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Archbishop Elpidophoros Greetings to the Chicago Metropolis Philoptochos



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America
Greetings to the Chicago Metropolis Philoptochos
October 12, 2023
Meridian Banquet & Conference Center
Rolling Meadows, Illinois

My Beloved Brother in Christ, Your Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael,

Dear Bishop Timotheos of Hexamilion, Chancellor,

President of the Metropolis Philoptochos, Marilyn Tzakis,

Dear Sisters of the Metropolis Philoptochos,

To be with the Philoptochos is always a pleasure and an inspiration for me, because you incarnate the love of God in our communities from coast to coast. The Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos is clearly tending to the “good work” that is spoken of in the theme of this Clergy Laity Assembly. Your recent Annual Luncheon – “From Good Roots, Love Flourishes” – testifies to your energetic pursuit of the worthy goals of Philoptochos, as an organization and as a spiritual movement.

As I look around this room, I can see πίξεις that are strong and endowed with every grace. That is why love is flourishing in this Metropolis. Because your roots run deep like a mighty oak, reaching back to your spiritual mothers, who raised you in the ways of the Lord. I am so proud of the Philoptochos wherever I go! You are one of the great reasons that our Church in America has prospered through the decades.

When I think about you and all that you do, I am reminded of the story of Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazaros. In the Gospel of Luke we read:

Later, as they were traveling, Jesus entered a certain village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. Now she had a sister, named Mary, who used to sit at the feet of Jesus, listening to His discourse. However, Martha was busy with all her preparations and serving. So she went right up to Jesus and said, “Lord, are You not even interested that my sister has deserted me to do all this serving by myself? Well then, say something to her so she will help me!” But Jesus replied to her and said, “O Martha, Martha... you worry and fret over so many things, but only one thing is essential. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her.”*

In this wonderful story, we see the two aspects of Philoptochos – action and contemplation. Martha is all abuzz with activity – serving everybody, taking care of everybody. Just like you, the Sisters of Philoptochos. But there is the other side of the coin. Mary sits at the feet of Jesus, drinking up every word. Here is contemplation and rest in God.

My beloved Sisters: You must have both. You must nourish yourselves even as you nourish our communities. Your ministry to the Church must be balanced with a ministry to your yourselves. Martha and Mary – the holy sisters of Lazaros, are your best inspiration.

I pray that through their holy intercessions, the Philoptochos of this God-protected Metropolis will always enjoy the balance of action and contemplation – of material service and spiritual self-care.

You are all so worthy, and I thank you once again for your ministry of love and compassion, which is transforming our world – day by day – into the kingdom of heaven.

* Luke 10:38-42.

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