

10/11/2022

Address At the Ordination to the Priesthood of Deacon Michael Giavris



By His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the Ordination to the Priesthood of Deacon Michael Giavris Kimisis tis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church

Beloved Deacon Michael,

Today, in this wonderful community of Kimisis tis Theotokou in Brooklyn — in the presence of your family, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ — you ascend the next step in the One and Holy Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. You enter into the ministry of the Presbyter- Πρεσβύτερος, which speaks to your position as an “Elder” in the Church. As such, you bear an even greater responsibility. Thus, I begin my exhortation to you with the words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, in order to encourage you at this milestone in your service to the Holy Church of God. Paul writes to the young Timothy:

Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*

You are young, but you are experienced.

You are young, but you are accomplished.

You are young, but you are eloquent.

You are young, but you have a wisdom that exceeds your years.

Therefore, the words of the Apostle ring all the more true. Because it will be by the example of your life that the People of God will recognize your leadership, and not by the gray hairs of old age, but by the way in which you speak, the manner by which you act, and by whether or not these external manifestations of your heart, soul, and mind are done in love, are done in faith, and are done in purity.

Today, Deacon Michael, on the day when you ascend that rung on the spiritual ladder of the Priesthood of Melchizedek, it is an opportunity for every clergyman present to look at his own life and ministry. To see if they live up to those sage

words of the Apostle Paul to set the example.

You have before you the standard established by your namesake, the one from whom His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew selected your name.

The blessed Archbishop Michael was a Hierarch known for his piety and his personal austerity. He disciplined himself and shared his ascetic aspiration with those around him. At the same time, all that he practiced, and all that he preached, he did with abundant love, with deep faith, and with purity of mind and thought. Thus, my beloved Deacon, he is the embodiment of the virtuous life to which you are called as a Presbyter of the Church.

And if, perchance, his archetype is not enough, you have the Commander of the Legions of Heaven - your Celestial Champion, the

glorious Prince of the Hosts of Heaven, the Archangel Michael.

As we sang in the Matins this morning for the Feast of the Archangels in that well-known and beautiful melody — chanted so exceptionally by the Byzantine choir here today, who stand at the very same analogion where you, as a layman, chanted:

Τῶν οὐρανίων ταγμάτων ὡς προεξάρχοντα, καὶ τῶν ἐν γῆ ἀνθρώπων, ἰσχυρὸν σε προστάτην, φύλακα καὶ ῥύστην....

As the Leader of the Celestial Orders, and as the powerful protector, guardian and deliverer of humankind upon earth....

Here, my dear Deacon, is the exemplar for all of your priestly life to come. Be a protector, a guardian, and a deliverer of the faithful entrusted to your care, and be powerful in your mission - ever strengthened by the Holy Spirit and the grace of God. The Archangel Michael is lively in his defense of the Church, and in defending all those called to the life of the Church. By bearing his name, you are called to be at his side, in the phalanx of angels and saints and righteous men and women who — from the beginning of time — have taken their own place in the Army of the Lord of Glory. Your weapons will be those described by the Apostle Paul:

Therefore, take up the hoplite's armor of God, that you may be able to stand in battle, holding the line on the evil day, and when you have prevailed in all things - to stand! Stand, therefore, with your loins girt about by truth. And put on the breastplate of righteousness. And shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Above all else, take up the shield of faith, by which you will be able to

quell the fiery arrows of the Evil One. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. †

In a few moments, you will be vested with the robes and signs of the Presbyter, but you must always prepare your inner vesture to be in accordance with that of the spiritual hoplite of the Lord.

My beloved Deacon Michael, you have served our Ecumenical Patriarchate, our Sacred Archdiocese, and my own Archiepiscopacy with honor and devotion. However, this day is not an ending to your διακονία, but rather, just the beginning.

And so, now, as I also said to you at your ordination to the Diaconate, enter into the Holy of Holies. Present yourself to the Living God as an oblation of service and love.

And may the holy Archangel Michael always be your guide and your champion, through the coming years of your ministry: a ministry of love, of faith, and of purity. Amen.

* I Timothy 4:12.

† Ephesians 6:13-17.

goarch.org