

Address to Theogenis Allen at his Reception into the Sub-Diaconate by the Imposition of Hands



My dear Theogenis,

You stand before your family, your community and, indeed, before the Holy Angels and all the Saints today – in the presence of God – ready to be received into the office of Sub-Deacon. Although this office is usually experienced only in passing by the faithful – as a brief steppingstone to the Holy Diaconate – it does, in fact, stand alone as a ministry. As with Deacons, a Sub-Deacon is attached to the Hierarchy, and his service is mainly found in his attendance on the Bishop. In the Slavic tradition, Sub-Deacons are regularly employed in the Sacred Services to attend to the Hierarchy. While in the Greek tradition, it is mostly Deacons, and in their absence, Readers.

However, my dear Theogenis, today is about more than just the specifics of what your liturgical role will be. Today is a mystical step in the journey of your life. Your name is particularly significant – Theogenis: it means one who is born of God. And it is even used in another form to describe Baptism. For we are all born again through Baptism to be children of God.

There is yet another form of your name - Theogony - which is the title of a work of the Greek poet Hesiod, who was a contemporary of Homer himself! It is a genealogy of the ancient gods of the Greeks, written seven centuries before the birth of our Savior.

So, you see, Theogenis, in coming before the Assembly of the Church today, bearing such a noble name and presenting yourself for service in the Church, you remind us all that we are the true children of God. God loves each and every one of us exactly as we are, and calls us to become the complete human being that we are destined to be.

It is my fervent prayer that your ministry as a Sub-Deacon - wherever it leads - will always reflect your name and our collective birthright to be children of God.

In the prayer that accompanies the Imposition of Hands that elevates you to this minor order of the clergy, I will pray that God grants unto you His special blessing:

To always love the beauty of His House,

To stand before the Doors of His Holy Temple,

To light the lamp of the Tabernacle of His glory,

And to be planted in His Holy Church as a fruit-bearing olive tree, bringing forth a harvest of righteousness....*

To be a Sub-Deacon is a high calling, indeed - one that you joyfully enter upon today.

But no matter where this major step in your life leads you, always hold fast to the truth and the power of your given name - Theogenis, the one who is born of a God. Not by nature, but by grace; not by the body, but by adoption; not by necessity, but by a free and loving choice.

And as a child of God, as you look around this magnificent Church today, you see in the faces of each and every one - young and old - your sisters and brothers in Christ.

As you will fulfill the task of ceremonially washing the Hierarch's hands - a liturgical duty of the Sub-Deacon - remember that it was the Lord Jesus Himself Who washed the feet of His Disciples. And always keep His words in your heart:

Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master; nor are apostles, the

ones sent, greater than the one who sends them. If you understand these things, happy and blessed are you if you act on them. †

Beloved Theogenis,

You shall truly be happy and blessed in your life if you serve in the knowledge of the Master's headship of His Church, and in the knowledge that He is the Greatest Apostle of all; for He was sent from Heaven to earth in order to save us.

You shall always know that you are the cherished son of a precious family, a wonderful parish, and most of all...

The treasured son of the Heavenly Father, and a vessel of the grace of the Holy Spirit, who raises you today to the rank of Sub-Deacon in our Holy Orthodox Christian Church.

Amen.

* Prayer of the Order for making A Sub-Deacon by the Imposition of Hands.

† John 13:16-17.

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