

Archbishop Elpidophoros Remarks at the Installation Luncheon of Bishop Theofan of Philomelion



Your Grace, Bishop Theofan of Philomelion,

Your Eminence and Your Grace(s),

Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy,

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have come from the Installation of your Bishop, His Grace Theofan of Philomelion, to this Agape Meal a feast of Christian love and reflection.

The love of the Albanian Diocese for its traditions, legacy, and history is self-evident. All of you have contributed in one way or another, to bring this sacred occasion to pass. I congratulate Presbyter Dean Photos, the Rector of this wonderful Church, Etleva Teli, the Parish Council President, and all the members of that Council and their fellow parishioners for providing such wonderful hospitality. And to those who have journeyed from afar to be here today, thank you for your prayerful presence.

The Albanian Orthodox Diocese of the Americas, which belongs rightly and spiritually to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, has a tremendous responsibility. And this responsibility is to cultivate and ensure the continuation of the unique Albanian heritage here in the United States.

The history of this famous parish – now nearly eighty years young, demonstrates the sacred journey of the Albanian People in America. They came here with the clothes on their backs, but they labored with intensity, and never forgot their homeland. All of you have stood on the shoulders of spiritual giants to come to this day.

There is a special duty for you, my brother, Bishop Theofan, to encourage cooperation throughout all the Albanian Orthodox People of America, and to use the synergies that you can cultivate, to promote and protect the precious inheritance of faith, culture, and language that distinguishes your noble People.

You will now join the Assembly of Bishops of all the canonical jurisdictional presences in America, where your voice will be heard. You will represent your Faithful with dignity and honor, and bring their voices to the Assembly so that every Albanian Orthodox Christian feels valued and appreciated.

We live in a complex and diverse society. And from the news we receive on a daily basis, we hear such sad and embittered woes that discourage even the most faithful Christians.

That is why you, Bishop Theofan, have the awesome duty before God to bring solace, comfort, strength, and hope to your People. Our modern world often clashes with the values of our Church, but we are called to be faithful to the Tradition of the Church, as we have received it from the generations who came before us.

But here, in the Albanian Orthodox Diocese of the Americas, you will hold your faithful together as one family in Christ, so that they understand where they have come from – where they are now – and where they are going. This is the obligation of the shepherd to his flock. To guide and nurture them

Our celebrations today bode well for the future, because the clergy and laity are united behind you. We wish and pray for your every success.

Once again, I thank the Brother Hierarchs for their presence and pious intercessions on your behalf today. We stand with you and the Albanian Orthodox of America.

Let us write together another glorious chapter in the history of your precious Albanian community in the United States.

May God bless all of you with good health, spiritual prosperity, and every good and gracious gift that descends upon us from the Father of Lights in Heaven.

Amen.

goarch.org