

18/12/2023

Remarks By Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the Grand Opening of the Resurrection Fellowship Hall Holy Resurrection Greek Orthodox Church



Beloved in the Lord,

Archbishop Demetrios, former of America

Protopresbyter Panteleimon Papadopoulos,

President Stephanie Clark and Members of the Parish Council,

Beloved Sisters of Philoptochos,

Esteemed Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,

Honored Members of Leadership 100,

Dear Parishioners of Holy Resurrection,

A little over a year and a half ago, this wonderful Church community broke ground on your Resurrection Fellowship Hall. I rejoiced to be with you on that festive spring

day in May of 2022, and I share once again in your accomplishments today, as the ribbon is cut, and the Fellowship Hall is ready for your various ministries. You have much to be proud of today, and I congratulate each and every one of you on this achievement for the health and future of your Parish.

When you broke ground as an act of faith, you planted within that groundbreaking the seeds of promise. We commenced with the Blessing of the Waters – the Ἐγιασμός – and we do so again today, in order to bring recognition to this endeavor of God’s favoring divine eye.

The Ἐγιασμός always makes reference to the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, because is it from His Sacrificial Love that every blessing and benefit flows. Thus it is today, that the blessing and benefit of the Resurrection Fellowship Hall is opened wide for the community of believers and friends of this Parish. For the Resurrection follows the Crucifixion, as the rising of the sun follows its setting.

Within this Hall you will engage the fulness of the life of your Parish. The sacred space of the church is reserved for the Mysteries and Worship of the Church. But these are not the only aspects of a parish’s life. Education, social activities, and above all community – or fellowship – are as vital to the Body of the Church as is Communion. We exist as the Body of Christ, with many members who fulfill many and different functions. The priesthood and the choir are preeminent in the church, but in the Fellowship Hall there will be many roles for everyone. I pray that this good beginning will reveal tremendous diversity in the Parish, and afford everyone an opportunity to make a substantive and meaningful contribution.

Each of us has a gift – and special charism from God. And it only becomes activated when we offer it to others. That is why all the various ministries of the Church are so vital, because they are inclusive.

And as you include and bring together the community in engaged ministry – whether it is Greek School, or Cultural and Scriptural Education, or athletic pursuits, or culinary activities for your own pleasure or the benefit of the greater community – you will all feel closer to one another.

Like any family, the more you are engaged with and interested in one another, the closer your bonds of trust and friendship will grow. By serving together within the Resurrection Fellowship Hall, you will learn the truth of the Lord’s saying:

I call you servants no more, for a servant does not know what his lord is doing. But I proclaim you my friends, because all that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

You see, my friends, as you work together for your Parish by ministering and being of service together, you grow in love. You become friends in Christ, beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, and this is the key to understanding the “why” of our Faith. Brotherly and sisterly love unlock the deeper mystery of our faith, revealing why God made us in His image, according to His likeness. For we are to reflect the mutual love of the Holy Trinity, Who is blessed forever.

Therefore, congratulations to all who have made this achievement possible. Your hard work and sacrifice will yield a harvest of much more than activities of all kinds. The real harvest will be the bonds of love and friendship that will grow for generations to come. Χρόνια Πολλά!

* John 15:15.

Photos: GOARCH/Dimitrios Panagos

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