

02/06/2023

The Shape of the Sacred: Eastern Christianity and Architectural Modernity at St. Nicholas Shrine



On Wednesday, May 31, 2023, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine hosted the “The Shape of the Sacred: Eastern Christianity and Architectural Modernity.” Sponsored by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in association with the Orthodox Christian Studies Center of Fordham University, this event was part of a three-day public international symposium that explored the challenges of the dialogue between contemporary architecture and theological concepts of space.

Rev. Archdeacon John Chryssavgis, Senior Advisor and Theologian to the Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical & Interfaith Relations, in addition to representing the H.E. Archbishop Elpidophoros on the Organizing Committee of the Conference, moderated last night’s program featuring keynote conservation with architecture critic and Pulitzer Prize recipient, Justin Davidson. Author of *Magnetic City: A Walking Companion to New York*, Davidson offered his architectural expertise on what makes St. Nicholas Shrine a ‘sacred’ symbol to Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike. As the only religious site on Ground Zero, Saint Nicholas Church serves the unique function to remember and commemorate those who died during the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Most evidently displayed in much of the iconography, Davidson observed the remarkable construction by designer Santiago Calatrava noting that this was the only church he ever designed.

Photos: Demetrios Katsiklis

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