

21/10/2022

Archpastoral Exhortation By His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the Meeting & Oath of Affirmation for the Metropolis Council of New Jersey



Your Grace Bishop Apostolos of Medeia,

Father Christoforos Oikonomidis, Chancellor of the Metropolis,

Father Dimitrios Antokas, President of the Clergy Syndesmos,

Mr. Peter Arbes, Vice President of the Metropolis Council,

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

As Patriarchal Vicar of this Metropolis, I am delighted to be with you today to administer the Oath of Affirmation for your service on the Metropolis Council. Before we make our affirmation and commitment to serve on this Council, kindly allow me a brief word of exhortation.

Our Church here in America is facing tremendous opportunities and challenges. This Council serves as a visioning body for the Metropolis – one that looks at the web of parishes and ministries from the “bird’s eye” view. Meaning, you are the ones entrusted to have the big picture for the Metropolis, as well as a forward-looking perspective that is preparing for the years ahead.

Remember that in this centennial year of our Sacred Archdiocese as the leading Eparchy of our Mother Church of Constantinople, we stressed Legacy, Renewal and, above all, Unity. Each of these aspects has both challenges and opportunities.

The Legacy of this Metropolis is contained in much more than the beautiful church edifices and facilities that our communities have attained. The legacy finds its beating heart in the educational traditions of faith, language and culture, which distinguish us as Greek Orthodox Christians. Therefore, I will look to you – the Metropolis Council – for creative and innovative ways to ensure that our young

people – those who will inherit the labors of their forebears – are grounded in our faith, our culture and, I hope, our language. For our language is the Language of the New Testament, the language of the Fathers, the language of Theology and Philosophy, and the language that can connect them to their roots across the ocean. Educational excellence is a challenge, but it is also an opportunity to enhance their lives and secure our future.

Renewal throughout the Metropolis entails the concerted efforts to enliven the liturgical routine of our parishes. We often hear the word, “routine,” and think it is somehow negative. But routine gives assurance, affirmation and the liberty to explore one’s faith in a very personal way. As we renew our worship experiences, we will surely gain more seekers from the greater society, Philhellenes and Phil-Orthodox, who are looking for the Great Christian Tradition of our Holy Orthodox Faith. As Council members, I ask each of you to commit your time and energy to this renewal, for the sake of the Metropolis, the Archdiocese and, indeed, our All Venerable Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Finally, this Council is a visible symbol of the Unity of this Metropolis – both within as an ecclesiastical entity unto itself, but also as connective tissue

to the Archdiocese nationally, and through the Archdiocese, to the Mother Church of Constantinople. Fidelity to the cause of the whole Church is essential for your service on this Council.

Therefore, I invite you now to make your affirmation, with your hands upon the Holy Gospel, and pledge your utmost for the highest values of our faith and the glory of our Most High God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Who is praised and glorified, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

*A similar Exhortation was delivered on the same day at the meeting and Oath of Affirmation for the Archdiocesan District Council.

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