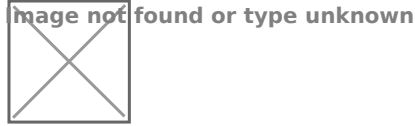


12/12/2023

Homily by Archbishop Elpidophoros of America On the Tenth Sunday of Saint Luke Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Bridgeport, Connecticut



My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am so very glad to join you for the observance of your One Hundred and Tenth Anniversary! We shall have more to say on this at the luncheon, but for now, let us all pause and give thanks to God for this wonderful milestone. Your parish is older than even the Archdiocese itself! You reflect a long and storied history of the worship of the Holy Trinity, for Whom your parish is named. In the spirit of this celebration today, it is “meet and right” that the last words of today’s Gospel reading are:

Καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ἔχαιρεν ἐπὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἐνδόξοις τοῖς γινομένοις ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ.

And all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Jesus. *

In this Divine Liturgy that we are celebrating, which is our way of giving thanks to God and showing Him our gratitude for the gift of life, let us take time to rejoice at all the glorious things that have been done in this parish of the Holy Trinity.

This is ultimately why we gather in spirit and body in this magnificent church, which you have all worked so very hard to achieve, and for which your physical and spiritual ancestors sacrificed so very much.

This sacred space envelopes you with Holy Images. Saints and Angels abound. The story of our salvation surrounds you. And you behold in these holy icons the vision of eternity.

These are the glorious things – τὰ ἔνδοξα – that have been accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ through your hands and your hearts.

And to show most clearly that this is the place where God dwells, we can look to the Holy Icon that identifies the name of your Church – that of the Holy Trinity.

It is also called, as you know well, the “Hospitality of Abraham” – or better, “the hospitality of Abraham and Sarah!” We cannot forget the woman who brought forth the direct ancestor of our Lord!

This icon recalls the moment when Abraham and Sarah received a visitation of God in the form of Three Angels. It was a foreshadowing of the revelation of God as Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Father is portrayed in green at your left, because the Father is the source of all life. The Holy Spirit is portrayed in red and gold at your right, for the Spirit descended in tongues of fire and vivifies all of creation. And the Divine Son – our Lord Jesus Christ – is in the center, blessing the table and clothed in the blue of our humanity, the color of the Theotokos, washing over the red fire of His divinity.

By the Oak of Mamre, Abraham and Sarah served these Angels a meal, and gave them water to wash their feet. And it was in this moment that the Angel proclaimed that Sarah would bear a child, even though she was well into her old age. Sarah laughed at this suggestion, even though she denied that she had done so, and the Angel replied, “But you did laugh! †

Of course, the end of that portion of the story is that Sarah did conceive by Abraham and did bear a son – Isaac, whose name means: “one who laughs or rejoices.”

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters – we return full circle to today’s Gospel and to the “people who rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Jesus.”

Holy Trinity in Bridgeport has much to rejoice in – especially in this anniversary year. As you proceed from glory to glory, remember the hospitality – the φιλοξενία – of Abraham and Sarah. Cultivate this friendliness and always welcome the stranger into your midst. For as Saint Paul says:

Ἡ φιλαδελφία μενέτω, τῆς φιλοξενίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε· διὰ ταύτης γὰρ ἔλαθόν τινες ξενίσαντες ἀγγέλους.

Let brotherly love continue. Remember to be hospitable to strangers: for thereby some have hosted angels unawares.‡

May you always live in this glory – of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

* Luke 13:17.

† Genesis 18:15.

‡ Hebrews 13:1-2.

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