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Archbishop Elpidophoros at consecration of St. Nicholas Church at Ground Zero: ‘This is a place for everyone to imagine and envision a world where mercy is inevitable’



Yesterday, Monday July 4th, marked the official inauguration of the landmark 20-22 clergy-laity congress in New York City, a biennial event that was not held in 2020 due to the pandemic.
This year’s congress commemorates the centennial of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

The series of events began with a doxology service for the opening of the congress and US Independence Day, officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, and sung by the Archdiocese School of Byzantine Music and the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians.

A virtual message and greeting by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, was aired during the inauguration.

On his part, Archbishop Elpidophoros, for whom this is the first Clergy-Laity congress since his enthronement in 2019, underlined in a keynote address that "…As a unified Archdiocese, let us lay hold of hope for the future – a hope that is founded upon the legacy of our past and our effectual energy in the present. We have the firm foundation, and we have the dynamism to go forward."

His Eminence also recognized, as centennial honorees, the two living former Archbishops of America, Spyridon and Demetrios, who were in attendance for the opening ceremony.

Earlier in the day, numerous faithful, clergy, and supporters from across the United States gathered at the World Trade Center in Manhattan for the consecration of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine.

The ceremony involved the sealing of the Holy Relics of St. Nicholas within the altar, and took place during the Divine Liturgy, officiated by Archbishop Elpidophoros and several other hierarchs of the Archdiocese and the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

In his homily, His Eminence noted that "…although this is a Greek Orthodox House of Worship, we welcome all. We invite all. We accept all. And we practice love of others; not prejudice; not rejection; and certainly not hatred. This shrine will be a place for everyone who comes to the sacred ground at the World Trade Center to imagine and envision a world where mercy is inevitable, reconciliation is desirable, and forgiveness is possible."