

20/11/2023

## **Greeting by Archbishop Elpidophoros of America at the 69th Chrysanthemum Ball**



Your Grace and Reverend Fathers,

Archdiocesan Cathedral Philoptochos President Madelene Lambiris and the Entire Cathedral Philoptochos Board and Sisterhood,

Chrysanthemum Ball Co-Chairs, Catherine Moutoussis and

Roula Zervoudakis,

National Philoptochos President Arlene Siavelis Kehl,

Ambassador Sekeris of the Permanent Mission of Greece to the UN,

Consul General Konstantinou,

Our Esteemed Honorees: Christopher and Mary Stratakis, and your beloved family,

Dear Friends, Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Once again we are sharing in the love and appreciation of our Holy Trinity Archdiocesan Cathedral Philoptochos Society at this Sixty-ninth Chrysanthemum Ball. As usual, the sisters of Philoptochos have outdone themselves, and we are

enjoying the fruits of their labors in wonderful fellowship and celebration.

Our honorees, Archon Notarios Christopher and beloved “Maro” Stratakis, are renown within the Omogeneia and the greater New York Society. Their interests range from education to opera, from the minutiae of admiralty law to philanthropy. The course of their lives is truly miraculous to behold.

The reputation of the name “Stratakis” is immaculate in every sense of the word. They have comported themselves with extraordinary grace and dignity throughout their long and fruitful service to the Omogeneia and the Church.

I would like to make careful mention of the international character of their dedication and devotion to their faith and heritage as well. They have never forgotten their homeland of Greece, and they have never forgotten the interests of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Whether on a local, regional, national or a truly ecumenical level, Chris and Maro bring their passion and energy to the pursuit of “the beautiful and the good.”

Their generosity is renowned. Their hospitality is legendary. They have lived remarkable lives worthy of our admiration and praise. But they are also people of humility, so I will not indulge in every possible quality of their well-lived lives. Suffice it to say the following – something that I believe will resonate with them as lovers of the operatic art form. Maria Callas once said: “An opera begins long before the curtain goes up and ends long after it has come down.”

This is eminently true of Chris and Maro. What we see in their public lives – on the stage of the world and society – is backed up by a sincerity and genuineness that informs their every decision. They are people of substance – of the precious essence of life that holds this world together. Our lives, our community, our Church are all made so much better by their humble, thoughtful and dignified presence.

And so, I thank and congratulate the Cathedral Philoptochos for recognizing Maro and Chris at this Sixty-ninth Chrysanthemum Ball. It is surely a recognition that is merited in every sense of the word.

Our celebration tonight is much like the life of Chris and Maro – for the benefit of others. And I thank all the supporters and benefactors who have made this evening a success.

May the Lord always grant unto you health, prosperity and every spiritual blessing that leads to His Heavenly Kingdom.

My gratitude and best wishes are with all of you!

Thank you!

Photos: Archdiocesan Cathedral

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