

## Great Vespers at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine Ahead of Consecration



On July 3, at the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine, His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon presided over Great Vespers. In an affirmation of unity across the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the Chancellor from each Metropolis served.

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros took the opportunity to honor the exceptional service of George Gigicos and Andy Veniopoulos, who “have used their remarkable talents and skills to bring the Saint Nicholas National Shrine to vital moments of its public reveal: last year on the eve of September 11th for the Lighting of the Shrine; on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Patriarchy of His All Holiness for the Opening of the Doors by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew; and tonight for this Vespers and the Consecration tomorrow.”

His Eminence also expressed his gratitude to His Beatitude Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia, who commissioned and gifted a full set of ornate altar coverings (kalymata) for Saint Nicholas.

A number of ecumenical and interfaith leaders were also present for the Vespers service, including His Excellency Archbishop Gabriele G. Caccia, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations; His Grace Bishop Irinej, Serbian Orthodox Church of North, Central, and South America; His Grace Bishop Saba, Georgian Apostolic Orthodox Church in North America; His Eminence Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Armenian Apostolic Church; and His Eminence Metropolitan Zachariah Nicholovos, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

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