

10/11/2023

Biennial 2023 Archdiocesan Presbyters Retreat in Phoenix, Arizona



The brotherhood of priests of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America hosted their Biennial 2023 Archdiocesan Presbyters Retreat in Phoenix, Arizona. The retreat began on Monday, October 30th and concluded on Thursday, November 2nd. Over 200 participants including Deacons, Priests, and Hierarchs from all over North America. His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros was in attendance along with several fellow Hierarchs. It is also the only national gathering event in the life of the Archdiocese exclusively for clergy.

The National APC Clergy Retreat exists as a means to serve the clergy of the Archdiocese by supporting them with the necessary opportunities for spiritual growth, educational development and personal wellness. The biennial National Clergy Retreat is one of the most important ways the APC fulfills that vision and mission through refreshing, renewing and recharging the clergy of the Archdiocese of America, and through them the Church, ministries and families they serve and love.

This National retreat has become a fundamental part of the care we are all expected to offer lovingly to our beloved clergy through encounters with dynamic and personal speakers, engaging sessions with brother clergy, refreshing

adventures to change the pace and plenty of time for great conversations, personal prayer and taking a break from the hectic daily schedules which all of our clergy are expected to endure. The brothers are also offered professional fitness sessions which add to the overall emphasis on wellness that empowers all who attend to be better stewards of their gift of health.

This year the brothers were first blessed to hear words from His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros at the welcome dinner where he shared his greatest hopes for our beloved Archdiocese and her clergy. The brothers were also welcomed by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos to the Metropolis of San Francisco.

This year's official speaker was His Grace Bishop Maxim. His Grace is a professor of Patristics and regularly teaches in the areas of Christian Anthropology, Byzantine Philosophy, Canon Law, and Dogmatics at various universities and schools. The brothers were blessed to be able to hear His Grace speak at multiple encounters while at the retreat. Following each discussion, the brother clergy were invited to join smaller breakout sessions to review the material discussed as well as to share with another their own individual thoughts and ideas. These breakout sessions did a great deal in allowing the clergy to share wisdom, experience, and their combined years of training in order to assist them collectively in fortifying their efforts for the future of serving Christ's ministry and of the Holy Orthodox Church.

The National APC also understands the value of personal time shared with brothers. With this in mind, on Wednesday morning the brothers were invited to personally participate in social activities alongside one another with activities that ranged from a visit to St. Anthony's Monastery in Florence, AZ, to group hiking, to a visit and tour of Old Town Scottsdale, or even just to enjoy some free time together. The final evening of the event was spent in prayer and fellowship at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Phoenix, AZ who graciously hosted the brotherhood as we celebrated the Vespers Service commemorating the Holy Martyrs Acindynos, Pegasios, Aphthionios, Elpidophoros and Anempodistos, as celebrated His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros's Name Day wishing him Πολλά Ετι, Many Years!

The National Retreat has become a fundamental part of keeping our clergy well trained, well looked after, and well informed about the work that we ask of them all. The brotherhood of clergy is also thankful to the support which they have received from all of our Metropolitans, from all of our beloved parishes, and from all the gracious donors who seek continually to meet the needs of their clergy as a witness of their love for Jesus Christ and His Holy Orthodox Church.

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