11/05/2022

Greeting By His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the Northern New Jersey Honoree Grand Banquet Of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey



Your Grace Bishop Apostolos of Medeia,

Honorable Michalis Firillas, Consul General of Cyprus,

Archimandrite Nektarios Papazafiropoulos, Archdiocesan Chancellor,

Archimandrite Christoforos Oikonomidis, New Jersey Chancellor,

Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers,

Archon H. James Polos, Master of Ceremonies,

Archon Leon Andris, Vice-President of the Metropolis Council,

and esteemed members of the Council,

Mrs. Eleni Constantinidis, President of the Metropolis Philoptochos,

and beloved sisters of Philoptochos,

Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,

Honored members of Leadership 100,

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! [in response: Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη!]

Christ is Risen! [in response: Truly He is Risen!]

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! [in response: Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη!]

I am very much delighted to be with all of you this evening, to continue celebrating our Paschal joy and to recognize with love and gratitude those who serve this Metropolis and the surrounding community.

Both as your Archbishop and as the Patriarchal Vicar of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey, I am always glad to be with you; for you are all faithful stewards of the Church. As wise οἰκονόμοι, you invest your time, talents and treasure into the benefit of all. It demonstrates your palpable devotion and dedication to the Message of the Gospel – that it is, indeed, “more blessed to give than to receive.”[*]

The many and varied gifts that we celebrate this evening run the gamut of Church service and ministry.

From those who serve the core institutions of our communities, our Parish Councils, our Philoptochos Societies and our Stewardship Fellowships,

To those involved with Religious Education, Community Service and Essential Medical Providers,

To the youth workers and our precious young people who demonstrate in their lives the values and beliefs that make us all proud.

In our recognition of individuals this evening, I want us to remember that we are also honoring the entire family of our Community. For we are one Church, one Body of Christ, one Omogeneia.

I do not think it is without significance that this year is the One Hundredth

Anniversary of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America as the leading Eparchy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Diaspora. All around the world, we are connected through our Mother Church to one another – to brothers and sisters in Christ whom we do not yet know.

On a smaller and more specific scale, the same could be said of our gathering this evening. We have all come from different parishes, and we may not be as familiar with one another as we might like to be. But, nevertheless, we are still members of the One Body of Christ. We are always in relationship to one another through the power of Holy Spirit in our lives and in our Church communities. And events like this give us the opportunity to come to know each other better – in a more personal way.

That is why I say the appreciation bestowed this evening belongs to the entire community. Our honorees are deserving for much more than their past activities and service for which they are being recognized. They are an inspiration to all of us to strive to do more and to do better.

Like the Centennial Celebration of our Archdiocese, we not only look back for inspiration, but we use this energy to motivate our plans for the future of our Archdiocese, of this Metropolis and of all the parishes.

Therefore, my beloved sisters and brothers in the Risen Christ,

I encourage each and every one of you to take from this evening an insight and an incentive for your own service in the Church.

All of us together have strength that none of us know individually.

We are a dynamic, powerful Church, as evidenced by our honorees this evening. We are proud of the legacy of our forebears. We are engaged in the renewal of our Church every day. And we are unified in our hopes for the future. May God grant that we achieve all of our aspirations!

Thank you all! Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη!

[*] Acts 20:35.