02/08/2022

Homily By His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the Service of Paraklesis



Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am so very pleased to be with you once again, as I was two years ago, during this Δεκαπενταύγουστο season. We commence this evening with our first Paraklesis to the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. This little Lent that we encounter every year, leads to the little Pascha that we know as the Dormition of the Theotokos. The Church affords us the opportunity to celebrate another Easter, in the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God, who passed over from death to life.

During these holy days, we gather as the Body of Christ to present our supplications to her, and through her, to her Son and our God. It is a time of intensity of prayer and fasting, and a time to remember all those who are in need of prayer. It is the reason why we bring to the Church lists of names of our loved ones, and even those not so close to us, but nevertheless known to us. By reading these names, we send our intentions for healing, mercy, forgiveness and

restoration on high to the Throne of Mercy and to the Queen of Heaven.

Among all the Saints – and here in Norwalk you have as your patron

the powerful intercessor Saint George the Trophy-bearer – there is none more powerful than the Holy and Ever-Virgin Mary. For, as the Mother of God, she has the closest position to our Creator. She is the creature who gave birth to the Creator! This remarkable fact alone accounts for her amazing Dormition that led to her bodily resurrection – even before the Last Day, the Day of Judgment. We shall all wait for the resurrection of the flesh, but she has already tasted of the glory to come. In doing so, then, she is a guarantee of our own resurrection.

Therefore, it is only right that as she has shared in the fruits of the New Life, she should also share in the work of our participation, as we journey along the path of the Cross that leads to the Resurrection. And she does share in that work, indeed; for as a Mother – our mother – she provides for our needs – those of the spirit and those of the flesh. She is constantly concerned for our wellbeing, and, as the hymn says, is “sleepless in her intercessions” on our behalf.* It is the mystery of these holy days. We prepare for the Mother of God’s Falling Asleep, by calling upon her sleepless intercessions.

My beloved Christians: The Virgin is always awake, always alert, always aware of our circumstances and conditions. She is always pressing her Son on our behalf. And her Son already knows all of our needs and all of our requirements. His compassion for us is limitless. Therefore, the Virgin’s requests to her Son are not to convince Him of anything.

Rather, her pleadings with her Son are for us. So that we can take some courage from the knowledge of her love, her concern and her compassion.

She prays for us so that we know we are prayed for.

Think of the most difficult time in your life. And perhaps, then, you learned that a friend lit a candle in Church for you, or offered a prosphoro, wine, or oil for you. Or maybe they wrote your name on their list and gave it to the priest to be read at Paraklesis. The knowledge of such loving attention would bring your heart comfort and spiritual solace.

Thus, our greatest friend is the Theotokos, and together with her all the Saints of the Church. They are with us in our difficulties, reminding us that we are not alone in our troubles. She is our ‘sleepless intercessor,’ who will always stand with us.

Through her holy prayers, may we fulfill these days of her Fast, and come to her glorious Dormition in safety and salvation.

Amen.

* Kontakion of the Dormition.

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