27/07/2022

Eulogy by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America For Paul Melis



Beloved Children, Nicholas and Marianna,

Dear Family and Friends of Paul Melis,

Beloved Community of Kimisis tis Theotokou,

The sudden passing of Paul Melis, a loving, caring, and philanthropic pillar of his family, this wonderful parish, and the Omogeneia, strikes at the very heart of all of us. He was a son of this Parish, who attended this Parochial School. When I heard of his passing, I made certain that I would be able to come today and pay my respects, and to offer a few words that I pray will be of comfort.

A eulogy is a form of blessing – εὐλογία – a way of remembering the goodness and beauty of a life well-lived. Paul's life was a living eulogy – a blessing to everyone he encountered. When such good people pass suddenly, and seemingly before their time, it always raises doubts and questions in our minds. We often see – especially

in world affairs, people who act wickedly and live for many years. It does not seem fair that those whom we love and are doing good in the world should pass so soon. And yet, as we read last night at the Great Vespers for Saint Paraskevi, whose Feastday is today:

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, …. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die … but they are in peace. … their hope is full of immortality. And they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them, and found them worthy for Himself.*

I pray that you can take some comfort from these prophetic words of the Great King Solomon. I know that you are suffering – suffering the pain of loss – the absence that stings your hearts. Truly, it could not be otherwise. When such a person as Paul leaves this world, the imprint of his life upon yours is as vast as it is deep.

But he is at peace, resting in the eternal heart of God and waiting there for all of you. His passing reminds us of the inevitability of our mortality, yet it also reminds us of the lasting value of the good that we can do while upon this earth.

One of the enduring contributions that Paul made is just across the Brooklyn Bridge, in Lower Manhattan – the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine. With his partner, John Vasilantonakis, their company donated all of the cement needs for the Shrine, a major contribution to the success of this national endeavor that is now blossoming at Ground Zero.

As I said when I commenced my remarks, John was a pillar of this community of Kimisis tis Theotokou.

But he has established himself as a pillar of the Saint Nicholas National Shrine as well. I hope that all of you remember this, and think of him when you visit the Shrine.

Moreover, he is now a true στῦλος ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ, a pillar in the Temple of God, as it says in the Book of Revelation (3:12):

I will make the victor a pillar in the temple of My God, fixed and immovable, one upon which I will inscribe the Name of My God, and My own new Name, and the Name of the City of My God – the New Jerusalem, which will descend from My God out of Heaven. †

Therefore, let us remember Paul as a victor, as one who overcame much in life,

and, as the Apostle says, overcomes even in death:

Through all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us. ‡

May the Lord grant unto all of you his ineffable consolation and comfort for your hearts and souls, and may He grant the servant of God, Paul, eternal rest in the Land of the Living, the Bosom of Abraham, and the Dwellings of the Righteous.

May his memory be eternal.

Αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη αὐτοῦ.

* Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-5.
† Revelation 3:12.
‡ Romans 8:37

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