

18/12/2023

Closing Remarks By Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the Annual Cathedral Christmas Concert Holy Trinity Archdiocesan Cathedral



Beloved sisters and brothers in the Lord,

Once again we have been filled with joy and peace by the marvelous program of praise and song of our Annual Cathedral Christmas Concert. Many thanks are due to Maestro Costas Tsourakis, the Cathedral Music Director, and to all the musicians and singers, for a truly inspirational presentation.

The sights and sounds of the Christmas Season are very special for all of us, and this evening's concert has certainly been moving - and, indeed, exhilarating - for us all.

There is something about this time of year, when bright and colorful lights seem to appear everywhere, and the familiar strains of Christmas Carols find their way into our hearing, even as we are walking down a crowded and busy street. New York City in particular has a love affair with the Holiday - as witnessed by the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree. But we gather together this evening for something more than a sentimental yearning. We are the Body of Christ, Who was born in Bethlehem of Judea.

This makes our hymnody and songs more acutely relevant. For in our celebrations this evening - under the dome of Heaven, in which our Incarnate Lord looks down upon us so lovingly - we are making an affirmation about the presence of God in this war-torn and weary world.

We declare that the One Who was born in a cave and laid in a manger is the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

We declare that we can see God in the world as a human being - and because of this, we can behold Him in one another.

We declare that our senses can perceive Divinity - through scent, through sight,

through touch, and even through taste in the Holy Liturgy. And tonight, thanks to this wonderful melodic presentation, we absorb the glories of God through our hearing of the Good News of our Savior's Birth in these Angelic anthems.

My friends:

In this Christmas Season, when commercialism and consumerism make an attempt to turn the Feast to their self-centered needs, let us take from this wonderful Concert the inspired meaning that is able to transform our lives. And if we would but let it, it could transform the world.

This evening, we are nourishing our souls with gifts of music and song, and I pray that each of us will receive this offering as a Christmas gift of inestimable value. More precious than all the baubles and trinkets that adorn the shops that invite us to peruse their wares. There is a more priceless gift - the New-Born Babe of Bethlehem, Who has come to redeem and save us.

From our communal experience of music and song, of fellowship, of beauty, and of family, we are readied to receive the One Who is Born for us - the Son Who is given unto us.

With these thoughts and aspirations, I want to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy and Healthy New Year of 2024. I commend you to the work and the practice of the Gospel, which was announced by the Angels so long ago.

Peace on earth, and good will to all people. *

We joined our voices to the Angels tonight, and we gave all the glory to God in the highest!

With this music in our hearts and with these songs in our minds, we shall fulfill blessedness in this life, and in the life to come, be forever established as the Children of God. With God as our Father and the Church as our Mother, we shall attain the unity of the Faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect person, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. †

Merry Christmas to all! And to all ... a good night!

* Luke 2:14.

† Ephesians 4:13.

goarch.org