

09/01/2024

## **Archbishop Elpidophoros of America Homily at the Liturgy and Memorial for the late Nicholas J. Bouras Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church & National Shrine**



Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We gather in our magnificent National Shrine today, named most appropriately for today's memorial, to remember our beloved, distinguished, and ever-memorable Church Benefactor and National Vice Commander of the Order of Saint Andrew, the late Nicholas J. Bouras, Archon Depoutatos. Together with his beloved spouse, Anna - who we also remember with love and fondness - Archon Nicholas made such substantial contributions to the life of the Church - to the Most Holy Ecumenical Patriarchate, to the Sacred Archdiocese of America, to the parishes in New Jersey that they loved - that we can say with assurance: he is among the leading benefactors in the history of this Archdiocese. But always - and I repeat, always - without fanfare. His generous heart was turned to good in silent and humble adoration, and the gifts that he bestowed were given to glorify God - never himself.

If you need proof, consider the fact that the Foundation in their name, has continued to bless and bestow upon the Church a continuous stream of

beneficence. This continued charity is a reminder to us all of the power of the Resurrection – that life and living, and even giving, goes beyond death.

As I stand here today in this truly superb Temple dedicated to the Archon's Patron Saint, and I consider that this achievement was effected with one of the largest gifts from the Nicholas J. and Anna K. Bouras Foundation, I am overwhelmed with gratitude. The trustees of the Foundation are among us, and they know what Archon Nicholas intended for his legacy. We, who are its beneficiaries, are forever indebted to this incredibly generous and humble man, who never sought even the slightest praise for himself, but only the praise of God.

We are now ten years from his passing, and his beloved Anna was many years before. Some people might consider them to have been childless, but I say that they brought forth a spiritual family, filled with many, many children, who hold their memories very dear.

Archon Nicholas was by no means the most prosperous member of the Omogeneia, but I would say that he may have been the richest ... because he understood value of his prosperity, and how to help others. He was generous to a fault, more than simply responsive to a request. He did not wait to be called to do good with the goods of his life. He offered first and without judgment.

I often wonder if his experience during the Second World War – in which he served with gallantry and distinction – gave him an abiding sense of the fragility of human existence. Those who have seen war in all its horror are often the ones who see life as truly worth living to the fullest, and are first to share with others the fruits of their labors.

Our faith in the Resurrection allows us a very special perspective today, as we remember Nicholas and Anna. Some might say that he did not live to see this National Shrine emerge from the ashes of Ground Zero. But as People of the Resurrection, we affirm that, by God's grace, Nicholas knows of this completion and rejoices with us in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our remembrance of Nicholas and Anna today is for us, not for them. Their spiritual achievements have already carried them into the bosom of Abraham. They are at rest – eternal repose – in the mansions of the Saints.

But we, those of us still in the daily struggle to lead godly and God-pleasing lives – we need to remember them and their wondrous examples of humility, decency, generosity, and piety. They can inspire us as much today, years after their repose, as they did in life. Because now, they have entered into life everlasting, where the

suffering, and pain, and strain of this world have disappeared. As much as they are still material benefactors to us, they are much more our spiritual benefactors, like the saints.

Their exemplary lives live on through the noble works they wrought - in both their business and their philanthropy. Archon Nicholas was a “man of steel,” if you will allow it. Not a “superman,” in the fictional sense, but a down-to-earth man of this world, seeking and building a better one to come. The steel that poured out of his enterprises built many of the remarkable structures that adorn New York City. But he infused all his philanthropy with true spiritual steel, and made much firmer and established our Mother Church and our Archdiocese.

Our Church institutions will never fail - the “gates of hell” can never prevail against them - but they are all the stronger because of people like Nicholas and Anna Bouras.

Therefore, my beloved friends and especially the Bouras’ family and friends:

Let us bow our heads in gratitude for their life of service and generosity.

Let us always hold them in our hearts with thanksgiving and love.

And let us take their noble example as an inspiration for our own lives, that we might live nobly, strive to walk humbly, and always give cheerfully.

May God grant unto his devoted servants Nicholas and Anna Bouras, eternal rest among the Saints, and the foretaste of the Resurrection, in which we hope and set all our faith, for our Lord Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life; and He is glorified with His Father Who is from everlasting, and the All-Holy, Good, and Lifegiving Spirit; now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Eternal be their Memory.

Αἰωνία αὐτῶν ἡ Μνήμη.

Photos: GOARCH/Dimitrios Panagos

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