02/06/2022

Prayers & Remarks by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros at the Orthodox Christian Studies Center 10th Anniversary Reception

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Dear Friend, President McShane,

Beloved Brother Hierarchs, Bishop Irinej and Bishop Maxim,

Gracious Benefactors and Supporters,

Distinguished Professors and Clergy Participants,

INVOCATION

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen!

I greet all of you with our Paschal Salutation, and ask you to join me in prayer:

O Good and Ever-Loving God, we give You thanks this day for this decade of the Orthodox Christian Studies Center. But even more so, for the decades of the visionary leadership of Fordham University by our brother, the Priest and President, Joseph McShane.

We ask for Your blessings upon Father Joseph; for his legacy here at Fordham and in our City is nearly indescribable. Like the Patriarch Joseph the All-Comely, he has built up the stores of Fordham for a future of limitless potential.

And like his heavenly patron, Saint Joseph the Betrothed, he has cared for the Fordham Community in every way possible – welcoming his Orthodox Christians sisters and brothers, and bringing about the Center, whose anniversary we celebrate tonight.

Bless Father Joseph’s going forth to new ventures of his heart, keeping him and all the Fordham Family under Your providential love and care.

Through the intercessions of Your All-Holy Mother, Saint Joseph the Betrothed, and all the Saints. Amen.

REMARKS

Tonight is truly a celebration of Faith, as we gather for the 2022 Patterson Triennial Conference on Christian Unity, entitled “Nicaea, Conciliarity, and the Future of Christianity.”

As Father McShane might say – in the words of Saint Augustine, we engage in that which is “ever ancient, ever new.” This conference and Tenth Anniversary, coming just three years before the One Thousand Seven Hundredth Commemoration of the Council of Nicaea, feels like a harbinger of good things to come.

The entire program of this Conference points to our unity in Christ and to ways to move forward to make our oneness in Him a reality. If there is a core principle of unity for all Christians, I think we can all agree that it is the Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints1 and articulated at Nicaea.

I am so very grateful to Fordham for this living and vibrant Orthodox Christian Studies Center, which fosters and promotes our shared aspirations of Christian Unity. Professors Aristotle Papanikolaou and George Demacopoulos have done literal wonders here over the past decade, and our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America celebrates their work and contributions. Indeed, they are first-rate academics. But as Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, they are Churchmen of the highest order as well.

I am also especially thankful for the presence of my dear Brother Hierarchs, Bishop Irinej and Bishop Maxim, of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Our enterprise as Orthodox Christians must always be pan-Orthodox – inclusive of all our sisters and brothers. In the same way that our Roman Catholic brethren are often distinguished by the plethora of religious orders, Orthodoxy is distinct in our jurisdictional particularities, too. But in neither case are we confederations. We are united in Faith and Practice, and we work tirelessly through ecumenical endeavors like this to manifest the unity in Christ that already exists – that is, if we are willing to find it.

Therefore, with these few words, I extend to you my heartfelt congratulations, and express once again my profound gratitude for our brother Father Joseph, whose vision for Christian unity is most decidedly clear and unobstructed. We are grateful for the home and the heart that Fordham has for our Orthodox sisters and brothers.

Thank you.

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