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## **Remarks of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros at Reception and Dinner with Priests and Presvyteres of the Direct Archdiocesan District**



June 20, 2019

Terrace on the Park

Flushing, New York

Your Eminences and Graces, Most Reverend Members of the Holy Eparchial Synod and Bishops of the Holy Archdiocese of America, Beloved Priests and Presbyteres of the Holy Archdiocese of America and the Direct Archdiocesan District, Beloved Children in the Lord – brothers and sisters,

I stand here before you this evening, and I think about all that has transpired in just the past few weeks, and I have to say that I am so happy when I reflect upon my

first interaction with the clergy of the Archdiocese, in the phone call of Thursday May 16th, just five days after my election as Archbishop of America.

It just seemed to me to be the right thing to do – to reach out to you, the clergy brotherhood of America. And to be here tonight – face to face with you and with your presbyteres and your children – it is a great blessing for me. Especially you, the children, the essence of the families of our clergy. Your bright and shining faces bring such joy to my heart. You, the children, you are my hope for the future!

Yesterday, upon my arrival, I was very pleased to spend a good portion of my first night in America in fellowship with Archbishop Demetrios. We had a private dinner together – just the two of us. I look forward to him contributing his vast academic experience and expertise to the growing body of Orthodox Christian literature in America.

Tonight, beholding your shining faces, I am deeply grateful to God for this extraordinary gift and vocation, to be your Archbishop. Together, I believe that we will accomplish great things. And not for ourselves, but as the Psalmist says (115:1):

Μὴ ἡμῖν Κύριε, μὴ ἡμῖν, ἀλλ’ ἡ τῷ ὀνόματι Σου δὸς δόξαν ἐπὶ τῷ ἐλέει Σου καὶ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ Σου, which means

*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us; but for the sake of Your Name give glory on account of Your mercy and Your truth.*

You and I, we are here to serve the People of God together, to bring to them the great gifts of Grace and Sanctification that our Lord Jesus Christ bestowed upon us through His Incarnation, through His Ministry, Passion, Crucifixion, Death, Three-Day Burial, Resurrection, Ascension and Sending of the All-Holy Spirit. We are still in the week of Pentecost, which establishes the institution of our Church, that is, the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist; just as the Holy Spirit through the prayers of the Invocation transforms in warmth and mystically the precious gifts into the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which all of us participate through the Spirit!

Pentecost is truly a feast especially and above all for the clergy, for through the Descent of the Spirit – specifically invoked at every ordination represented in this room tonight, we become Χριστοφόροι – we become Christ-bearers who are called to communicate the Gospel even as we commune the Sacraments. We join with our Great High Priest in His ongoing work of the salvation of the world. We become charged to shepherd the flock, even as the Lord said to Peter: “Feed My lambs ... shepherd My sheep ... pasture My sheep” (John 21:15 – 17).

But we all know that we cannot give what we do not have. Therefore, I want you to know, and not only who you are the clergy of the Direct Archdiocesan District, but all the clergy of our Holy Archdiocese, that as your Archbishop I will be your advocate, I will be your defender, and I will be your champion.

The priesthood is a lofty vocation, and it requires a degree of sacrifice worthy of its high calling. Your families pay the price as much as you do – sometimes more! And it is the charge of every Bishop to see to your care, because you care for the flock.

I know that there are many rumors, many stories, much “fake news” that wafts over the internet and tries your confidence. I give you my word that together, we will handle the earthly concerns – the healthcare, financial security, retirement, and all the others that rob you of a good night’s sleep – and we will handle them in a way that is transparent and responsible to you. As for the rest, let us leave aside the maliciousness of evil opinion, and concentrate on our mission!

It is my duty as your Archbishop. I am with you, in everything. As is our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, “let not your hearts be troubled” (John 14:1). “If God is with us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and forever. Amen.

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– Source: [Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America](#)