

21/09/2022

Remarks by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America at the Service of Agiastos - The Greek-American Institute at Zoodochos Peghe



Dear Fr. Vasilios,

Beloved Students, Teachers and Administration,

Sisters and Brothers in the Lord,

I am delighted to be with you today, to help you commence this academic year with the Service of Agiastos, in order to sanctify and bless all of your efforts here at the wonderful Greek-American Institute at our precious Parish of Zoodochos Peghe.

All of you are pioneers of our faith and culture, because here at this school, you are exploring our shared history and spiritual tradition. We benefit the most when we combine the two together - much as the Holy Fathers of the Church used what they found in Greek Philosophy, so as to express the truth of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What you have here at the Greek-American Institute is a school for the mind and a school for the heart. It is a superb blessing from God - and from your parents and this parish - that after 110 years, this School, the oldest such continuously operating school in our Archdiocese, is still offering the very best for your minds and hearts.

I consider the work of all our Schools here to be among the most important and engaged anywhere in our Archdiocese, because there is a noble formation of the human spirit.

You all might know by now that the word for human being in Greek -ἄνθρωπος - comes from the Greek words ἀνά and θρώσκω, which when combined mean to “surge on high.” Thus, to be a human being means to turn your attention always to the higher values, to the noblest pursuits and, ultimately, to the God of Heaven.

Here at the Greek-American Institute, you have the opportunity to always reach beyond and to attain the full measure of your human potential.

In blessing you and your School with Holy Water today, we are making a prayer for all of you, your teachers, administrators, staff and your families for a healthy and prosperous academic year.

But we are also making a declaration that the purpose of this education that you are receiving is to help form you into the image and likeness of God, which is the fulness of what it means to be a human being.

Therefore, as this blessing is bestowed upon you, let the Agiasmos not simply moisten your hair, skin and clothing. Let it saturate your hearts to be soft and receptive to the love of God and to the love of your neighbor. This is our highest calling in Christ, and it is ultimately the best education that you will ever receive.

Καλὴ Ἀρχή! May the Lord bless you all!

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