

19/06/2023

Saint Basil Academy Graduation Address By His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America - 2023



Beloved Children in the Lord - the 2023 Graduates,

Father Costas and Esteemed Trustees,

Friends and Supporters of Saint Basil Academy,

Let us begin with prayer:

Heavenly Father, we give thanks to You this day and every day for Your mercy and love, and especially for our life and education here at Saint Basil Academy.

As we mourn the loss of our beloved Father Anthony Falsarella, and we pray for his everlasting memory, we ask that his ministry here at Saint Basil never be forgotten.

Bless us all, and all who live, serve, and minister in this

sacred institution of our Church, as we gather to celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates. Grant that through the intercessions of Saint Basil the Great, their lives may prosper according to Your Divine Will, that they may ever glorify Your Holy Name; of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

I rejoice to be with you, back here at our Academy, to congratulate you, the graduates, and the entire Saint Basil Family for another year of accomplishment and success. Your education is a very important part of your lives, because it prepares you to make the choices for a well-rounded and successful life.

Saint Basil the Great, your heavenly patron, lived at the waning of the Classical World, and was one of the last well-known graduates of the Academy of Plato. More than a great ascetic and theologian – destined to become one of the most famous Bishops the Church has ever known – he studied a wide swath of subjects. From philosophy to medicine, to the natural world and the various sciences of the day.

In his famous essay, *To Young People*, he advised students, just like you, to be like honeybees that gather different nectars and pollens from all manner of flowers. From these, the best honey would be made.

And that is what you are going to be doing with the rest of your lives ... making honey! Life is filled with so many opportunities and challenges, and in each one, there is the possibility for a sweet or sour experience. Our goal is to make as much honey as we can, and to share with others the sweetness of life that we have found.

Now the truth is that not every opportunity in life will yield a sweet result. But you have probably heard the old saying, “If life gives you lemons, then you can make lemonade!”

Here is a way for you to go forward in life and in learning. You may not always find that your circumstances are exactly as you wish, but you can always find a way to sweeten your experience by looking for the best in others and the best in yourselves.

Nature itself teaches us that there is always a dark side, a shadowy side, and a light side, where God’s grace illuminates our path.

Stick to the light!

And when you have to pass through a shadow or two, realize that it is only there because something is blocking the light – the way the moon passes between the sun and the earth in a solar eclipse. It is the moon that casts the shadow, but it doesn’t last for long (usually less than ten minutes!). And which is greater – the sun or the moon?!

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, and I pray that He will always shine His warming, loving light on you wherever life takes you.

May God bless you all, and grant unto you long life, spiritual prosperity, and the joy of love and fellowship, through the intercessions of your Heavenly patron, Saint Basil the Great, and all the Saints. Amen.

Photos credit: GOARCH/Yannis Malevitis

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