Blessing of the Waters, and the Immersion of the Holy Cross into a body of water. In years gone by, the parish of Saint Nicholas was faithful to this tradition, holding the ceremony at the Battery, on the southern edge of Manhattan.

As I think about the future of the Shrine, which will open for worship this year and be a high point of the One Hundred Year Clergy Laity Congress in July, I see in these same services around the country an image of the mission of the Saint Nicholas National Shrine. We have often spoken of the Shrine as a “House of Prayer and Memory,” because of the national trauma inflicted on our Country, and the preeminent place that Saint Nicholas occupies at the rebuilt World Trade Center. The Greek Orthodox Church bears a great responsibility to the Nation for maintaining the presence of Faith and the highest human values at Ground Zero, as we are the only religious presence in the entire sixteen-acre site.

But more than this, we are a source of sanctification to all those who come to Ground Zero, and to those around the world who encounter the story of 9/11, wherever they may be. Our presence is not a proselytizing one, but neither is it passive. Sanctification, redemption, forgiveness, and healing are more than

symbolic tokens of Faith. They are active, like the action of the clergy when they sprinkle Holy Water in the churches and homes of the faithful, or the retrieval of the Holy Cross after its sacred Immersion.

This year, the One Hundredth Anniversary of our Sacred Archdiocese – the Eparchy of the Ecumenical Throne in America – we will commence the full liturgical life of the Saint Nicholas National Shrine, but not only for ourselves and our own needs. We are called to bring what we do “for the life of the world” to the world. Through ministries. Through preaching. Through teaching. And above all through service to others, whether they were personally affected by the tragic events of 9/11 or not. Together, we can make a difference that brings the sanctification which heals, binds up the inner wounds, and that ultimately redeems the suffering and loss that happened on that fateful day twenty years ago, at the epicenter of 21st Century history.

<https://mailchi.mp/stnicholaswtc/2022-january?e=c02d9a0f1b>

With Love and Blessings in the Baptized Lord of Glory,

†ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America

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