

## Αμερικής Ελπιδοφόρος: Γέφυρα με το παρελθόν η ανοικοδόμηση του Ι.Ν. Αγ. Νικολάου Μανχάταν

[Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο](#) / [Αρχιεπισκοπή Αμερικής](#)



**Στο πλαίσιο του 46ου Κληρικολαϊκού Συνεδρίου της Αρχιεπισκοπής Αμερικής που θα ξεκινήσει στις 3 Ιουλίου και θα ολοκληρωθεί στις 7 Ιουλίου 2022 στη Νέα Υόρκη με θέμα «Κληρονομιά, Ανανέωση, Ενότητα», ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος Αμερικής κ. Ελπιδοφόρος αναφέρθηκε στα εγκαίνια του Ιερού Ναού Αγίου Νικολάου στο Μανχάταν της Νέας Υόρκης.**

*Της Σβετλάνα Λεβίτσκι*

“Μια από τις μεγάλες κληρονομίες του παρελθόντος είναι η πολύτιμη εκκλησία του Αγίου Νικολάου που βρισκόταν στην οδό Cedar – ένα μικροσκοπικό πνευματικό νησί πίστης στη μέση μιας ταραγμένης θάλασσας εμπορίου και βιομηχανίας.

Αυτό το Σαββατοκύριακο είναι τα εγκαίνια του ανακατασκευασμένου Εθνικού Ναού του Αγίου Νικολάου. Αυτή η εξαιρετική Διακονία της Εκκλησίας μας όχι μόνο τιμά το παρελθόν μας, αλλά θέτει επίσης έναν νέο υψηλό πήχη για τη δέσμευση της Εκκλησίας μας σε εθνικό επίπεδο.

Η Ελληνική Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία και ο Εθνικός Ναός του Αγίου Νικολάου στο Παγκόσμιο Κέντρο Εμπορίου αποτελεί τη δήλωση Πίστης και Ιθαγένειας που πρέπει να δει όλος ο κόσμος”, υπογράμμισε χαρακτηριστικά ο Σεβασμιώτατος μιλώντας στις 2 Ιουλίου στο Εθνικό Συνέδριο Νέων Ενηλίκων.

Δείτε το βίντεο με την ομιλία του Σεβασμιωτάτου [ΕΔΩ](#)

## **Παρακάτω μπορείτε να διαβάσετε μερικά αποσπάσματα από την ομιλία του Σεβασμιωτάτου:**

- **100 χρόνια της Αρχιεπισκοπής Αμερικής**

“Εκατό χρόνια! Ένας αιώνας ακούγεται πολύς καιρός, αλλά πολλοί από εμάς έχουμε γνωρίσει ανθρώπους που έχουν ζήσει εκατό χρόνια ή τουλάχιστον πλησιάζουν τα 100. Μια «γενιά» θεωρείται γενικά ότι είναι μεταξύ είκοσι και τριάντα ετών – που σημαίνει ότι η Ιερά Αρχιεπισκοπή μας έχει δει τρία έως πέντε γενεών ευσεβών πιστών.

Πολλοί ήρθαν κατευθείαν από την Ελλάδα και την Κύπρο και άλλα μέρη, και πολλοί άλλοι γεννήθηκαν σε αυτά τα μέρη. Αλλά σίγουρα δεν είμαστε τόσο μακριά από τους ιδρυτές των Εκκλησιών και των ενοριών των Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών.

Αυτό σημαίνει ότι η Κληρονομιά – το θεμέλιο πάνω στο οποίο έχει οικοδομηθεί η εκκλησιαστική μας ζωή – είναι πιο πρόσφατη από ό,τι θα μπορούσαμε να πιστέψουμε αρχικά.

Οι αφηγήσεις των πρωτοπόρων μας, στους οποίους περιλαμβάνονται πολλοί από τους παππούδες και τις γιαγιάδες και τους προπαππούδες σας, είναι ακόμα προσβάσιμες”.

- Τα εγκαίνια του Ι. Ν. Αγίου Νικολάου

“Μια από τις μεγάλες κληρονομίες του παρελθόντος είναι η πολύτιμη εκκλησία του Αγίου Νικολάου που βρισκόταν στην οδό Cedar – ένα μικροσκοπικό πνευματικό νησί πίστης στη μέση μιας ταραγμένης θάλασσας εμπορίου και βιομηχανίας.

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Ναού του Αγίου Νικολάου. Αυτή η εξαιρετική Διακονία της Εκκλησίας μας όχι μόνο τιμά το παρελθόν μας, αλλά θέτει επίσης έναν νέο υψηλό πήχη για τη δέσμευση της Εκκλησίας μας σε εθνικό επίπεδο.

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- Η ανοικοδόμηση του ναού αποτελεί γέφυρα με το παρελθόν

“Ο Ιερός Ναός Αγίου Νικολάου – μια σύγχρονη βυζαντινή εκκλησία που υψώνεται στην οδό Ελευθερίας με το ίδιο μάρμαρο που κοσμεί τον Παρθενώνα των Αθηνών – είναι ένας άξιος διάδοχος του προκατόχου του στην οδό Cedar.

Αποτελεί μια γέφυρα μεταξύ της ιστορίας των μεταναστών, η οποία είναι θεμελιώδης για τόσες πολλές από τις Εκκλησίες μας στην Αμερική, καθώς και για τα επόμενα εκατό χρόνια της Αρχιεπισκοπής μας. Είναι μια ιστορία που θα αφηγηθείτε στη διάρκεια της ζωής σας ως μια γνήσια εμπειρία της Αγίας Ορθόδοξης Πίστης μας – μια πίστη που τώρα εκτείνεται σε δύο χιλιάδες χρόνια και έχει εισέλθει στην Τρίτη Χιλιετία της”.

- Το Κληρικολαϊκό Συνέδριο ένας τρόπος ανανέωσης

“Οι ζωές σας, αυτή τη στιγμή, είναι χτισμένες πάνω σε βαθιά θεμέλια – ισχυρούς πυλώνες εκείνων που έχουν προηγηθεί. Η Ορθοδοξία δεν έχει μια μορφή «προγονολατρίας», αλλά αναγνωρίζουμε τους πνευματικούς και σωματικούς προγόνους μας ως αναπόσπαστο κομμάτι του ποιοι και τι είμαστε.

Γι’ αυτό το Κληρικολαϊκό Συνέδριο στο οποίο συμμετέχετε είναι ένας τρόπος ανανέωσης – ένας χώρος όπου μπορείτε να καλλιεργήσετε και να ανανεώσετε την πνευματική σας ζωή μέσα σε μια σταθερή βάση”.

- Οι τρεις βασικές αρχές

“Γιορτάζουμε την Εκατονταετηρίδα μας ως Εκκλησία σε αυτήν την ευλογημένη χώρα με αυτές τις τρεις βασικές αρχές:

Κληρονομιά – το θεμέλιο πάνω στο οποίο έχουμε χτιστεί.

Ανανέωση – οι δραστηριότητες και οι ενέργειές μας στην παρούσα στιγμή.

Και, ίσως, το πιο σημαντικό από όλα:

Ενότητα – η διαρκώς διευρυνόμενη αγκαλιά της Εκκλησίας, ως ένα περιβάλλον χωρίς αποκλεισμούς στο οποίο όλοι είναι ευπρόσδεκτοι.

Ας είμαστε ρεαλιστές. Η Ορθόδοξη Παράδοση του Χριστιανισμού είναι συντηρητική, ειδικά σε σύγκριση με άλλες χριστιανικές κοινότητες γύρω μας στην Αμερική. Δεν είμαστε όμως καταναγκαστικοί. Είμαστε μια συμπονετική παράδοση. Είμαστε μια παράδοση εν Χριστώ”.





Archbishop Elpidophoros of America

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Keynote Address at the 2022 YAL Conference

Centennial Clergy-Laity Congress

Marriott Marquis

New York, New York

July 2, 2022

Most Honorable Delegation of the Mother Church of Constantinople:

Your Eminence Elder-Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon,  
Your Eminence Metropolitan Prodhimos of Rethymnon and Avlopotamos,  
Your Excellency, Madam Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic,  
Honorable Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus,  
Conference Co-Chairs: Konstantine Ouranitsas and Harry Koulos,

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I greet all of you in the glorious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

This is such an exciting time for our Church in America, and when I look out on your faces – shining with vibrant hope – I take a deep breath of gratitude for your presence here at our Centennial Clergy-Laity Congress.

One Hundred Years! A century sounds like a long time, but many of us have known people who have lived to be one hundred years, or at least have gotten pretty close. A "generation" is generally thought to be between twenty and thirty years – meaning that our Sacred Archdiocese has witnessed three to five waves of pious faithful.

Many came directly from Greece and Cyprus and other places, and many more were born on these shores. But we certainly are not so distant from these founders of the Churches and the parishes of the United States.

This means that the Legacy – the foundation upon which our ecclesial life has been built – is more recent than we might have first believed. The narratives of our pioneers, who include many of your grandparents and great-grandparents, are still accessible.

One of the great legacies of the past that we have inherited is the precious Saint Nicholas Church that was on Cedar Street – a tiny spiritual island of faith in the midst of a roiling sea of commerce and industry. You will learn more, though, from Father Andreas later on today.



But as you may already be anticipating, this weekend we are celebrating the Consecration of the rebuilt National Shrine of Saint Nicholas. This extraordinary Ministry of our Church is not only honoring our past, but it is also setting a new high bar for our Church's engagement on a truly national level.

The Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center is our statement of Faith and Citizenship for all the world to see. It is the re-incarnation (if I may use this phrase) of the church that was tragically lost with so many lives on 9/11. As such, it is the fullness and richness of our Greek Orthodox faith – a church dedicated to the Wonderworker of Myra. But it is much more than this, too.

By consecrating the church on the Fourth of July – the most American of all national holidays – we are making a deliberate statement about the place of religion in the public square, together with our civic (as well as religious) responsibility to accept diversity in that same square.

As I have noted elsewhere, it may be an accident of history that the only House of Worship destroyed on 9/11 was a Greek Orthodox Church. But to rebuild it is an act of Faith: faith in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and faith in the American way of life, which, as embodied in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, allows for freedom of conscience and religion – the exact opposite of the religious hatred that inflicted so much pain and suffering on that awful day. Saint Nicholas Shrine – a modern Byzantine Church rising on Liberty Street with the same marble that adorns the Parthenon of Athens – is a worthy successor to its venerable predecessor on Cedar Street. And it is a bridge between the immigrant story, which is foundational to so many of our Churches in America, as well as to the next One Hundred years of our Archdiocese. It is a story that you will tell as you live out your lives in a genuine experience of our Holy Orthodox Faith – a faith that now spans two thousand years and has entered into its Third Millennium.

For the stories of our collective past inform our present and pave the way for our future. This Conference plainly demonstrates this. Just look at all the topics for consideration in the sessions that you will engage in later this afternoon. They are reflective of your activities and energies in the present moment.

You have a choice of many sessions that include the situation in Ukraine. For example, you will see how the granting of the Tomos of Autocephaly to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine by our Ecumenical Patriarchate has affected the country's future. The current and cruel conditions in Ukraine are in the news every day, but the underlying history and the involvement of the Church of Constantinople go back over one thousand years. These issues cannot be understood in the present without reference to the past. The same goes for what has happened to our precious Hagia Sophia, which we shall commemorate again on the 24th of July – the day of its seizure – and for the future of Halki Seminary, still struggling to reopen.

There are many other topics as well, including the history and structure of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, its vital relationship to the Ecumenical Patriarch, and how we, as Greek Orthodox Christians, relate to other Orthodox Churches, and to the public sphere at large as People of Faith.

There will even be sessions that focus on wellness and mental health, as well as current affairs that relate to Greece and Cyprus around the Eastern Mediterranean.

But in all these conversations, I would like to encourage you to use your critical thinking to advance your faith. This is a bit of a reversal of the usual theological proposition: *fides quaerens intellectum*, "faith seeking understanding." The ancient formula means that we believe first and then use our faith to explore the rational basis for our beliefs. Of course, this was the method in the age before the explosion of empirical investigation.

It was certainly a good enough intention in the centuries before the kind of technological sophistication and scientific knowledge that we possess today. But I think we have to build on the foundations of our Church, rather than merely, and sometimes, repetitively, dig into them.

All of you here represent the most educated and sophisticated generation the Church has ever seen. And we cannot ask you to abandon the experience of your learning and training in the things of this world.

Rather, we invite you to use your competencies in the service of the Faith – not by setting Heaven and Earth in opposition to each other, but rather learning to transform the mundane into the celestial.

And this is done first and foremost by embracing the spiritual reality of God's love for each and every one of His creations. Every person, no matter who they are, or what they have done – for better or for worse – is worthy of God's love. And if they are worthy of God's love, then they are worthy of our love, too.

However, this does not mean that the Church accepts the consequences of every action. But it does mean that the Church will never reject anyone on the basis of their personhood.

Your lives, at this very moment, are built upon deep foundations – powerful pillars of those who have gone before you. Orthodoxy does not have a form of "ancestor worship," but we do acknowledge our spiritual and physical forebears as integral to who and what we are.

That is why this Clergy-Laity Congress that you are participating in is a place of renewal – a place where you can cultivate and refresh your spiritual life in the midst of a firm foundation.

And the purpose for this Renewal is designed for you to become more consciously engaged.

By being here at this Conference, you have already declared your commitment to being engaged.

Engaged in your Church! Engaged in your Community! Engaged in your Life!

And that is why we are observing our Centennial as a Church in this blessed Country with these three basic principles:

Legacy – the foundation upon which we are built;

Renewal – our activities and energies in the present moment;

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Legacy – the foundation upon which we are built;

Renewal – our activities and energies in the present moment;

And, perhaps, most important of all:

Unity – the ever-expanding embrace of the Church, as an inclusive environment in which all are welcome.

Let us be realistic. Our Orthodox Tradition of Christianity is a conservative one, especially compared to other Christian communities around us in America.

But we are not a coercive one.

We are a creative tradition.

We are a compassionate tradition.

We are a Christ-like tradition.

If the next one hundred years of our Church in America are going to be as fruitful as the first one hundred, then the same energy that built the wondrous edifices and institutions we hold so dear today must be applied to building up the Body of Christ.

We need to have critical thinking in an Orthodox Christian context.

We need moral decision-making that is supported by the Church community;

And we want you to be engaged in your Church, and to be mentored by your Church.

Together, we are building a ministry for the future – the ministry to give us a future!

And so, please allow me to close by saying that forming the spirit and intention of disciples in every corner of our Church is the ultimate goal. For to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is a life-long commitment to be a pupil of the Lord, in His great and marvelous School of Creation.

Everything you have experienced in your lives is part of that School. But like a language that you have yet to learn, how you interpret all of the experiences of your lives is yet to be revealed.

This YAL Conference is one step in the right direction of learning that the language of love, compassion, mercy and forgiveness translates and transforms our experiences of everyday life into the Kingdom of Heaven. As the Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray:

"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in Heaven."<sup>1</sup>

When we are aligned with His will, what we do on earth produces the transformational energy to make this earth more heaven-like.



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I would like to thank all of you for coming together in the spirit of Christ for this Conference. You give us all hope for the Church, because you are the best of the past; you are engaged in the present; and you are helping to prepare for the future.

And for this, the next one hundred years look brighter already!

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As a way of recognizing all of your commitments, I would now like to call the Co-Chairs of this Conference, Konstantine Ouranitsas and Harry Koulos, together with Andrea Holland and Kristina Headrick, to come forward and receive a token of our appreciation for their labors as our Centennial Honorees.

Thank you again, and may the Good Lord bless you all!

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 GOARCH / [Dimitrios S. Panagos](#)

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