

01/02/2022

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America Homily at the Divine Liturgy for Greek Letters



Beloved children,

I am so very happy to see your shining faces this morning, as we celebrate together Greek Letters and the Feast of the Three Hierarchs, which took place yesterday.

Over sixteen hundred years ago, these three great Fathers of the Church – the very best and brightest of their day – made lasting contributions to how we talk and how we understand God, which we still use today.

And why are they still so relevant? Because they took what was most important in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and what was most important in Greek Culture, Philosophy and Language, and combined them together into a magical mixture that we call “Greek Letters.”

And today – whether you realize it or not – you are their legacy, and the inheritors of their genius.

You are the legacy of these Holy Three Hierarchs, because the Church that you have inherited bears all the hallmarks of struggles to articulate and spread our Holy Orthodox Faith. Just think of the Divine Liturgy that we are celebrating today. We call it the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.

And the other Liturgy that we celebrate ten times a year, is the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great. These two Church Fathers shaped the way we worship. Every time you come to Church for the Divine Service, Saint Basil and Saint John are present in the very texts that we chant and pray. And their presence is not an egotistical one. They took all that had come before them, and molded it into such a wonderful form and way, that is has lasted throughout these last sixteen centuries.

And what about the legacy of Saint Gregory? Well, he is only one of three Saints

who are called “Theologian.” The other two are: Saint John the Evangelist, who wrote the Gospel, three Letter, and Book of Revelation; and Saint Symeon, who is called the “New Theologian.” Symeon lived in the late Tenth and early Eleventh Centuries, and he taught that the direct experience of God is something in which every Christian should participate.

Gregory’s great legacy to you and all Christians is how he talked about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. He did this in five famous sermons in Constantinople. And it is because of these sermons, that the Church calls him “Theologian,” which really means, someone who can speak about God.

While all this and more constitutes your legacy from the Three Hierarchs, there is also their genius that belongs to you, too.

Their genius was expressed in the Greek language, within the borders of Greek philosophy and learning. These are the building blocks of the entire enterprise of Western civilization, especially the education system from which we all benefit today. There is literally nowhere you can turn in the arts and sciences where the Greek genius does not manifest itself.

And it is these Church Fathers – Basil, Gregory and John – who brought together Greek learning with the preaching of the Gospel.

Together, they are the best examples of what it means to combine faith and science – something you should never be afraid to do.

Because science means “knowledge,” and the greatest knowledge in the world is the knowledge of God. Such knowledge comes directly from the mind of God into the heart of any human being who is open to it. And the key to opening that door is love.

Therefore, my beloved children,

Through the intercessions of these Holy Three Hierarchs, I pray that your studies may always be filled with faith and science – that is, the knowledge of the mind and of the heart.

May you find in your education what these famous Fathers found – the good things of this world and the next, which brought them to the true worship of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen!























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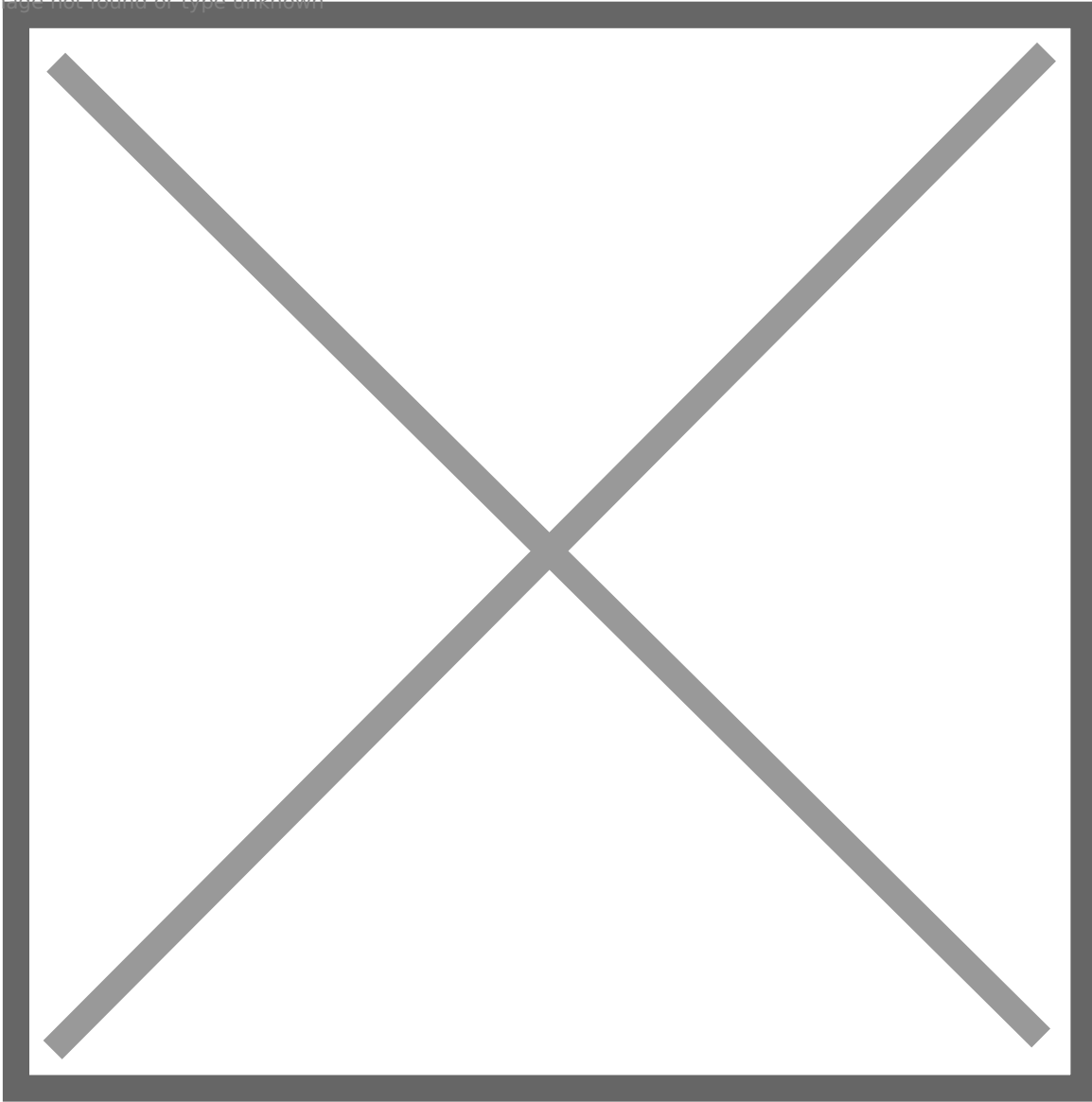


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