A Blessed Christmas and New Year

Encyclical

The Nativity of Christ

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the reverend priests and deacons, the monks and nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox family in America

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

We rejoice in the Lord on this blessed Feast of the Nativity, for we proclaim in the hymns of the feast, “Heaven and earth are united today, for Christ is born!” (Great Compline) In a divine and wondrous act of His abundant grace, God has bowed the heavens until they touched the earth. All creation rejoices, for the love of the Creator has been revealed. The gates of Paradise have been reopened, and God’s plan for our salvation is made known. The manger has become the throne of the Cherubim, for our God has clothed Himself in created flesh.

Throughout all the world, Orthodox Christians proclaim this truth through our worship. We continue to share that through the Holy Nativity, the Word is made manifest and dwells among us. God has spoken to us through a Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom He also created the world. (Hebrews 1:2) Today, He has come for our salvation. Christ has entered our humanity. The glorious Light of heaven now shines upon the earth, illuminating the hearts and minds of all who receive Him.

As we gather to offer our praise and thanksgiving to God, heaven and earth continue to be united. They are united just as the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds with the good news of the birth of Christ. The heavens were opened, and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2:13-14) Today, heaven and earth are united, just as the wise men from the East saw His star as a sign of the birth of Christ. The heavens were strained and are in need renewal. As a Church, we are united, just as the wise men from the East saw His star as a sign of the birth of Christ.

Archbishop's Keynote Address to Arch. Council

Your Eminences and Your Graces,

Mr. John Catsimatidis, Vice Chairman of this Archdiocesan Council, Distinguished Members of the Executive Committee and Members of the Archdiocesan Council, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, just four months after my arrival in the United States, and only five months from my election as your Archbishop, I can promise each of you that our beloved Archdiocese of America is back on course and headed to the safe harbor of stability, progress and growth. This is not to say that all the painful repercussions of the past are behind us. There are challenges all around us. Christianity remains under attack. Americans continue to lose their trust and faith in religion, and our own beloved Archdiocese has suffered from a lack of transparency, a lack of funds and, yes, a lack of trust. We are addressing these challenges head-on, but it requires a long-term solution, not a short-term fix.

It is critical that we maintain our Christian and Hellenic values, traditions, culture and mission, while ensuring that the Archdiocese’s administration, operations, communications and ministries function as a modern, transparent and contemporary church, meeting the needs of our faithful. Over the next few weeks, I will be reaching out to many of you to join me in developing a new process and plan that ensures the continued vitality of our Archdiocese and the Greek Orthodox faith in America today. We hope to share with you our findings at the next Archdiocesan Council meeting.

What we genuinely want and need for our Archdiocese is transparency, accountability, and responsibility. As we continue on this stage of our voyage, I am proud to call all of you my co-workers, especially our new Vice-Chairman, John Catsimatidis. Regardless of how we arrived on these shores, whether born in this blessed land or carried here over the sea or in the air, we have all been called to tend the Lord’s Vineyard in America, planted by the His own Right Hand, and having its Root and Stem in the Apostolic Vine of our Holy Mother Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Commitment, dedication essential

Your commitment, your dedication, and your love for Christ and His Holy Church are now more essential than they have ever been. We need your talents to reinforce the walls that support our Archdiocese and Her many ministries, for they have been severely strained and are in need renewal. As a
Ecumenical Patriarch: Religious Leaders Preaching Fanaticism is Unacceptable

Message from His All-Holiness at the International Conference on Religious Diplomacy held Nov. 11 in Athens.

“Peace between religions is a fundamental prerequisite for peace between peoples and cultures,” Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew pointed out in his recorded message to the International Conference on Religious Diplomacy, on the topic “Religion in the Modern World: Challenges and Prospects for Dialogue and Peace.”

The event was co-organized by “Foreign Affairs: The Hellenic Edition” magazine and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens that began Monday, Nov. 11, in Athens. In his message, His All-Holiness pointed out, among other things, that “religions must develop their peacekeeping function more effectively,” and reiterated that “violence and war in the name of religion and God is violence and war against religion and God.” Religions must cease to give voice to an aversion, the enemies to the opponents of faith and to those who seek to identify religion with its negative aspects. It is unacceptable for representatives of religions to appear as preachers of fanaticism, to ignite the flame of hatred, and casually allow religion to be used by unscrupulous people to promote, non-peaceful purposes. His All-Holiness reiterated that, “in view of outbursts of religious fundamentalism, of brutal violence, destruction of religious monuments, the impending or even ongoing ‘clash of civilizations,’ persecution of religious minorities, and widespread violation of religious freedom, the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church (Crete, 2016) condemned these morbid expressions of religious hatred and praised the importance of interfaith dialogue and its contribution to peace.”

“It has been rightly said that ‘the Gordian knot’ of peace is not untied by the sword of Alexander the Great. Peace is an eternal challenge and a task that is never fulfilled, it is never guaranteed forever, and it requires constant struggle. We are ‘destined’ to struggle and suffer for peace. After all, Our Modesty praises and supports any sincere initiative for peace, and continuously strives for the dialogue of religions and for the strengthening of their contribution towards reconciliation and solidarity,” said the Patriarch. Following is the full text of the Ecumenical Patriarch message.

The Honorable Mr. Lukas G. Katsonis, editor-in-chief of Foreign Affairs magazine: Hellenic Edition, beloved in the Lord son of Our Modesty, may the grace, peace and blessing of God be with you.

We have experienced for the last decade a reassessment of the role of religion in the lives of individuals and in society. Religion is dynamically returning to the forefront, appearing to be an important factor in the present and future of mankind. No analysis of the present situation is complete unless there is a reference to the influence of religion. In this discussion, four important functions of religion are highlighted: the first has to do with the meaning of human life. Religion gives us answers to our deep existential problems and a steady orientation to human existence. Secondly, religion provides identity to peoples and cultures. Therefore, those who know the religion of the other have better access to the characteristics of his or her culture. Thirdly, the most important cultural achievements of man, his highest and most important intellectual and artistic works, are related to religion. The fourth function of religion relates to its contribution to peace. Peace between religions is a fundamental prerequisite for peace between people and civilizations.

Regarding the last point, which is your conference theme, there has been criticism, the idea that it does not seem to be working effectively against violence in the name of God.

In view of the explosion of religious fundamentalism, the destruction of religious monuments, the impending or even ongoing ‘clash of civilizations,’ persecution of religious minorities, and widespread violation of religious freedom, a Great Council of the Orthodox Church (Crete, 2016) condemned these morbid expressions of religious hatred and praised the importance of interfaith dialogue and its contribution to peace.

In the Encyclical of the Council, the following points are noted: “Today we are experiencing today an increase in violence in the name of God. The explosions of fundamentalism within religious communities threaten to create the view that fundamentalism belongs to the essence of the phenomenon of religion. The truth, however, is that fundamentalism, as ‘neat not based on knowledge’ (Rom 10,2,1) constitutes an expression of morbid religiosity. A true Christian, following the example of the crucified Lord, sacrifices himself and does not sacrifice others, and for this reason is the most stringent critic of fundamentalism of whatever provenance. Honest interfaith dialogue contributes to the development of mutual trust and to the promotion of peace and reconciliation.”

In addition, we emphasize that religions must develop their peacekeeping function more effectively, and reiterate, “Violence and war in the name of religion and God is violence and war against religion and God.”

Religions must cease to give welcome arguments to the opponents of faith and to those who seek to identify religion with its negative aspects. It is unacceptable for representatives of religions to appear as preachers of fanaticism, to ignite the flame of hatred and casually allow religion to be used by unscrupulous people for dissimilar, non-peaceful purposes.”
The Archdiocese of America convened for their regular fall meeting, October 15-16, under the presidency of Archbishop Elpidophoros and: 1) Decided on the reorganization of the Synodal Committees as follows: a) Committee on Canonical Matters presided by His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston. b) Committee on Liturgical Texts presided by His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston. c) Committee on Ecclesiastical Music presided by His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey. d) Committee on Holy Monasteries presided by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta. e) Committee on Inter-Orthodox Relations presided by His Eminence Savvas of Pittsburgh. f) Committee on Ecumenical Dialogue presided by His Eminence Methodios of Boston. g) Committee on Clergy Benefits presided by His Eminence Isaiah of Denver. 2) Deliberated on clergy disciplinary matters in the second degree and decided to extend a formal request to the Ecumenical Patriarchate to laicize three clergymen. 3) Examined the petitions of three clergymen who have requested to enter into holy matrimony in the second instance and decided to formally extend a request to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. 4) Instituted a special Synodal Committee presided by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America to organize and oversee the celebration of the 200-year anniversary of the Greek Revolution in 1821. 5) Established a special Synodal Committee presided by His Grace Bishop Apostles of Media to organize and oversee the festivities for the centennial anniversary of the inception of the Sacred Archdiocese of America in 1922. 6) Following a proposal of the Archbishop for the purpose of electing an auxiliary bishop, formulated a three-person (triprosopon) candidacy list of clergy eligible for the elevation to the holy episcopacy based on the approved list of eligible candidates ratified by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. 7) Was given an update by Archbishop Elpidophoros regarding the progress on the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center project. 8) Was informed of the resignations of George Tsandikos and Cathy Boufidies-Walsh and the subsequent appointments of John Catsimatidis and Theodore Bozonelis for the Archdiocesan Council positions of Vice Chairman and Secretary, respectively. 9) Was informed of the appointment of Rev. Fr. Andreas Vathoulkas as the new Chancellor of the Holy Archdiocese. 10) Was informed of the appointment of Rev. Fr. Nicolas Kazarian as the new Ecumenical Officer. 11) Was informed by the Rev. Fr. Earl Cantos on the significance of the new youth protection protocols and procedures. 12) Was informed by the Rev. Fr. James Paris regarding the condition of the clergy pension plan. 13) Decided that on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, every Metropolis of the Archdiocese will hold an Archieratical Concelebration with the local hierarchs of all Orthodox jurisdictions. 14) Decided to encourage the participation of as many choirs as possible for the Christmas-themed concert to be held in conjunction with the representatives of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in Tenafly, New Jersey, on December 8, 2019. 15) Gladly accepted the recommendation of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America to convene their next meeting in Washington, D.C., May 2-5, 2020. And, finally, 16) Decided on the more frequent assembly of the Holy Eparchial Synod and designated the schedule and locations for the upcoming meetings.

From the Office of the Chief-Secretary of the Holy Eparchial Synod.

New York — The New York Board of Rabbis (NYBR) welcomed Archbishop Elpidophoros and honored him at their post-sukkah reception, on Oct. 23. The sukkoth — a weeklong festival that takes place five days after Yom Kippur — celebrates God’s protection of the Israelites as they fled bondage in Egypt. Recognizing the reciprocity between the Archdiocese and the NYBR, Archbishop Elpidophoros emphasized the notion of hospitality, as taught by Abraham and Sarah in both the Jewish and Christian traditions (Genesis 18). His Eminence stated, “Hospitality is a blessing from God. God is our only shelter, our safe haven. In Greek, the word for hospitality, “φιλοξενια,” which literally translates as “friend of the stranger,” also has a deeper meaning. Hospitality is considered one of the highest virtues because of the great respect and honor traditionally bestowed by hosts on their guests.”
Merry Christmas!

Καλά Χριστούγεννα!

Michael and Robin Psaros & Family
Ecumenical Patriarchate

Patriarch of Alexandria Recognizes Ukraine Autocephaly

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt - The Patriarchate of Alexandria officially recognized the Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine on Nov. 8 during the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Archdiocese of Alexandria. This recognition follows the decision of the Ukrainian Church's Synod, which took place in May, to achieve autocephaly.

The recognition of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine's autocephaly is particularly significant, as the Patriarchate of Alexandria is commemorated second after the Ecumenical Patriarchate in dignity.

This move is a step towards greater unity among Orthodox Christian churches worldwide.

Ecumenical Patriarch Honors Belgian Archdiocese 50th Year

BRUSSELS, Belgium - Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, accompanied by a delegation of Archbishops, visited Belgium Nov. 9-11 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Orthodox Archdiocese there.

The Metropolitan Archon of Belgium hosted the delegation led by the Patriarch, who was welcomed by the Archbishop and by the Governor General of Belgium.

Other delegations included the National Commander of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, and Presbytera Xanthi Karloutsou.

Other delegations included Archbishops of the Archdiocese of America and Spiritual Advisor of the Order of St. Andrew, and the Metropolis of Belgium host.

The delegation included Metropolitan Archons and Archdiocesan Council members, and led by His All-Holiness Bartholomew.

The delegations were greeted in Brussels Nov. 9 by Archon Boris of Gournay, who expressed appreciation for the visit.

With these thoughts, congratulations to the organizers and other contributors to this international conference, with its impressive theme, and wishing you success in all things, we convey to the eloquent speakers and delegates and other participants, our Patriarchial blessing and we beseech you for the grace and mercy of the God of peace, justice and love.


PEORIA, Ill. – U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood on Oct. 7 presented an official copy of the United States Congressional Record from Sept. 25, when House of Representatives recognized the Oct. 19 50th anniversary of the priesthood of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. This signal honor, in tribute to the 50th anniversary of the holy priests' consecration, was the first time an American congressman has presented an official copy of the United States Congressional Record to a religious leader.

The presentation was made on the occasion of the Ecumenical Patriarch's visit to the United States.

Religious Leaders Fanaticism is Unacceptable

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt - A statement by the Orthodox Church of Alexandria condemned the recent attacks on religious leaders in the Middle East.

The statement, issued by Pope and Patriarch Theodore II of Alexandria, said that the attacks are a violation of human rights and a violation of the recognized principles of the Orthodox Church, including the protection of religious leaders.

The statement called for the immediate release of all those detained and the protection of all religious leaders in the region.

Cantonis Named School President

BROOKLINE, Mass. – HCHC Trustee and Florida businessman George Cantonis was elected president of Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology at the Board of Trustees’ Dec. 10 meeting.

Upon the completion of a rigorous nationwide search, the HCHC Board announced Cantonis’ election following the recommendation of the Trustees’ Executive Committee. He replaces the Triarch of the Metropolitan Methodios of Boston. After the Board’s decision, Archbishop Elpidophoros immediately filled the position.

Mr. Cantonis becomes the 11th president of HCHC. A native of Chicago, he currently resides in the Tampa, Fla., area. He is an alumnus of HCHC’s Theological School and a member of the Board of Trustees.

Cantonis has served the Church in many capacities over the years including various leadership positions on the local level as well as on the national level through the Archdiocesan Council, Leadership 100. He is an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Having previously as a trustee, he rejoined the Board in September 2018 and has been its vice-chairman since April.

The search process for a new president began in August with the formation of a six-member Presidential Search Committee (PSC) in accordance with the by-laws of Hellenic College, Inc. The PSC was chaired by Aylissi Vassilou, who serves as Archon to the Archbishop Iakovos Leadership 100 Fund chairman.

The PSC received applications from 26 highly qualified candidates (including four women and three priests of the Archdiocese) which, after due process, was narrowed to eight semi-finalists. After a careful evaluation of the semi-finalists, two worthy candidates were determined as finalists. They met with HCHC constituents, including faculty members from both schools, the administration, and students who offered their recommendations to the Executive Committee. Upon intense review and deliberation, the Executive Committee confirmed the nomination of George M. Cantonis for the position of president.

To fill the position of vice-chairman, Archbishop Elpidophoros nominated Fr. Jon Magladuras from Annunciation Church in Modesto, Calif.

In announcing Cantonis’ election, Archbishop Elpidophoros said, “Today, we have a renewed sense of direction in the person of George Cantonis as the new president of HCHC. He has already demonstrated his administrative acumen in helping navigate the waters these past months as vice-chairman of the Board of Trustees. I am also grateful to His Eminence Metropolitan and Boston for shouldering the great weight and responsibilities of the presidency since April of this year which he took on in addition to his already heavy schedule. To Mr. Cantonis, I extend personal blessings, and I encourage the faculty, students, and the entire membership of our Archdiocese to offer prayers and full support for the newly elected President. Our School has a wonderful and historic legacy that under the presidency of Mr. Cantonis will reach new heights—academically, administratively, and spiritually—to the glory of God.”
A Blessed Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

ARGYRIS VASSILIOU, Chairman
DEMETRIOS G. LOGOTHETIS, Vice Chairman
MARIA ALLWIN, Secretary
KASSANDRA L. ROMAS, Treasurer
PAULETTE POULOS, Executive Director

Leadership 100

ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS LEADERSHIP 100 FUND, INCORPORATED

Advancing Orthodoxy and Hellenism in America

www.L100.org /Leadership100 /TheLeadership100
leading Archdiocese of the Ecumenical Throne we need to strengthen and build up the present while at the same time laying the foundations of our future. We all know the problems of our present circumstances and are aware of the issues that occurred in the past. For this reason, I ask you, rather, I need you to be committed to speaking up, speaking out, and who are working for love, must be honest with each other about the state of our Church. Silence on these grave issues is neither respectful nor useful. You, the leaders, and leaders must communicate. I expect nothing less from all of you, for we have much work to accomplish.

But this is not the Council. Our sights must be fixed on the future, a future that can be glorious for our Holy Orthodox Faith and our Archdiocese; a bright future of nearly limitless potential.

In order to make this possible, we must sincerely accept and embrace our roles and responsibilities in the life of this Church as leaders, as we rely on the Grace of God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (cf. Mark 12:30).

Arrival well timed
When I arrived just a few months ago, the timing proved to be a great advantage for me, as it is the custom in our churches, summertime is traditionally a season of reduced activity. Therefore, I was afforded opportunities to travel extensively in this great nation, and see for myself the state of our Holy Archdiocese of America. And do you know what I witnessed? Not a gloomy picture of a decline, but rather a picture of a Church vibrantly alive, with a large number of people, both children and adults, who are enthusiastic and committed to the life of the Church.

We have much work to accomplish. We have much work to do. We must do what we can to strengthen and build up our Church, our Archdiocese, our Hellenic community.

AREAS OF CONCERN
Therefore, I come before you today, full of hope in our collective future. I want to call all of you to help me rebuild our institutions, so that we may be worthy of the trust that the Faithful bestowed upon us. There are three distinct areas of concern, ones I have included in my Enthronement Address, that I wish to re-emphasize with you today.

First: our youth. And I am speaking about those in the cradle all the way to the door of our church, from the moment of baptism, up to the moment of marriage, and the Our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 12).

And I will go further; we are all members of one Holy Archdiocese of America. We are not divided into metropolises, parishes, and departments, and organizations, and institutions. This is a false and worldly view of the church. Rather, we are appointed for service through all of these organs of the Church that I just mentioned, of all Orthodox Christians in the United States are now converted. Needless to say, we all know that the epoch of infant baptism in Europe is beginning to come to an end. And over. So and must be open and welcoming to those who would find a life among us.

In this in mind, I would make this suggestion: instead of calling marriages with non-Orthodox spouses “mixed marriages,” might we not better refer to them as “baptized marriages?” For these marriages are the main road that usherers converts to the Faith. As the Apostle Paul says: “How do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or do you know: O husband, whether you will save your wife?” (1 Corinthians 7:16).

Every faithful marriage is a miracle marriage – a miracle of God’s love and a Mystery to be celebrated with joy and gratitude. Thanksgiving to God is due because either the bride or the spousal joins the Church in a formal way through Chrismation, they are still 100 percent of our community and should be treated the same. Such as if we are to be a Church that truly serves and embraces our young people who live in a technologically advanced and pluralistic world, we must embrace the strangers in our midst – make them strangers no more, and embrace all the members of our community and our Country.

Hellenic College Holy Cross
My second concern: our Hellenic College and Holy Cross – a theological seminary.

This is our offering to our City, to our Nation, and to the world. The reborn St. Nicholas Church will be much more than the historic and precious parish church that fell among the victims of 9/11. St. Nicholas is a vision of what it is to be a Church with a mission and a vision in a modern society.

Finally, as I spoke of the St. Nicholas National Shrine at Ground Zero in my Enthronement Address: “It is our offering to the Holy Orthodox Faithful of America, has been given this sacred and noble task, to raise up the Victory Standard to Life Eternal on the field where so much death was dealt without pity. The Unconquered Cross – Το Αναπτυμένο Τρόπαιο – will rise at Ground Zero, a sign that faith endures over, death, destruction, and despair, and love conquers all!”

My Brothers and Sisters, we need to be clear about these things. We are not immune to this kind of decline. Just look at the Archdiocese Registry statistics over the past 20 years; every category is falling, except funerals. But we must never accept to be a Church that is dying off. We are a branch of the Apostles, raised in the womb of Christ, joined through the Faith and the Person of the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Successor of the First-Called Disciple Andrew and his spiritual descendants, the bishops and priests and lay leaders, who live in a technologically advanced and pluralistic world, we must embrace the strangers in our midst – make them strangers no more, and embrace all the members of our community and our Country.

Thank you for embracing this mission with me. May God see all our endeavors rise from glory to glory, bringing eternal glory to His Holy Name. Amen.
Rejoicing in The Nativity of Our Lord and in Gratitude for the Ministry of ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

Christ Is Born! Glorify Him!
**Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Ukraine Receives Athenagoras Award**

By John Mindala

NEW YORK - Archbishop Elpidophoros, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, St. Andrew’s National Commander Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis presented the Athenagoras Human Rights Award to Metropolitan Epiphaniy of Kyiv and All Ukraine at the annual banquet Oct. 19 at the New York Hilton Midtown.

About 500 Archons and guests attended.

In a video message to the audience commemorating the occasion, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew stated: “This honor is, as we note, rightful and deserving for the leader of a fledgling Autocephalous Church, which the Mother Church of Constantinople has in its loving concern nurtured for millennia and navigated in recent decades to self-governance and self-determination, just as it has done in many similar circumstances for other Autocephalous Orthodox Churches throughout the world.” (To view the video, and to read the complete texts of remarks by Archbishop Demetrios and Dr. Limberakis, visit www.archons.org)

In presenting the award, Archbishop Elpidophoros said: “Tonight we celebrate not only your person, Your Beatitude, but we celebrate as well the Pious and Faithful People of Ukraine, whose aspirations for religious independence and control over their own future and spiritual destiny were realized by the loving, pastoral, and indeed maternal care of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Holy and Sacred Synod of Constantinople.

His Eminence added: “Despite the pens that would re-write history, we know very well from which πηγή flows the Life-Giving Fountain of the Queen of Cities, Constantinople – and how it is that Kyiv is the mother of Moscow, and not the reverse! Moreover, we know that the Autocephaly was always received from Constantinople, for those Local Churches that came into existence in the Second Millennium of our Faith.

“These are historical facts that cannot be denied, except by those who choose to willfully live in denial. The Autocephaly has yet to be accepted by the majority of Local Churches, but these delays have ever been. There are enough examples of individualized circumstances where a Local Church has forestalled the Ecumenical Throne.

“As the mothers in this room know very well, birth-giving is not an easy matter, and comes with pain and great discomfort, but as our Lord Jesus Christ said of His own Passion: When a woman is in labor, she has pain because her hour has come. But when she has brought forth the child, she no longer remembers her distress because of her joy that a human being is born into the world.” (John 16:21)

In his remarks on presenting the Award, National Commander Limberakis paid tribute to His Beatitude Metropolitan Epiphaniy and declared that “in his person we also honor the faithful Ukrainian People and their struggle for religious independence, self-determination, and the crowning achievement of the Tomos of Autocephaly for the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.”

Dr. Limberakis noted that, “by the grace of God and with the spiritual leadership of Metropolitan Epiphaniy, the centuries-old dream of a united autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine is now a reality and Ukraine is now on the path to a unified Orthodox witness for this noble and historic Orthodox People. Critical to this path of unity for the Orthodox Church of Ukraine was the actual granting of the Tomos of Autocephaly, the certificate of autocephaly if you will, issued earlier this year by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, under the inspired leadership of the spiritual father of us all, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.”

Dr. Limberakis asked, “Ladies and gentlemen, brother Archons, why has the Order of St. Andrew taken such a strong position in support of autocephaly for Ukraine? Why did we sponsor an International Townhall Conference Call in support of Autocephaly? Why did the Order publish an eBook on the historical and canonical underpinnings of Ukrainian Autocephaly and why did the Order in fact, select His Beatitude to receive the certificate of autocephaly?”

His Eminence told the new Archons: “Today is truly a day of rejoicing for all of us. It is none other than His All-Holiness whom we have the honor of welcoming to our midst today. A man of great love and humility, he has chosen the title for you, out of his love for you and appreciation of your dedication to the Great Church of Christ. You are all most worthy of this noble honor!”

The National Commander Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, explained: “The Archons represent the nobility of the Church, both in Byzantine and modern times, and with this noble charac-
St. Nicholas Church & National Shrine Project Resumes

Introduction

The St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine project is back on track coming to a halt in 2016. In his comments about the project, Archdiocesan Council Vice Chairman John Catsimatidis was blunt and to the point as to why the project had collapsed.

“Squandered is the nicest word I can use,” he said. More than $12 million had been spent on architects, lawyers and designers and part of that had been squandered.” Some $20 million that had been pledged was never collected because of mismanagement, he added. With every change order that had been made in the original plans, costs began to spiral beyond the original estimate.

“If you don’t know what you’re doing and if you don’t have the right experts on your side to protect the Church, then contractors and builders will take advantage of you and this is what happened.”

He said because of mismanagement, “a terrible job was done of supervising and managing the contractors. For every change order that was made they took us to the cleaners.”

Catsimatidis noted that “all of us were very, very embarrassed. The governor and Port Authority were embarrassed. They were five minutes away from taking the entire project away from us, foreclosing on us and giving it to someone else.”

However, Catsimatidis and other high profile Greek American leaders met with Gov. Andrew Cuomo who agreed to appoint a commission, “The Friends of St. Nicholas” that has been working in conjunction with the Archdiocese, St. Nicholas parish and others directly involved with seeing the project to its completion.

As a result, through the efforts several Church leaders, including Fr. Alexander Karloutos, who has raised more than $45 million for completion of the St. Nicholas project, and several million from others within and outside of the Greek Orthodox community, the project is back on track with a completion target of Sept. 11, 2021.

Efforts to garner support from outside the Greek Orthodox community have been undertaken by George Gigicos, former Trump presidential campaign organizer, and Mark Arey, former head of the Hellenic Initiative.

Archdiocese officials also had been working with CBS “60 Minutes” anchor Scott Pelley to showcase the project, which is on hold pending the restart of construction.


The St. Nicholas National Shrine project is perhaps the most important cultural and social statement of the Greek Orthodox Church since Archbishop Iakovos marched in Selma with Dr. Martin Luther King. The fact that our beloved St. Nicholas Church was destroyed in the horrific terrorist attacks of Sept. 11th when thousands of our fellow citizens were murdered by terrorists filled with religious hatred places an enormous responsibility on all our shoulders.

As we struggled to preserve the right to rebuild our Church, we faced many obstacles, but we overcame them all, with the help of unsung heroes whose names would be familiar to you all. We commenced construction in hope, even with the soaring costs that were determined by the very cost of building in the single most expensive site in the United States, Ground Zero. The generosity of the community was unprecedented: over $47 million raised, with $9 million remaining in outstanding pledges. Such a feat has never been accomplished by our Church.

Yet, we must face the truth that we stumbled. Leadership failed. There were improprieties, incompetent management, bad decisions, and ultimately, we stumbled. Leadership failed. There were improprieties, incompetent management, bad decisions, and ultimately, we stumbled. Leadership failed.

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However, Catsimatidis and other high profile Greek American leaders met with Gov. Andrew Cuomo who agreed to appoint a commission, “The Friends of St. Nicholas” that has been working in conjunction with the Archdiocese, St. Nicholas parish and others directly involved with seeing the project to its completion.

As a result, through the efforts several Church leaders, including Fr. Alexander Karloutos, who has raised more than $45 million for completion of the St. Nicholas project, and several million from others within and outside of the Greek Orthodox community, the project is back on track with a completion target date of Sept. 11, 2021.

Efforts to garner support from outside the Greek Orthodox community have been undertaken by George Gigicos, former Trump presidential campaign organizer, and Mark Arey, former head of the Hellenic Initiative.

Archdiocese officials also had been working with CBS “60 Minutes” anchor Scott Pelley to showcase the project, which is on hold pending the restart of construction.


The St. Nicholas National Shrine project is perhaps the most important cultural and social statement of the Greek Orthodox Church since Archbishop Iakovos marched in Selma with Dr. Martin Luther King. The fact that our beloved St. Nicholas Church was destroyed in the horrific terrorist attacks of Sept. 11th when thousands of our fellow
NEW YORK – Orthodox faithful around the world and in the Archdiocese celebrated the feast day of St. Nicholas, the Wonderworker, archbishop of Myra in Lycia.

Archbishop Elpidophoros presided at the Archieratical Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Shrine Church in Flushing, N.Y., perhaps the largest parish in the Archdiocese, where hundreds of faithful came to worship.

Fr. Paul Palesty, the parish protosynoder, read the Archbishop’s the St. Nicholas Feast Day encyclical.

In his homily, the Archbishop about the blessed life of St. Nicholas and his example for us in today’s circumstances. “… we call upon St. Nicholas in a special way at his feast today. We ask that he intercede; that he would show us the power of God; that he would prove to us, again and again, the truth of Christ’s words. Sharing his same spirit of faith, ‘we also believe, and we speak.’ We proclaim our faith, that the Lord who glorified St. Nicholas will raise up his fallen church to glory once more.”

Later in the afternoon, Archbishop Elpidophoros visited the World Trade Center construction site of St. Nicholas Church and National Shrine and officiated at a blessing and sanctification of the water service (Agiasmos) in front of the building. (Photos at left)

The Archbishop and the faithful in attendance entered the structure for the blessing. He sprinkled sanctified water upon the people and the structure. He addressed the gathering and reiterated his confidence in the church’s completion: “I have complete and utter confidence that God is raising up His mighty hand to help us complete this divine work.

We will move forward with all necessary openness and transparency and complete our mission here at the World Trade Center, to rebuild St. Nicholas Church and make of it a national shrine.”
**Chicago Hosts 17th National CMF Luncheon, $500,000 Raised**

By Barbara Pasalis

CHICAGO – The Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos hosted the 17th Biennial National Philoptochos Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon Nov. 16, with more than 1,150 guests attending.

They included Archbishop Elpidophoros, Metropolitan Nathaniel of Chicago, Philoptochos Spiritual Advisor Bishop Apostolos of Medeia, National President Mirta Lomis, and the Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos Society for an inspirational afternoon of agape.

The luncheon raised more than $500,000 for innovative research programs at pediatric hospitals throughout the United States and organizations with special programs that care for children with critical and life threatening illnesses and disabilities.

Nearly $300,000 was disbursed to 17 programs situated within the Metropolis of Chicago at the luncheon. The remaining funds will be disbursed in the coming year to programs throughout the country, leading up to the 2020 National Philoptochos Convention in Cleveland.

The Kids Helping Kids project was a new initiative this year. Young people in churches throughout the Metropolis of Chicago sponsored ‘lemon-aid’ stands and other fundraisers during the months leading up to the luncheon. The youth raised over $20,000 in support of the program.

This is another example of Philoptochos engaging our youth in philanthropy. Andrea Darlas, award-winning Chicago media personality, served as emcee for the afternoon. Fr. Mark Munoz, Proistamosen of Holy Agnorygi Sts. Cosmas & Damianos Church in Rochester, Minn., was the guest speaker and inspired the guests with personal reflections of his 5-year-old daughter’s battle with cancer. A grown-up and healthy Nina Munoz, followed her father, greeted the audience, and filled the room with love and thanksgiving for the work of the Children’s Medical Fund.

Jeffrey Michals, husband of the late Anastasia Michals, 2017 Children’s Medical Fund Chair, received a recognition and honor in her memory, and shared touching and heartfelt reminiscences of her work in Philoptochos. Finally, the audience was entertained during the luncheon by Philoptochos Friends in Music, which presented a medley of Chicago and American favorites.

The following 17 organizations received grants:

- Anchored in Hope, Lake Forest, Ill., $16,198
- Project: Licensed Nursing Staff and Medical Supplies for Camp Hope for Children with Special Needs
- Child’s Voice, Wood Dale, Ill., $25,000
- Project: Child’s Voice Early Intervention (EI) Program for Children with and at-risk for hearing loss
- Elyssa’s Mission, Northbrook, Ill., $11,520
- Project: Elyssa’s Mission Evidence-Based Signs of Suicide (SOS) Program in New Middle and/or High Schools in Plainfield School District 202
- Hadley School for the Blind, Winnetka, Ill., $16,298
- Project: Hadley Distance Learning for Visually Impaired Youths
- Mercy Home for Boys and Girls, Chicago, $20,000
- Project: Health and Safety Programming to address the issues of homelessness and the opioid crisis by providing a safe, nurturing residential treatment home
- Special Education District of Lake County (SEDOL) Foundation, Gages Lake, Ill., $15,000
- Project: Weekend Backpack Program for special needs children ages 3-22
- John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County, Chicago, $21,600
- Project: Car Seats Save Lives
- University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine, $22,450
- Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary (IEEI), Chicago, Project: Identification of Demographic and Family Related Factors That Impede Successful Implementation of Amblyopia Treatment in Chicago-Area Children
- Children’s Hospital, South Bend, Ind., $13,071.30
- Project: Improving Care for Critically Ill Children and Premature Babies
- Mental Health America of North-west Indiana, Hammond, Ind., $10,000
- Project: Parents as Teachers (PAT)/Empowering Teens as Parents (ETAP)
- Unity Point Health, St. Luke’s Foundation, Sioux City, Iowa, $25,000
- Project: Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Patient Monitors Project
- Fairview Foundation, St. Paul, Minn., $15,136
- Project: Diagnosing and Treating Infant Hearing Loss in Rural, Resistant Areas
- Hennepin Health Foundation, Minneapolis, $13,261.50
- Project: Promoting Infant Safe Sleep Conditions for Families Experiencing Poverty
- Family Forward, Brentwood Children’s Home, St. Louis, $15,000
- Project: Specialized Bathtub for Non-Ambulatory Children
- University of Missouri Health Care, Columbia, Mo., $5,000
- Project: Neonatal Outreach Education Program
- Children’s Hospital, Milwaukee Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wis., $12,500
- Project: Child Life Services: Non-Pharmacological Pain Management
- Rogers Behavioral Health Foundation, Oconomowoc, Wis., $25,000
- Project: Expanding Specialized Mental Health Treatment for Children and Adolescents at Rogers Behavioral Outpatient Clinic in Appleton, Wis.

Visit the National Philoptochos website for more information on these projects. National Philoptochos’ founds thanks go to the many sponsors and stewards, without whose generosity this event would not have been possible. Heartfelt thanks to Metropolis of Chicago President and Luncheon Chair Pam Argyris; Co-Chairs Irene Ansoniadis, Georgia Sarlas, and Marilyn Tzakis; and their dedicated committees for an enormously successful and heartwarming event.

**Archbishop’s Address to the Luncheon**

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

Quoting the words of Helen Keller, thus began Archbishop Elpidophoros’ address at the 17th Biennial National Philoptochos Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon. He proceeded to charm the audience when he extended the reference, calling it the Koulouraki Effect.

“This occurs when a member of Philoptochos makes cookies for a bake sale. It can be in Portland, Maine, or Troy, Michigan, or Bakersfield, California. One plate of koulourakia, by itself, does not amount to much. But each small plate, together with all the others, adds up to a great banquet of love. This is the ‘Koulouraki Effect’: when a small cookie makes a big difference—in a child receiving treatment; in a family keeping their home; in research that saves young lives.”

“An army of agape”

His Eminence continued addressing the women: “Nothing you do is small or insignificant. Each fashion show, each weekly coffee hour that you host, has great value. Each member of Philoptochos has great value. This is because you work together, in every parish, in every metropolis, and across our Archdiocese. You are an ‘army of agape’ that conquers pain and anguish through generosity and kindness. You are a model of cooperation and collaboration for our Church.”

With these words, His Eminence inspired the women of Philoptochos to work together and redouble their efforts to do even more to serve the most fragile members of society. Archbishop Elpidophoros precisely captured the power of Philoptochos. Organized on the parish, metropolis and national levels, Philoptochos can harness the support of over 25,000 members to assist individuals who need our support and agape across the country and across the world.

The Archbishop finished his address by announcing that he has dedicated the Sunday of the Good Samaritan (8th Sunday of Luke) as National Philoptochos Day. This will be a day to celebrate Philoptochos and share the news of our philanthropic work in our communities. Perhaps you will sponsor a community-wide project to benefit Feed the Hungry, Operation Classroom, or another local program; or present an educational program on Bullying; perhaps you will serve a beautiful coffee hour, present a PowerPoint presentation to inform the community of the many programs Philoptochos sup...
OCA Metropolitan Welcomes Archbishop

SYOSSET, N.Y. – At the invitation of Metropolitan Tikhon, head of the Orthodox Church in America, Archbishop Elpidophoros and a delegation from the Archdiocese visited OCA headquarters on Long Island, Nov. 4.

Accompanying His Eminence were Bishop Apostolos of Medea, chief secretary of the Holy Synod, Archpriest Nicholas Kazarian and Nicholas Anton of the Archdiocese Office of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical, and Inter-faith Relations; and Deacon Eleftherios Constantine.

In attendance from the Orthodox Church in America were Archbishop Michael of New York, secretary of the Holy Synod, Archpriest Alexander Rentel, chancellor, Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, director of External Affairs, and Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak, secretary to the Metropolitan.

Metropolitan Tikhon welcomed the Archbishop Elpidophoros to St. Sergius of Radonezh Chapel. After venerating the altar and the relics of the North American saints, Metropolitan Tikhon officially welcomed Archbishop Elpidophoros and presented him with an icon of the Valaam Mother of God.

“With brotherly love, and great joy, I welcome Your Eminence to the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America. It has been my honor in the past to host your predecessor, Archbishop Demetrios, and I am confident that my visit to the headquarters of the Greek Archdiocese and your visit here today will build upon the friendship we have developed over the years, and that we can look forward to a long and fruitful relationship as our churches look to work together for the Glory of God and the encouragement of the flock we lead.

In turn, His Eminence addressed the following words to Metropolitan Tikhon, “I am personally very happy to be here today because I feel that we have a very good friendship from the time I was Metropolitan and I had the joy and pleasure to host and welcome you to my monastery in Halki in Constantinople. And now, I see this new visit we have today as a continuation of our good friendship, and brotherhood that we have established throughout the years. I am sure these good relations will continue; let’s pray to see where this good friendship and love with guide us.”

Lengthy discussions on various topics of mutual interest took place during a luncheon in the Chancery dining room. Among the matters discussed were the current and future relations, and dialogue between the Orthodox Church in America and the Ecumenical Patriarchate; the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA; and the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey.

Archbishop’s Address to the CMF Luncheon

from previous page

ports, and put out a Basket of Love so that the community can provide funds to help the needy. There are myriad ways to celebrate Philoptochos in your communities.

This will not detract from the celebration of the feast day of our patron saints, Sts. Cosmas and Damianos, in November when Philoptochos chapters around the nation hold an annual collection to benefit the philanthropic work of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. That will not change. We remain committed to this important ministry of Philoptochos.

Archbishop Elpidophoros concluded his remarks with a prayer for many years of life for the women of Philoptochos, and service together, in peace and in love.

Statement on the Arrest of Jerry Dimitriou

from page 3

GOARCH has had a review of its finance function performed by an independent accounting firm and its Audit Committee to ensure the highest levels of governance, segregation of duties and authorization of expenditures.

GOARCH is committed to full transparency with its faithful and with governmental authorities, and will continue to cooperate fully with them with respect to Mr. Dimitriou’s arrest.
Archbishop, L-100 Leaders Hold First Meeting

By George Schira

NEW YORK - Archbishop Elpidophoros and Leadership 100 Executive Committee members and trustees met for the first time Nov. 7-8.

He introduced both with his forthright manner and vision for the Church in America. I want to assure you that the Ecumenical Patriarch and I are both aware of the generous support Leadership 100 has offered to the Archdiocese and to the National Ministries. We should always be mindful that we are ONE Archdiocese here in America working together for the perpetuation of our Orthodox Faith and Hellenism. Leadership 100 continues to play a vital role,” his Eminence stated.

The Archdiocese reported that the Archdiocese is back on course and financially stable and that efforts to revitalize Hellenic College Holy Cross and complete St. Nicholas Church and National Shrine were making progress. However, he added a word of caution. “We are faced with numerous challenges all around us. We need to address these challenges head-on, bolstered by our faith and heritage. The Church needs your honesty, your integrity and your fighting spirit,” he added.

Archdiocesan Council Vice Chair John A. Catsimatidis, also a Leadership 100 Executive Committee member and Chancellor of St. John’s University, reported that concentrated efforts were underway to collect on pledges for rebuilding St. Nicholas and he thanked Leadership 100 for its generous support.

Newion Village Director Named

NEW YORK – Fr. Gary Kyriacou, pastor of St. Demetrios Church in Carmarillo, Calif., was named director of Ionian Village on Nov. 26.

Fr. Gary brings a great deal of experience from a variety of responsibilities that will continue to drive the dynamic ministry of Ionian Village. Ionian Village participants will benefit from his many years of parish service, leadership and service to various ministries of the Metropolis of San Francisco, Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology, and the Archdiocese. Fr. Kyriacou has over 30 years of summer camp and youth ministry program experience from the Metropolis of San Francisco camp programs of St. Sophia Camp, St. Nicholas Ranch, and Ascension Cathedral Camp Ravencliff. He also served the Ionian Village program in 2016 and 2018.

Fr. Gary is married to Presvyteria Christina (Platis) and they have three children. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Holy Cross School of Theology in 2001, following which he was ordained to the Diaconate (May 27, 2001) and to the Priesthood (Sept. 9, 2001). Prior to his studies at Holy Cross, Fr. Gary received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Film Production and Screenwriting from California State University – Northridge. He also had served as assistant priest at the Ascension Cathedral in Oakland, Calif. In July 2008, Metropolitan Gerasimos appointed Fr. Kyriacou as chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Greek Folk Dance and Choral Festival (FDF) Board.

Scholarship Awards Announced

The Scholarships Committee of the Archdiocese has awarded a record amount of scholarship funds for the current academic year 2019-20, from three scholarships.

Gioles Scholarship

The George & Naoumai Gioles Scholarship Fund was established in 1997 with a generous gift from Mar- tin Gioles in memory of her beloved parents, to honor their commitment to the Orthodox faith, their love for their Hellenic heritage and their desire to help those who are orphaned or in need. Scholarships are awarded annually to Greek Orthodox students committed to serious study in degree-seeking undergraduate programs at accredited colleges or universities in the United States. To date, the Gioles Scholarship has given out over $175,000 since its inception in 1999. Ten scholarships were awarded to the following students: Panayiotis Tsagakis (Staten Island, NY), Eleftheria Retzoulas (Somerville, MA), Vangelis Economou (Shaker Heights, OH), and Angela Demetriou (Jersey City, NJ).

Malta Scholarship

The Katina John Malta Scholarship Fund was established in 2002 through a generous gift from the estate of Katina John Malta, in recognition of the love she had for the Church and to honor her Founder and my inspiration, Archbishop Iakovos of Blessed Memory. I am both aware of the generous support Leadership 100 Execu- tive Committee and to the National Ministries.

Bishop Apostolos Attends Ukraine Sobor

SOMERSET, N.J. – Bishop Apostolos of Medea, accompanied by Nicholas Anton, director of the Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical and Dialogue Relations, represented Archbishop Elpidophoros at the Oct. 17 banquet of the 22nd Sobor (clergy-laity) of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the United States.

The event included Ukrainian cultural performances in dance and music. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was present, and the bishop delivered remarks from the Archdiocese.

New Greek Education Director Named

NEW YORK – Archbishop Elpidophoros has appointed Dr. Anastasios Koularmanis, previously the Diocese of Brooklyn Greek American School superintendent in Astoria, as the new director of Greek Education.

Dr. Anastasios Koularmanis began his career as an educator for the NYC Department of Education in 1992 and transferred to the Hickey School District in 1996. He received his tenure in 1999.

On Feb. 1, 1999 he joined St. Demetrios School as the assistant principal and, shortly after, was named supervising principal.

During his 20 years as the school’s chief administrator, Koularmi- nis raised the bar for Greek-American education in the United States. Under his administration, St. Demetrios has won recognition as a top Greek-American parochial school, and as one of the best such schools in the country.

As an educational leader, he continually upgrades school programs and curriculum to meet each student’s needs for an excellent education.

Graduates from the high school have been accepted to some of the most prestigious universities, including Yale, Columbia, Barnard, Cooper Union (NY), NYU, and Sophie Davis Medical School.

Many of these students received full scholarships to these universities.

Fr. Andreas Vithoulkas was named the Archdiocese chancellor in October, succeeding Bishop Andonios of Patras who continues to serve as director of St. Michael’s Home. Fr. Vithoulkas was pastor of Resurrection Church in Brooklyn, N.Y. prior to being named to his new position. He previously served parishes that include Holy Trinity Church, Bridgeport, Conn., and St. Paul’s Cathedral, Hempstead, NY. He served as a deacon in the Archdiocese’s Chancellor’s Office under then Chancellor Bishop Savas.
Archbishop Makes Archpastoral Visit to Bahamas, Brings $100,000 L-100 Grant

NEW YORK – Archbishop Elpidophoros traveled to the Bahamas on Oct. 13 for a pastoral visit to areas recently affected by Hurricane Dorian.

Leading a delegation from the Archdiocese, His Eminence celebrated a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at Annunciation of the Mother of God parish in Nassau. He also visited areas that sustained extensive damage under the hurricane’s force.

He also brought with him a $100,000 grant from Leadership 100 for relief efforts in the aftermath of the hurricane, which the L-100 Executive Committee unanimously approved. Chairman Argyris Vassiliou presented the donation to His Eminence on Oct. 7.

The Archbishop-led delegation, which included International Orthodox Christian Charities representatives, personally ministered and delivered relief following an appeal for assistance from Fr. Irenaeus Jeffrey Cox, pastor of Annunciation Church in Nassau.

While the church was spared, the suffering of the inhabitants was of deep concern to His Eminence, who visited areas that sustained extensive damage.

Hurricane Dorian struck the Bahamas as a Category 5 hurricane, one of the strongest storms ever recorded in the Atlantic. Dorian brought storm surges and extreme wind, causing extensive destruction to property and infrastructure, as well as at least 50 deaths. The islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama were most heavily affected.

We bring our consolation and tangible assistance, and seek together how to help with their needs and concerns over the long-term recovery. They are all our sisters and brothers, and our hearts are open wide to be of service to them in Christ,” Archbishop Elpidophoros commented at the outset of the visit.

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Metropolis Launches Ministry for H. S. Graduates

CHICAGO - The Metropolis of Chicago announced a new ministry for high school graduates called Lighthouse. Lighthouse aims to prepare campers for the social, emotional, practical, and spiritual challenges they will encounter in their college experience and beyond.

Named “Lighthouse,” the ministry was developed through the Metropolis’ Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministries (OYAM Chicago) and is intended to be the natural next step for campers who attended both St. Mary’s Orthodox Camp and Fanari Camp. The ministry will address and respond to the troubling reality that approximately 60 percent of youth are leaving Christianity (including the Orthodox Church) in America today.

Specifically, Lighthouse will organize, promote, and execute an annual camp staffed with clergy and laity trained to proactively engage the age group and foster an authentic sense of community among campers as Orthodox Christians. The first Lighthouse camp will run from June 7 - 14 at Carthage College.

SF Metropolis Holds Retreat for Deacons

SQUAW VALLEY, Calif. - The Metropolis of San Francisco offered a Deacon’s Retreat at St. Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center, Nov. 1-3.

The retreat welcomed deacons and diaconal candidates from the West Coast and Montana, Tennessee and Texas. Under the direction of Metropolitan Gerasimos, this retreat provided training to enhance the deacons’ ministry, and to provide a basis for diaconal candidates studying at Holy Cross School of Theology in Brookline, Mass.

In his opening remarks, the Metropolitan commented, “This retreat is part of the ongoing formation and development of your ministry as a deacon of the Church. I am always reminded of the words of Saint Ignatius of Antioch who, as he faced certain martyrdom in the arena said, ‘Now I am learning to be a disciple.’” He continued on to share, “Each stage of life has its issues and challenges for development. Each stage in our ministry has distinct issues and challenges.
St. Nicholas Project Resumes

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Kavourias (legal counsel).
The “Friends of Saint Nicholas” already has a bank account at Atlantic Bank, controlled completely by Friends of St. Nicholas Shrine, separate from the Archdiocese, and one whose audits will be a public record.

We have engaged, pro bono, Richard Browne, Partner at Sterling Project Development, the developers and owners of Citi Field, to be the COO (Chief Operating Officer) of Construction, a position that literally did not exist in the past and one which could have saved the project millions of dollars.

We have re-engaged with our great ally, Steve Plate of the Port Authority New York/New Jersey, as well as with Skanska Construction to continue work on St. Nicholas, along with all the sub-contractors, Architectural Designer Santiago Calatrava, along with architects of record Nick Koutroumis, have completed the plans to reflect the cost-cutting measures of Archbishop Elpidophoros. Sub-contractors will be submitting bids shortly. Once those bids have been received, the site will be prepped for construction and the final cost will be submitted.

Nevertheless, the first two years of the project was shut down have not been without consequences. Water has infiltrated the intersitial space beneath the platform and as allowed by the 2018 Clergy Laity Congress; the first increase in three years. The 2016 Congress previously approved an increase of $4.74 percent for 2018. That increase was eliminated in October 2017, saving parishes over $1.6 million in Total Commitment payments to the Archdiocese.

In October 2017, the Archdiocese pledged to balance the budget and meet all financial commitments without increasing the Total Commitment allocations paid by parishes. That pledge was met through careful cash, budget and expense controls established at the Archdiocese. Implementing those controls resulted in an operating excess of revenues over expenses in both 2018 and for the six months ended June 30, 2019 and continue to guide the budgeting process just completed for the 2020 budget year.

Other notable changes to the budget include increased support for the Ecumenical Patriarchate to a new total of $1.5 million — restoring a portion of the prior budget reduction. The Hellenic College/Holy Cross support was increased by $2.5 million — the largest in history and with the understanding that it may require a further increase during 2020 to meet immediate cash needs of the School.

The Archdiocesan Council and Executive Committee also passed resolutions allowing a grant of up to $3.5 million per year for up to five years to Hellenic College Holy Cross beginning with the School’s 2020/21 fiscal year to clearly exhibit the Archdiocese’s long-term commitment to the School. Although, long-term borrowings on a line of credit should not be necessary, the Archdiocesan Council, together with the Executive Committee and Finance Committee, also supported increasing the Archdiocese’s line of credit from $3 million to $5 million as an explicit demonstration of its ability to meet its

Archdiocesan Council Committee Members

Administration
Presiding Hierarch: Metropolitan Evangelos
Chairman: Constantine (Gus) Caras
Deputy Leader: Bishop Andonios
Members: Bishop Apostolos, Elaine Allen, Fr. Nick Anctil, Fr. Timothy Bakakos, Fr. George Callos, Catherine Boulfides Wald, Judge Theodore Bozondis, George Behrakis, Stephen Cherpelis, Jim Gianakis, Larry Hotzoglou, Lou Kircos, Nicholas Kourtis, Paul Lillios, Maria Logus, D. Moschos, Professor Elias Pat savos, Alex Pritos, Dr. Louis Roussalis, George Tsandikos, Savas Tsivicos, Dr. Ted Vlahos.

Communications
Presiding Hierarch: Metropolitan Nathanael
Chairman: Cliff Argue
Deputy Leader: Matthew Costidis
Members: Fr. Michael Kallaur, Stamatis N. Astra, John Catsimatidis, George Demos, John Metaxas, Hedia Mihaltses, Mike Minaton, Gus Publicas, Paul Sogotis, Dino Yotides

Finance
Presiding Hierarch: Metropolitan Methodios
Chairman: Lazaros Kircos
Deputy Leader: Fr. Soteros Baroody

Stewardship, Outreach, Evangelism
Presiding Hierarch: Metropolitan Nicholas

$23.6 Million Budget for 2020

NEW YORK – The Archdiocesan Council, the Executive, and Finance Committees approved the Archdiocesan budget for 2020 of $23,625,000 at the Council’s Oct. 17 meeting. (2020 Adopted Budget). The amount represents a very small increase over the $23.39 million current year’s total.

Archbishop Elpidophoros expressed his appreciation for the work done by all to accomplish this important task. “I am grateful to our people for all the effort put into crafting this budget. It provides for notable changes in the current needs of our Archdiocese while still being a balanced budget. I am especially grateful for the support extended by our Synod, Executive Committee and full Archdiocesan Council for Hellenic College Holy Cross.”

The 2020 Total Commitment from parishes was increased 3 percent as needed to balance the current budget and as allowed by the 2018 Clergy Laity Congress; the first increase in three years. The 2016 Congress previously approved an increase of 7.74 percent for 2018. That increase was eliminated in October 2017, saving parishes over $1.6 million in Total Commitment payments to the Archdiocese.
For 2020 Receives Approval

The Council approved the following resolutions during their meetings:

- Authorized the chancellor, treasurer and CFO to negotiate an extension of the Archdiocese’s line of credit with Alma Bank, which currently stands at $3 million, to Jan. 2, and to increase that credit line up to $5 million beginning Jan. 3 to fund its commitments to Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology.
- Authorized a letter of commitment to HCHC indicating financial support of $3.5 million per year for up to five years.
- Approved signatory lists that include certain Executive Committee officers and other authorized individuals, as follows (bank signatory list) Archbishop Elpidophoros, Archdiocesan Chancellor Fr. Andreas Vithoulkas, Chief Financial Officer Fr. Sami (Soterios) Baroody and Treasurer Elaine Allen. (settlement signatory list) Archbishop Elpidophoros, Chancellor Fr. Andreas Vithoulkas, Council Vice President John Catsimatidis, and Council Secretary B. Theodore Bozonelis.

Resolutions Approved for HCHC

In both, we must be willing to take time for prayer reflection, conversation, and guidance from trusted others, so that we may grow in our discipleship and service to Christ and His Church.” Featured speaker was Fr. John Chrysavgis, Ph.D., archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. His presentation highlighted the role of the deacon today, bringing not only the important historical perspective of the diaconate, but his own personal experience as a deacon for many years. Other presenters included Fr. Steven Tsiakis, presiding priest at St. Paul Church in Irvine, Calif., who shared his experience with how a deacon enhances the life of the parish.

Deacon Euthym Kontaxis, M.D., from St. George Church in Palm Desert, Calif., offered his experience on the importance of maintain a balance between church, work and family. The weekend culminated with a prayerful Divine Liturgy at the Monastery of the Theotokos the Life Giving Spring, adjacent to St. Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center. The retreat was part of the Metropolis of San Francisco Clergy Continuing Education ministry established in conjunction with the Metropolis Strategic Plan in 2012.

Metropolis News

Metropolis of Boston Holds Clergy-Laity Assembly

By Stamatis Astra

WESTON, Mass. - More than 200 delegates, Philoptochos members and clergy attended the Nov. 9 Metropolis of Boston Clergy-Laity Conference.

Metropolitan Methodios, set the tone for the conference with his opening remarks. “Listen to all the reports, from the various Metropolis Ministers, ask questions, engage in dialogue” he advocated for all.

The Philoptochos message reflect the endless work and love the ladies give back to the community, making everyone think we could be more, we could be better.

From helping the veterans, to new initiatives like women’s health and the opioid crisis Philoptochos is at the forefront of issues that communities struggle with.

Stephen Christoforou, director of Archdiocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, discussed the roll-out of “policies for the safety of children and youth.” Yes, it is a tedious and maybe costly initiative, but children’s safety must be uncompromised and be held at the highest level.

The next part, was probably my favorite. Not because of the topics, but because the presenters were the future of our Metropolis. Panos Coufos and Eleni Kalioras, two young members of our community, showed us the passion, energy and new ideas that will propel us forward. In the areas of the Metropolis Boston Camp, and the Philoxenia House, those two dynamic individuals paved the way to our bright future. Having young people in leadership positions, shows the maturity of our community.

Michael Sintos reported on the progress and expansion plans of the St. Methodios Faith & Heritage Center in Contoocook, N.H. The vision and hard work the team has put to the New Hampshire property is bearing fruits, as more groups and more youth, young adults, families and parish communities are using the facilities. The Metropolis, through generous donations, ensures that no camper ever misses the camp experience because of family financial hardship. Generous scholarships are available to all who need assistance.
Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church. It was not celebrated or observed, neither by the apostles nor in the apostolic age. History reveals that about 440 A.D. the Church in Jerusalem started the celebration of Christmas.

Christmas has become an increasingly commercialized holiday, with many families spending a large part of their income on gifts and food. Many Sunday schools, churches and communities organize special events.

These can include decorating the neighborhood or a shopping mall, putting up a Christmas tree and planning a Nativity display, concert or performance.

Many plays and songs have an aspect of Christmas as a theme. Some groups arrange meals, shelter or charitable projects for people without a home or with very little money.

Christmas is not just to have a concept in form we call Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. In three years of His mission on earth, He was known to them what God is like—forgiving, loving, healing, feeding the hungry and by bringing back to life people that had died. He said to them, “I no longer call you my followers, I call you my friends...greater love has not man than the one who lays down his life for his friends.”

And Jesus gave up His life for the sins of the world. But His death on the Cross was not the end. He was resurrected. It was the risen, exalted Christ to whom the early Christian looked upon and believed.

Many nations, different cultures
People celebrate Christmas Day in many ways. It is often combined with customs from pre-Christian winter celebrations. Many people visit family or friends and exchange gifts. In the days or even weeks before Christmas Day, many people decorate their homes and gardens with lights, Christmas trees and much more.

It is common to organize a special meal, often consisting of turkey and many other festive foods, for family or friends and exchange gifts with them. Children, in particular, often receive many gifts from their parents and other relatives and the mythical figure Santa Claus.

This has led to Christmas Day becoming an increasingly commercialized holiday, with many families spending a large part of their income on gifts and food. Many Sunday schools, churches and communities organize special events.

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Many plays and songs have an aspect of Christmas as a theme. Some groups arrange meals, shelter or charitable projects for people without a home or with very little money.

Genuine faith admits that Jesus Christ was no longer a baby; no longer the “Christ-child,” or a babe laid in a manger. And He does NOT somehow return to earth as a baby every year at Christmas-time.

But, invisibly, He is always present in our life. After we study and meditate on his teachings, we can legitimately say, “I have had a meaningful encounter with Jesus. He is my Lord and Savior.”

People who truly believe in Jesus are humble, overwhelmed by a humble God. He is a God who is overwhelming and triumphant, with all the answers and all the perfection, but a God who is somehow in this life with us. He is a God who is infinite, yet somehow finite, as we perceive his human nature. A God who is in charge, yet chooses not to be in control at all.

He gives us freedom to make our own choices. We look for something certain, strong, undying, infinite. “Great,” we say, and attach ourselves to this strong God, who in His human form we call Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Relocating a concept
To have Jesus as our Lord and Savior is not just to have a concept in our minds, it is a challenge to move that concept from the head to the heart. He is participating with us in our daily life.

He lives in each one of us, and we need to see him with the eyes of faith. He smiles when we are happy and weeps when we suffer.

He does not merely tolerate human suffering or heal pain and suffering. He is participating in it. In essence, Jesus says, “Even I suffer, even I participate in the finiteness of this world.” That is what gives meaning, hope, and comfort to those who believe.

In him we find an answer to our agonies and despair, healing for our ailments, and forgiveness for our sins.

The world seldom provides an answer; schools and education cannot help us, nor can affluence and pleasures. What the human spirit needs is compassion, understanding, and love.

For all of today’s talk about love, the fact remains that never has the world been so absolutely loveless, self-absorbed, hostile, cruel, rejecting, contemptuous, and indifferent.

Hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods are terrible and we feel sad for the victims, but as long as we are not affected, after a brief period of compassion we simply forget about them.

Never have human hearts been so weak in faith as are the hearts of the modern person. War and massacres no longer disturb us; we can hardly hear the needy who beg for help at our very doorstep.

We are busy—with nothing. We talk—of nothing. Our neighbor, our brother or sister, cries for help, and we do not listen or offer assistance.

Evil has almost consumed this world that has despised the good for “scientific truths” that are the scientific errors of tomorrow. Technology, with all its benefits, has replaced intimate interaction among people.

Our children are mesmerized with computerized knowledge. Texting has replaced verbal communication and socialization.

Our schools do not teach respect, reverence, faith, duty, or responsibility. Parents indulge their children with the toys mass media advertise. Entitlement has become an epidemic.

As a result, we have a generation that does not accept restraint, does not know goodwill, or peace, or altruism, or true faith.
Reflections on the Celebration of Christmas

By Timothy Patitas, Ph.D.

The Christians of Bethlehem

This year I had the opportunity to travel to Bethlehem on each of three separate trips to the Holy Land. In the process of scouting and shooting a film about Holy Week in Jerusalem, and later while accompanying the students of our seminary on the St. Helen’s Pilgrimage, I had the blessing to meet some of the young Orthodox Christian families who call Bethlehem their home.

To be sure, a trip to the site of Our Lord and Savior’s birth is uplifting in its own right. Entering the cave where Christ was born, you find that everything you believed about Christmas as a child is really true. You live again the wonder, the hope, the peace, the joy, the solid expectation of your earliest years. You do not want to leave.

We all know that Christmas feels like no other season of the year. That feeling is present year-round in Bethlehem itself. When you see the star on top of the Church of Christ’s birth lit up at night, you feel such a rush of love and awe. In Bethlehem, every eve is Christmas Eve…

But in the Holy Land we have an additional treasure besides the holy sites and the uncreated grace that fills even the rocks where we live. We have as well as the Orthodox Christian people whose lineage stretches back through many long centuries to the time of Christ.

The faith of Orthodox Christian in Israel and Palestine, whether they be the Arabic-speaking Palestinians or the Greek-speaking members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, is vibrant, strong, and real.

For example, the complex of our Patriarchate in Jerusalem is built over the house where St. Helen herself lived, as she directed the excavations which established the location of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection. Where today large numbers of pilgrims are baked for all the Orthodox Churches of Jerusalem, one can see the remains of St. Helen’s very house! Thus, the presence of St. Helen, her faith and her legacy, are literal facts for the bishops, priests, monks, and monks of that Patriarchate. We Orthodox are there because she was there. We are the custodians of the holy sites on behalf of all Christians, because of what St. Helen established and gave us.

Among the Palestinian Orthodox, the presence of the saints is felt very strongly. St. Nicholas of Myra himself lived in Bethlehem for six months, just before his journey to Nicaea for the First Ecumenical Council in 325 AD. This year (2019) in May, on the day before we arrived with our Holy Cross seminarians on the St. Helen’s Pilgrimage, St. Nicholas appeared to three young Palestinian boys who had entered the cave of his asceticism in order to ask him to heal their playmate, another boy, who had been ill. He thanked them for their prayers and promised to heal their friend (which he did).

I can assure you that we ourselves, having heard this miracle less than two days after it happened, entered the cave of St. Nicholas with some trepidation. It occurred to me that perhaps it is more than an accident of history that we associate St. Nicholas with Christmas.

We can’t know what he saw or did or prayed about Christmas, during those six months St. Nicholas the Wonderworker lived in Bethlehem, in 324 AD…

Even more astounding are the stories of local faithful at the monastery near the shepherd’s field. Many faithful have entered the small church there, only to hear the angels singing as they did on that first Christmas, more than 2,000 years ago.

Most of all, we were touched by the young Palestinian Orthodox clergy who serve at the church of Christ’s Nativity. I don’t want to mention them by name, but their joy, strength, peace, and faith were unforgettable. I hope that you have the chance to go to Bethlehem, and if you do, to meet the local Orthodox Christians. They are one more link to our history, one more diadem on the crown of our Orthodox faith. We owe a great debt to them for all that they endure while upholding the legacy of our Christian faith.

Let us remember them in prayer during the Twelve Days of Christmas, and let us resolve to bring our children and our grandchildren to the Holy Land at our earliest opportunity. Our Orthodox Faith is the most precious possession we have. In a world of materialism and sorrow, of excess and poverty, of listless comfort and cold terror, our Orthodox faith in Christ is the one thing that remains, that saves, that endures, and that makes sense of everything else.

Dr. Timothy Patitas teaches at Holy Cross School of Theology and is co-founder of Beauty First Films. For 2020, Beauty First Films offers a unique Calendar with photos from their production trips to the Holy Land, available at www.beautystaticfilms.com
Mormons Evangelizing Greeks!!

By Fr. John Bakas

As dean of St. Sophia Cathedral of Los Angeles, I am invited to various inter-religious luncheons, community prayer breakfasts and other civic events which may have an impact on our cathedral as we are located in midtown L.A.

Earlier this year, I was invited to a Los Angeles Police Department prayer breakfast at a local Korean hotel. Several clergy from various denominations, including myself, offered prayers for the well-being and safety of LAPD officers. To leave at the end of a couple of months...

I answered with an unbelievable look on my face. “Wait a minute Larry. You mean to tell me your son is going to Greece to evangelize the Greeks? You’ve got to be kidding! The Mormons are going to evangelize the country and the people who gave Christianity, the New Testament and the blood of martyrs to the world? Mormons are going to improve on what St. Paul and the other Apostles did 2,000 years ago?”

I was stunned and prepared to walk out on him. But I thought I might learn something by asking him about his son’s motivation to learn Greek and give up two years of his life with an other teenager, to go to Athens to convert Orthodoxy. “But Larry we have dynamic Orthodox churches in Greece that have been true to the Gospel message for nearly 40 years now, parents and youth leaders will ask what is the church doing for the youth? What they really mean is, does the church offer social activities, dancing, Greek School, GOYA, YAL, etc?”

Not once in my 40 years was I asked what can the youth do for the real mission of the Church, of evangelizing our own to our theology and Orthodox lifestyle. I can’t recall being asked by parents or youth leaders to have consistent team Bible Studies and religious discussions. It’s difficult as it is, to get the youth to attend services with disciplined regularity.

The above programs are not really ministries, they are church semi-secular activities which could be ministries leading our youth to Christ in a church. But unfortunately at present, most are not.

The key is to educate our youth leaders who dismiss such programs to also be religious teachers to the youth they direct. What about the parents? Are they teachers of the Faith in their homes? Are they living the Faith enough that they can teach and mentor our youth? Or do they tell their kids “go ask the priest.”

Many of us priests ask ourselves where are the young, when they are too old to dance or party or play basketball or attend Greek school activities that served for nearly 40 years now, parents and youth leaders will ask what is the church doing for the youth? What they really mean is, does the parish offer so...

In their teen years they work after school hours to earn the expected monies for their missions and of course the family helps find work for them. In their ten years they work after school hours to earn the expected monies for their missions and of course the family helps find work for them.

In the end of the day we can count the 10 percent of our gross income that we give to the church. Larry further elaborated. “In Athens our missionaries have over 100 Greek Mormon brothers and sisters.”

I couldn’t believe it. I came back to my church office and reflected on what I heard and experienced. Imagine, I thought, our 19- and 20-year-old Greek Orthodox youngsters going on a self-funded Orthodox mission to a foreign country and learning the language of that country and promoting the true Gospel of Christ experienced by our church for two millennia?”

For us Orthodox, to do what the Mormons do would be currently unthinkable. In every parish that I have served for nearly 40 years now, parents and youth leaders will ask what is the church doing for the youth? What they really mean is, does the parish offer social activities, dancing, Greek School, GOYA, YAL, etc?”

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Many of us priests ask ourselves where are the young, when they are too old to dance or party or play basketball or attend Greek school activities that kept them close to church facilities. When the social fellowship and fun time sponsored activities are no longer relevant, especially now with social media, do they come to church to worship, pray and grow in faith.

Apologists lamely will say “Well, yes, many may say they will come back when they get married and have children.” Really? As the Greek saying goes, “We are hiding behind our little fingers in these matters.” Let’s be the Church Christ intended for us to be, and develop effective programs for evangelizing our own. Then it will be real youth ministry.

Fr. John Bakas, dean of St. Sophia Cathedral in Los Angeles, also is adjunct professor of Orthodox Theology at Loyola Marymount School of Theology.
Assembly of Bishops and Oriental Orthodox Churches Revive Joint Commission

NEW YORK – For the first time in nearly a decade, representatives of Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Christian Churches Joint Commission met on Oct 8 and discussed ways to advance the relationship between the two groups. The meeting took place at the Armenian Cathedral of St. Vartan in Manhattan. The commission was established in the 1990s under a doctrinal agreement by the Church’s official international theological dialogue.

Participants discussed topics that included the holy mysteries of marriage and baptism and formed a committee to explore existing agreements and to study their application in America. The also addressed religious education programs and other common areas of concern.

The Bishops established a committee to discern ministerial overlap and common areas of advocacy. Concerns in the Middle East were tabled for a future meeting.

Bishop David of the Coptic Orthodox Church commented, “This meeting is joyful, encouraging. It is joyful because, as King David says, ‘Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.’ It is historic because it builds upon the work of our predecessors. It is promising because there is a spirit of good will and potential to move forward in faith and in hope.”

Archbishop Elpidophoros reflected that, “It is no secret that the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox relationships are the closest in the Christian world.

Despite this, we continue to develop ministries independently and remain separated eucharistically. Indeed, I am deeply saddened by this notion, but an encouraged by the willingness on both sides to return to the table to discuss ways forward.

This practical approach will breathe life into the Church.”

At the close of their discussions, bishops set Sunday, Dec. 8, for a joint Christmas concert at the Mor Aphrem Center in Paramus, N.J. In addition, a Pan-Orthodox (Eastern and Oriental) youth conference will take place next summer.

By William H. Samonides, Ph.D.

St. Nicholas at 36 North Pinellas Avenue in Tarpon Springs, Fla., has been the site of Epiphany celebrations for over 75 years (1943-2019). It replaced a smaller, wooden church that had served as the sanctuary since 1907.

Archbishop Athenagoras, primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America from 1931 to 1949, took an active interest in the building process from beginning to end. Parishioners persevered despite wartime shortages, damaging fires, and increasing costs. Construction would take over seven years.

On January 8, 1937, two days after Epiphany, Archbishop Athenagoras laid the cornerstone for the new church. The stone was a gift from the Greek government, a block of marble from the same quarry on Mount Pentelic in Athens that had supplied building material for the Parthenon. The mortar was mixed with sand produced from stone taken from the Acropolis. The cornerstone contained church papers and mementos of President Franklin Roosevelt and King George II of Greece.

Following the hour-long ceremony, the Archbishop presided at a meeting to raise money for the building fund. The new church was expected to cost $100,000. In just one hour, $22,000 was raised, mostly from sponge packers, boat captains, and crews of the Tarpon Springs community. The Archbishop himself led the list of donors with a gift of $2,000. The Archbishop later described this event as one of the most wonderful occasions in his life.

Despite the auspicious start, construction was temporarily delayed six months later. On the evening of July 13, 1937, defective wiring in the original wooden church caused a fire. The integrity of the building was not compromised, but the blaze swept through the interior of the church, destroying memorial windows, icons, books, a chandelier imported from Russia, and a newly-purchased pipe organ. The water used to extinguish the blaze caused additional damage. Only the vestments of the priest and choir and a large Bible were salvaged.

The fire severely strained the resources of Depression-era Tarpon Springs. Money that would have been used for the new church was shifted to the reconstruction of the older building. St. Nicholas is the oldest parish in the state, and at the time it was the only Greek Orthodox parish in West Florida. It attracted thousands to celebrate Feast Days like Epiphany and Easter. In six months, it had to be functional for Epiphany.

On Friday, June 23, 1939, fire broke out again. This time it was in the bell tower, where an oil stove was being used to melt paraffin for candles, an important source of income for the parish. The lower floor of the tower, which served as the wardrobe room for the church choir and as storage for church property, was completely destroyed.

This double-barreled setback caused the parish to reconsider its plans and its choice of architect for the new church. In October 1940, the new design was ready. The result was a much larger but also more expensive church. The new architects for the project were the Eugene Brothers of Chicago, who would later design Greek Orthodox churches in West Virginia, Ohio and Massachusetts.

Finally, on April 14, 1941, the groundbreaking ceremony took place. In July, Archbishop Athenagoras made a surprise visit to Tarpon Springs. He was pleased at the progress being made and predicted “it will be the finest Greek church in this country.”

Later that year it was announced that the Greek government had again presented the parish with a gift of Mount Pentelic marble. This time the gift was sixty tons of marble valued at $30,000. It had been used for the Greek Pavilion at the 1939 World’s Fair in New York City.

When the Fair closed in October 1940, the pavilion was dismantled, and the marble was placed in storage in New York. In late 1941, Greece was occupied by Germany, forcing the Greek government into exile in Egypt.

Rather than have the marble continue to accrue storage fees, the President of the Tarpon Springs community and the Greek Ambassador in Washington persuaded the Greek government to donate the stone to St. Nicholas, where it was used for interior work, including the altar.

It had been hoped that the church would be ready by January 1942, when Archbishop Athenagoras was scheduled to attend the Epiphany celebration. In December 1941, however, America entered World War II, and all priorities immediately changed. Supplying military needs took precedence. The delivery of building materials for the church became problematic, and bad weather also contributed to delays.

With the construction half complete, work was discontinued until May 1942. A flurry of activity late in the year made it possible for the church to open to celebrate Epiphany in 1943, with Bishop Athenagoras Cavadas presiding.

By the following year, the church was almost complete. The roof and dome, however, were to be covered with copper, which was not available during wartime.

On April 23, 1944, the Sunday of Thomas, Archbishop Athenagoras presided at the consecration of the church. He laid the cornerstone and had made eight trips to Tarpon Springs during its construction. This special visit would be his last.

Archbishop Iakovos elevated the church to Cathedral status at the Feast of Epiphany, Jan. 6, 1976. As Archbishop Athenagoras had predicted, it remains one of the great churches of the Archdiocese.

This is one of many stories included in the special exhibition, “A Profound and Abiding Presence: The Greek Orthodox Church in the South,” on display until January 2020 at the St. Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine in St. Augustine, Fla. (904-829-8205; www.stphotios.org).
Archbishop Gives Keynote Speech at Ecumenical Symposium

NEW YORK – Archbishop Elpidophoros offered the keynote address at an Ecumenical Symposium Nov. 13 titled “Truth does not fear dialogue,” hosted by St. Roman Catholic Peter’s Church with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York; the Metropolitan New York Synod, ELCA; The Grace Foundation; and Yale Divinity School.

His Eminence emphasized the importance of ecumenical dialogue promoting peace and reconciliation in today’s global culture. Presenting the history of Orthodox involvement in ecumenical dialogue, he also spoke of his personal experience with the International Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue, especially touching upon the theological consensus to which we are drawing closer.

“We take the persistent differences that keep us away from unity very seriously. The pursuit of a theological dialogue is a key part of ensuring that the common understanding of the fundamental truth of Christianity can become more inclusive.”

Brief responses followed from Monsignor John A. Radano and Lutheran Bishop Paul Egensteiner. A Compline service concluded the event.

Scholarship Awards Announced

From page 14

Lake, NJ), Eleni Marinos (Landisville, PA), Melina Mitogiorgakis (Staten Island, NY), Eleftheria Qatapi (Cambridge, MA), Christiana Metaxas Kalina (Norfolk, VA), Michael Kochis (Fort Worth, TX), Nicholas Tsilavaras (Champaign, IL), and Aristotle Vainikos (Decatur, GA), Cassian Trenham (City, MD), Alexios Rodriguez (Silverland, NY), Eleftheria Qatapi (Ocean Lake, NJ), Eleni Marinos (Landisville, PA), and Kalin Vainikos (Orlando Park, IL).

Paleologos Graduate Scholarship The Paleologos Graduate Scholarship Fund was established in 2007 to assist students enrolled in graduate studies leading to advanced degrees in academic fields other than theology. This award is open to students from all the jurisdictions of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. Thirteen scholarships were granted to the following 16 students: Alexander Bageris (Ann Arbor, MI), James Bantis (Brooklyn, NY), Elyse Buffenbarger (Dallas, TX), Maria Constantoudoulos (Hillsborough, NJ), Maria Constantine (Brighton, MA), Oksana Germain (Alpina, CA), Andrew Kalina (Norfalk, VA), Marios Katsolas (Cambridge, MA), Christiana Metaxas (Katonah, NY), Aristotelis Nayfa (Spartansburg, SC), Danae Pappas (Glendale, CA), Maria Pappas (Whitleston, NY), Lindsey Perry (Plano, TX), Thomas Perry (Eagan, MN), Stephanie Sergakis (Modesto, CA), and Andrea Tsatlas (Dayton, OH).

2020 Scholarships It is expected that all three of these scholarships will once again be available for the 2020-2021 academic year. Applications will be available at the beginning of February 2020 on the website of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, www.goarch.org. Applications may also be requested at that time by e-mail at scholarships@goarch.org.

NSP Holds Annual Retreat

DEL RAY BEACH, Fla. - The National Sisterhood of Presvyteres held their biennial National Retreat at Duncan Retreat Center Oct. 11-14 with about 70 presvyteres attending. Presvytera Anastasia Leonidou, who chaired the event, and her committee representing the Metropolis of Atlanta, planned a beautiful weekend for all. The theme “Self Care: Mind, Body and Soul” was presented by Presvytera Dr. Roxanne Louh of St. John the Divine Church in Jacksonville, Fl. The weekend began with a video message from Archbishop Elpidophoros, and a welcome letter from Metropolitan Alexios.

Fr. Mark Leonidis and St. Mark parish in Boca Raton offered a warm welcome and lunch after the Sunday Liturgy.

CLERGY UPDATE

Ordinations to the Diaconate:

- Sarigiannis, Neofitos, by Bishop Apostolos of Medea – Church of the Resurrection, Brookville, NY 09/07/19
- Burkhard, Christian (Rondal) – Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco – St. Anna Church, Rossville, CA 09/08/19
- Hendricks, Noah – Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey – Sts. Constantine & Helen Church, Newport News, VA 09/22/19
- Palamara, Michael – Bishop An- donios of Phasiane – St. Nicholas Church, Flushing, NY 10/19/19
- Sergakis, Michael – Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver – Prophet Elias Church, Holladay, UT 10/27/19

Ordinations to the Priesthood:

- Konstantinos Kourtoubas – Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh – Sts. Constantine & Helen Church, OH 08/21/19
- Dn. Paul Tsalakis – Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta – Holy Trinity Monastery, Aegina, Greece 09/14/19
- Dn. Philip Halikias – Archbishop Elpidophoros of America – Holy Cross Chapel, Brookline, MA 09/14/19
- Dn. Christian Burkhard – Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco – St. George Church, Fresno, CA 09/29/19
- Dn. Theodosios Palis – Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh – Annunciation Church, Lancaster, PA 10/02/19
- Dn. Alexander Orphanos – Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco – St. Nicholas Church, Northridge, CA 10/06/19
- Dn. Christian Siskos – Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta – Holy Trinity Cathedral, Charlotte, NC 10/06/19
- Dn. Panteleimon Papadopoulos – Archbishop Elpidophoros – Holy Trinity Cathedral, New York 11/02/1

Assignments:

- Fr. Alexander Orphanos – St. Nicholas Church, Northridge, CA 08/25/19
- Fr. Konstantinos Kourtoubas – Holy Cross Church, Stroudsburg, PA 09/01/19
- Fr. Theodore Petrides – Sts. Constantine & Helen Church, Reading, PA 09/01/19
- Fr. Christian Burkhard – St. George Church, Fresno, CA 09/09/19
- Fr. Nikolaos Delaveris – St. Kath- erine Church, Falls Church, VA 09/16/19
- Fr. George Kouzelis – Annunciation Church, Winston-Salem, NC 09/16/19
- Fr. George Anastasiou – Holy Cross Church, Whitestone, NY 09/19/19
- Fr. Nicholas Mueller – Ascension Cathedral, Oakland, CA 10/01/19
- Fr. Christian Siskos – Holy Trinity Cathedral, Charlotte, NC 10/07/19
- Fr. Joshua Pappas – Holy Trinity Church, Grand Rapids, MI 10/01/19
- Fr. Nicolas Kazarian – St. Elefther- nicos Church, New York 10/15/19
- V. Rev. Fr. Chrysostom Panos – Transfiguration of Christ Church, Corona, NY 10/15/19
- Fr. Soteros Roussakis – St. Nicholas Church, Jamestown, NY 10/15/19
- Fr. John Jarrod Russell – Assump- tion Church, Grand Blanc, MI 10/15/19
- Dn. Panteleimon Papadopoulos – Holy Resurrection Church, Brookville 11/03/19
- Fr. Matthew Carter – Annunciation Church, Mobile, AL 11/15/19
- Fr. Sampson Kasapakis – Annuncia- tion Church, Pensacola, FL 11/15/19

Appointments:

- Fr. Andreas Vithoulkas – Chancellor, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, New York, NY 11/01/19

Offikia:

- Fr. Theodore Petrides – Office of Protopresbyter, bestowed by Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh 09/08/19
- Fr. Hector Firolgannis – Office of Economos, bestowed by Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh 09/15/19
- Fr. Ioannis Vernikos – Office of Economos, bestowed by Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta 09/20/19

Clergy Deaths:

- V. Rev. Archimandrite Chrysantos Zois, 10/27/19
- Economos George Pappas, 11/20/19

Receptions:

- V. Rev. Meletios Giannidou/October 18, 2019 (from the Church of Greece)

Correction:

- Fr. Jeffrey Frate / August 29, 2019 (from the Orthodox Church in America)

Releases:

- V. Rev. Iakovos Koutsakis / October 16, 2019 (to the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain)
- Fr. Nephon Tsimalis / October 17, 2019 (from the Church of Greece)
- Fr. Patrick Irish / October 31, 2019 (to the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America, November 1, 2019)
Community Overcomes Hurdles of Earliest Years

**Parish Profile**

**Name:** Kimisis tis Theotokou

**Greek Orthodox Church**

**Location:** Racine, Wis.

**Founded:** 1916

**Clergy:** Fr. John Ketchum (Holy Cross, 1995)

**Size:** About 200 families

**Web:** www.kimissis.org

**Email:** joykimissisoffice@gmail.com

**Noteworthy:** Since 1916, 40 priests have served the community.

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**RACINE, Wis.** – The small Greek Orthodox community in Wisconsin’s fifth largest city (pop. more than 80,000) consists mostly of second and third-generation Greeks. Americans whose predecessors began arriving around 1900. The city was, and still is, a factory town and manufacturing center, which attracted the immigrants, some of whom also opened their own businesses.

Now, some parishioners work at such large corporations as J.L. Case (makers of heavy construction equipment), and S.C. Johnson (makers of heavy construction equipment including Johnson Wax and that “home remedy” of the yia-yia in “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” - (Windex), and others. One new company where parishioners are employed makes touch screens for mobile phones and TV’s, Fr. Ketchum noted.

The parish priest said his parishioners range from very young to senior citizens and that Kimisis Church is “a very welcoming community.” He added that, “there are always new people coming in” with new businesses locating in the city.

Racine has one other Orthodox Christian parish, a Serbian church, and has the largest population of Danes outside of Greenland. The city’s Danish Lutheran Church is the oldest in North America.

Kimisis parish’s small number of involved members participate in several ministries of the church, including the Philoptochos, the choir, providing food for the hungry every month and youth programs that include GOYA, HOPE for the youngest children, a Greek Dance group and Sunday School with about 80 students registered. There is no Greek school due to lack of numbers.

Fr. Ketchum’s ministry is a family affair. In addition to the regular services, he conducts a paraklesis and Bible study every Wednesday evening. His presvytera, Veronica, runs the HOPE ministry, daughter Evangelia (one of their six children) leads the choir and her husband helps with the chanting.

For several decades, Kimisis parish’s main revenue source has been stewardship, supplemented by the Greek festival and other fund-raisers. Fr. Ketchum noted that the festival is very popular citywide and has won an award for “Best Church Festival” in Racine County.

**Early years**

According to a parish history, about 40 priests have served the church since its beginning as a parish in 1916 when the first Liturgy took place in the local Moose Hall. (The Loyal Order of Moose is a fraternal and service organization founded in 1888 with about 1,800 lodges (chapters) in the U.S., Canada, Bermuda and the U.K.)

Prior to that year, community members would travel to Milwaukee to attend services and the priest in that parish occasionally would hold services in Racine.

In 1917, the community purchased a house near downtown and converted it to a church. It served until 1925 when the community built a church that served as their spiritual home for 40 years.

As noted in the long list of priests listed on the parish website, the 1920s and 30s were a revolving door as most clergy served for a year to a year-and-a-half.

Fr. Ketchum explained that the church struggled financially and could not afford a full-time priest. “They would hire a priest in the fall and drop him after Pascha,” he said.

During the Great Depression, the community shared a priest with St. Demetrios Church in Waukegan, Ill.

By the end of World War II, however, the financial situation became stable,

the mortgage was paid and the community began to grow.

The longest-serving priest, Fr. Peter Pappademetriou, arrived in 1959 and he served until 1986. Under his spiritual leadership, an eight-acre parcel of land was purchased on the west side of the city, which was mostly farmland, and a new church, the present facility, including an educational unit, was completed in 1966.

Archbishop Iakovos consecrated the church in early November 1974. Fr. Douglas Papulis followed Fr. Pappademetriou and served for 11 years. He led the parish in its 75th anniversary celebration.

Fr. Richard Andrews served for two years in the late 1990s and the parish expanded its hall and kitchen and hosted the Metropolis clergy-layperson conference. The building project was completed by Fr. Emmanuel Lillios.

Fr. Ketchum, a native of New York who grew up in Florida, arrived in Racine in 2002. He served continuously until 2015, then was assigned to Annunciation Church in Milwaukee, to deal with its serious financial situation. He returned to Kimisis parish earlier this year.

“It’s a wonderful parish,” he said of the community.

-Compiled by Jim Golding

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**Books**

**Seeds of Spirituality**

He traces the martyrdom of Christians from the time of Christ in his chapter on Christianity and Persecution, a practice that continues in various forms to the present day in Marxist societies and in more sophisticated levels in the West.

To a gathering of young professionals at a leadership conference in Boston, Archbishop Demetrios several concepts and levels of leadership as defined in the Greek New Testament vocabulary.

These are a few examples of the spiritual impacts that serve to enlighten and deepen a reader’s understanding of Orthodox Christianity.

This book’s appearance during the Christmas season is most timely and a valuable addition to one’s collection of books on the faith.

Available at Holy Cross Bookstore for $24.95, (1-800-245-1899)

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**Family Matters**

Family Matters is a podcast produced by Fr. Alex Goussietis, director of the Center for Family Care, and features interviews, reflections, book reviews, and narratives to encourage dialogue and strengthen families. Recent episodes are available at: www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/familymattersepisodes.

Adoption: Blessings and Challenges—Fr. Alex Goussietis speaks with Stellanie Butcher on the logistical, emotional, and unexpected aspects of the adoption of children. Upcoming Pastoral Challenges in Marriage Conference—Fr. Alex Goussietis and Melissa Tzongrais speak about a national conference being held at the end of January in Houston, Texas for clergy, laity workers, therapist, and all who are interested in strengthening their marriage relationship. For more information about the conference visit https://goacfc.wixsite.com/marriage.

Ministering to Alzheimer’s and Dementia Family Members—Social worker Daniel Belonick speaks with Fr. Alex about the physical, emotional, and spiritual impact on patients and family members.

**Did You Watch?**

The Spiritual and Physical Heart: What’s the Connection?

The heart is a marvel! Theologically, it is the center of the human being and where God is revealed. Physically, it is the primary organ and catalyst of necessary processes throughout the anatomy. Because the Orthodoxy Church advocates for physical—as well as spiritual health—the heart’s material function becomes an important indicator of our general well-being, especially when considering heart disease is the number-one cause of death in the United States. “The Spiritual & Physical Heart: What’s the Connection?” is a Center for Family Care webinar broadcast that features Dr. Trent Orfano, a cardiologist and Functional Medicine practitioner from Crown Point, Indiana. His overall message is that our health is much more of a result of lifestyle choices—rather than genetics. By adopting a “self-emptying” lifestyle that emphasizes diet, social interaction, physical activity, and stress reduction, Dr. Orfano offers resonating advice for heart health. You can watch this webinar at www.family.goarch.org.

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**Pastoral Challenges in Marriage - Chronos & Kairos Jan. 22-25**

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to weep, a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance...a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted...a time to cast away” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-6).

**NEW YORK**—The Archdiocesan’s Center for Family Care presents a National Conference on the theme of “Pastoral Challenges in Marriage – Chronos & Kairos,” Jan. 22-25, in collaboration with Annunciation Cathedral in Houston.

Throughout the seasons of married life in created time (chronos), and adoption of the Holy Family, Jesus offers us a chance to share in His salvific mission.

**Heart of the Matter**

- **Michael and Gail Hyatt, Dn. Stephen Muse, PhD, LMFT, and Carrie Frederick Pusot, PhD** will help us understand the heart as a marvel, with the help of the physicians and theologians. Their sessions will explore pastoral issues, including: Resolving Conflict, Issues with Family of Origin, Infertility, Families with Special Needs, the Latter Years of Marriage, and Vital Characteristics of a Healthy Marriage.

- **Keynote speakers**: include Dn. Michael and Gail Hyatt, Dn. Stephen Muse, PhD, LMFT, and Carrie Frederick Pusot, PhD. They will lead an interactive session elucidating the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the heart and marriage.

- **George Stavros, PhD, M.Div.** will lead an interactive session elucidating the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the heart and marriage.

- **George Pagapegorge, LMFT, Director of the Family Wellness Center of the San Francisco Metropolitan** will present the session “Becoming Marriages from the Inside-Out.”

- **Registration for the conference includes presentations and activities** as well as meals. For more information visit https://goacfc.wixsite.com/marriage

**CENTER FOR FAMILY CARE**

Phone: 646-519-6605 Email: familycare@goarch.org Web: www.family.goarch.org

The Center for Family Care of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America nurtures and empowers stewards, who, at the forefront of ministry within the home and parish family, navigate the joys, challenges and life of prayer and in prayer and through multifaceted resources, trainings, and collaboration with the ministries of the Archdiocese and parishes, we foster the building up of the Body of Christ.

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**Family Connection**

When Hope is Born

As a child our homemade Nativity Set fascinated me. Positioning myself under the Christmas tree near the rustic creche made of plywood and twigs, I spent many quiet moments examining the figurines: Joseph, Mary, Jesus, and Baby Jesus were the central figures; and the wise men, shepherds, and animals all surrounded them with reverence. A pretty angel was fastened to the front peak of the roof. The scene was quiet and small like me; but it imprinted a message warm, deep and vast into my soul. Baby Jesus was so little, yet He was the heart of the scene. In the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ birth, God offers each of the persons invited to encounter the Christ Child a chance to share in His salvific plan. Examining the Nativity Scene we can see that God extends this invitation through them, to us.

**King Herod**

The King of the Jews, Herod the Great, was absent of the Nativity Scene, he learned from the Shepherds to seek the Christ Child in created time (chronos), God offers each of the persons invited to encounter the Christ Child a chance to share in His salvific plan. This conference will seek a time within the blessed communion of marriage. This conference will seek to explore these concepts; and, to help provide practical tools and support to couples as they guide them through various marital challenges.

Conference workshops will explore pastoral issues, including: Resolving Conflict, Issues with Family of Origin, Infertility, Families with Special Needs, the Latter Years of Marriage, and Vital Characteristics of a Healthy Marriage.

**King Herod**

In contrast to Herod’s frightful slaughter of the infant Jesus, God’s plan for our salvation. We can see that God extends this invitation through them, to us. He viewed this baby as a threat to his people’s best interests in mind. In stead, he viewed this baby as a threat to his personal hopes and dreams.

In contrast to Herod’s frightful slaying of innocent children, we see another hope more clearly: nothing can stop God’s plan for our salvation. We can hope that despite the warfare and genocides rampant in our world, the powers of darkness are ultimately powerless against God’s Providence. Try as they may to annihilate Christ, “the darkness has no power over Him.” (John 1:5)

**The Magi**

These wise men from the East possessed knowledge, wealth, and status, yet they were not important or polished enough to be near the King, for the angels call upon the meek to become inheritors of His Kingdom. As the shepherds’ angelic visitation came in the dead of night, so hope is offered to us in our darkest hour. “Be not afraid...for you a Savior is born.” (Luke 2:11)

**St. Joseph the Betrothed**

Joseph was a “just man” (Matthew 1:19) chosen to care for the Virgin and her child. In him we find hope that God will reveal His plan to us if we live righteously; and if times of doubt or public scrutiny threaten to influence our decisions, heavenly messengers will reassure us to trust God’s promises.

In this teenaged Virgin not far from menopause, we see a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance...a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted...a time to cast away.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-6).

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**By Presvytera Melanie DiStefano**

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Boardman, Birmingham, Ala; Sergio
for each Archon. Fikion designated by His All-Holiness
Patriarchal Certificate specifying the of
of St. Andrew along with the official
presented each Archon with the Cross
goodwill ambassador of the Phanar in
Ecumenical Patriarchate and serves as a

ization is associated an extraordi
nership, noblesse oblige, to continue
 sustained and distinguished service
to the Church. It is the Archon
who is the most ardent supporter of
the Ecumenical Patriarchate and serves as a
goodwill ambassador of the Phanar in
his daily life. During the solemn Archon Investi-
ture service, Archbishop Elipdophoros presented each Archon with the Cross of
St. Andrew along with the official Patriarchal Certificate specifying the of-
fication designated by His All-Holiness for each Archon.

The new Archons are:
Nicholas Balidis, Rye, N.Y; Mark
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Deligianis, Flushing, N.Y; George G.
Demos, Sacramento, Calif; Stilianos Ef-
stratiadis, M.D., St. Louis; JamesFran-
gis, Marietta, Ga; Theodore Germana-
kos, M.Div., Bronx, N.Y; Peter Gouris,
Elkins Park, Pa; John John, Seattle;
Arthur Katsaros, Naples, Fla; IssamKhoury, Hillsborough, Calif; Michael
Komis, Houston; Nicholas Kourtsis,
Weston, Mass; Girard Mitchell, Boca
Raton, Fla; Jeremy Oryhon, MD, Pala-
tine, Ill; Stephen Petrick, Bayonne, N.J;
Nicholas Rallis, DDS, Port Washing-
ton, N.Y; Nicholas Scandalios, South-
ampton, N.Y; Perry Siatis, Palatine,
Ill; Nikolaos Spanos, Manhattan, N.Y;
Lambros Stassinos, Plymouth, Mich;
Stephanos Tenedios, Tenafly, N.J; The-
odore Vavoulis, Pasadena, Calif; and
Demetrios, Ziozis, Manhasset, N.Y.

from page 9
cept it, as I do not consider myself wort-
thy to be placed among the ranks of the
eminent persons and institutions who
have been so honored in the previous
thirty years. “However, I do accept it,
gratefully, not as a reward for me per-
sonally, but as a mark of the fruition of
the work of hundreds of thousands - and
even millions - of Ukrainian Orthodox
believers in the Motherland and in
the Diaspora.

The Local Ukrainian Orthodox
Church, fifteenth in the Diptych of Sis-
ter Churches, is the youngest to be pro-
claimed, but is ancient and glorious in
its history.

This Church, the Primate of which
I was by Grace of God elected by deci-
sion of the Unification Council held on
Dec. 15, 2018, is the fruit of the long
work, efforts, prayers and struggles of
many generations of God-fearing an-
cestors, hundreds of hierarchs, many
thousands of priests, and its millions of
believers.”

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Greek Cruises
Archdiocese News

Celebrating the Feast of St Demetrios

St. Demetrios services
Archbishop Demetrios (above) presided at the Divine Liturgy for the Feast Day of his patron saint at St. Demetrios Cathedral in Astoria, which Archbishop Elpidophoros attended. After the service, representatives of the Order of St. Andrew-Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarch honored Archbishop Demetrios for his 20 years of service to the Archdiocese. (below) Archbishop Elpidophoros presided at the Vespers service at St. Demetrios Church in Merrick, Long Island, where he tonsured four altar servers as readers.

Honoring Archbishop Michael
Archbishop Elpidophoros recently paid his first visit to Saint Basil Academy in Garrison, N.Y., where he conducted a Trisagion service at the grace of Archbishop Michael, who led the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America from 1948-58. His Eminence also held a service at the Saint Basil Chapel for the Academy’s children and staff.

REQUEST FOR PHOTOS & VIDEO
ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH, NEW YORK CITY

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is working with CBS - 60 Minutes on a segment featuring St. Nicholas National Shrine which was located at 155 Cedar Street in downtown New York City. This small church was destroyed on Sept. 11, 2001, when the Twin Towers were destroyed.

We welcome photos and video from the entire life of the church, including ones from the 1920s until September 11, 2001. Photos and video from inside or outside of the church and also on holidays such as Pascha and Holy Friday services are needed.

PLEASE send photos or video to the Archdiocese by email or hard copy. Include your name, phone number, address and email address. All hard copies will be returned promptly in the same condition as received. For more information contact 212-570-3588.

Send to: Marissa Costidis
Department of Communications
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
8 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10075

or by email to marissa@goarch.org
ΥΨΗΛΟΒΑΘΜΕΣ ΕΠΙΣΚΕΨΕΙΣ ΣΤΟΝ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟ ΕΛΠΙΔΟΦΟΡΟ

Ο Σεβασμιώτατος ευχαρίστησε τους εκλεκτούς επισκέπτες για το ειλικρινές ενδιαφέρον της Ελληνικής Κυβέρνησης τόσο για την Εκκλησία όσο και για τον Ελληνισμό των Η.Π.Α και διαβεβαίωσε αυτούς ότι και η Ι. Αρχιεπισκοπή πάντοτε θα στέκεται στο πλευρό των Ελλήνων απανταχού της γης. Τέλος, αντηλλάγησαν εκατέρωθεν ευχές για την επικείμενη εορτή των Χριστουγέννων.

Ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος με τον Πρέσβη της Ελλάδος Θεοχάρη Λαλάκο

Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης: Ο Παναγιώτατος επισημαίνει, μεταξύ άλλων, ότι «αι θρησκείαι οφείλουν να αναπτύξουν την ειρηνοποιητικήν των λειτουργίαν αποτελεσματικώτερα, και επαναλαμβάνομεν ότι 'Βία και πόλεμος εν ονόματι της θρησκείας και του Θεού, είναι βία και πόλεμος κατά της θρησκείας και του Θεού'. Πρέπει αι θρησκείαι να παύσουν να δίδουν ευπρόσδεκτα επιχειρήματα εις τους αρνητά της πίστεως και εις όσους αρέσκονται να ταυτίζουν την θρησκείαν με τας αρνητικάς της πτυχάς. Είναι απαράδεκτον, εκπρόσωποι των θρησκειών να εμφανίζονται ως κήρυκες φανατισμού, να αναρριπίζουν την φλόγα του μίσους και να επιτρέπουν, ελαφρά τη καρδία, να χρησιμοποιούνται από διαφόρους επιτηδείους δι᾿ αλλοτρίου, μη ειρηνικούς, σκοπούς».

Υπενθυμίζει μάλιστα, ότι «εν όψει των εκρήξεων θρησκευτικού φονταμενταλισμού, της ωμής βίας, της καταστροφής θρησκευτικών μνημείων, της επαπειλουμένης ή και εξελίξει συγκρούσεως των πολιτισμών, των διωγμών κατά των θρησκευτικών μειονοτήτων και της στυγνής καταπατήσεως της θρησκευτικής ελευθερίας, η Αγία και Μεγάλη Σύνοδος της Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας (Κρήτη, 2016) κατεδίκασε τας νοσηράς αυτάς εκφάνσεις της θρησκευτικότητος και εξήρε την σημασίαν του διαθρησκειακού διαλόγου και την συμβολήν του εις την ειρήνην».

Το Ετήσιο Επιμορφωτικό Σεμινάριο του Γραφείου Παιδείας Αρχιεπισκοπικής Περιφέρειας έλαβε χώρα υπό την αιγίδα του Σεβ. Αρχιεπισκόπου Αμερικής κ. Ελπιδοφόρου την Τρίτη 5 Νοεμβρίου, στο Ελληνοαμερικανικό Λύκειο του Αγίου Δημητρίου Αστορίας. Πάνω από 260 εκπαιδευτικοί της μητροπολιτικής περιοχής έλαβαν μέρος.

Το πρόγραμμα άνοιξε με την ομιλία του κ. Νίκος Κατσώρης, ιδρυτής και πρόεδρος του μη κερδοσκοπικού ιδρύματος "Make a Difference with Loukoumi". Την Ελληνική παρουσίαση με θέμα «Σύγχρονες Μέθοδοι Διδασκαλίας της Νεοελληνικής Γλώσσας: Από τη Θεωρία στην Πράξη» ανέλαβε η Δρ. Νατσιοπούλου, επίκουρος καθηγήτρια στο τμήμα Κοινωνιολογίας και Εκπαίδευση / Teachers College / Columbia University.
Οικουμενικός Πάτριαρχής:

«Είναι απαράδεκτο, εκπρόσωποι των θρησκειών να εμφανίζονται ως κήρυκες φαινόμενο»

Ο Γκεν. Πρόξενος της Κίνας επισκέφθηκε το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο

Ο Πατριάρχης Βαρθολομαίος, ο Γεν. Πρόξενος της Κίνας επισκέφθηκε το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο, ο Πατριάρχης κ. Wei από την πόλη της Νέας Υόρκης.

Η θηρασία αναφέρεται είς την συμβολή της είς την ειρήνη. Η ειρήνη μεταξύ των θρησκειών είναι βασική προϋπόθεση της ειρήνης μεταξύ των λαών και των πολιτισμών.

Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο απένειμαν στον κ. Δημήτριο τιμητική πλακέτα για την 20χρονη ἐξασφαλίζει ταυτότητα εἰς τούς λαούς καί τά ἑξῆς τήν καί εἰς τοῦς διοργανωτάς την χάριν καί τήν καταστάσεις δέν σημαντικώτερα πολιτισμικά τό, αγωνίζεται δε αδιαλείπτως προσκήνιο Ἡ θρησκεία ἐπιστρέφει ζωῆς Λουκᾷ τοῦ ρόλου τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἥτο πάντοτε πογραμμίζομεν, ὁ θρησκευτικός φονταμενταλισμός, ὁ ἐντάσεις σκοπούς. Εἶναι καί εἰς θεματολογίαν τούς διοργανωτάς και τα ιερά από τον Πατριαρχικό Διάκονο επισκέπτεται την Κίνα και είπε ότι θα χαρεί να τον δεί και να επισκεφτεί την χώρα του. Αμέσως μετά, ο κ. Wei, συνοδευόμενος από τον Πατριαρχικό Διάκονο Ιακωβος, επισκέφθηκε τον Πάναντε Πατριαρκό Ναό και ενημέρησε για την ιστορία του και τα ειρήματα που φιλοσοφούνται σε αυτόν.

Ακολουθεί το πλήρες κείμενο του Παναγιώτα του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου προς το Διεθνές Συνέδριο Θρησκευτικής Διάλυματων με θέμα «Η θρησκεία στον Πυρόχρονο Κόσμο: Προκλήσεις και Προοπτικές για τον Διάλογο και την Ειρήνη: Της Ενιαίας Κυρίας Λουκᾶς και Κατσώνης εν Κυρίω αγαπητέ, χάρην, είρηνην καί ευλογίαν παρά Θεόν. Ζήμιν κατά τας τελεταιας δεκαετίας μίαι επαναλογιονίδα τον ρόλο της θρησκείας διά την ώθη των άτομων καί των κοινωνιών. Η θρησκεία επιστρέφει δυναμικά εἰς το προσκόπον, εμφανίζεται ως εἰς σημαντικός παράγον το παρόν καί το μέλλον της ανθρωπότητας. Κακια ναλούσις της παρούσας καταστάσεως δέν είναι πλήρας, είναι δεν όποια ναναφά καί εἰς την επιρροή της θρησκείας. Εἰς την σχετική σύγχρηση, τοινείται αι έξι τέσσερεις σημαντικοί λεγειασμοί της θρησκείας: Η πρώτη έχει σχέση με την νομοθετική τής ώθη του ἄνθρωπο. Η θρησκεία δίδει όσιας απαντητές ας εἰς τά θαλην παράδειγμας μας προβλήματα καί σταθην προσανατολισμόνας εἰς την ἐνθωπισθήν υπάρχει. Διατροφήν, η θρησκεία εξασφαλίζεσαι τοτιαστείς εἰς τό εἰς ἱστορίαν καί τό εἰς τό θεματολογίαν καίκα τούς ανθρώπους, νέων καί θεματολογίας.
Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης: «Το Οικουμενικόν Πατριαρχείον αγωνίζεται σήμερα να διαφύλαξη την πίστιν των Πατέρων»

Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης:

Κατά τη διάρκεια της εκδήλωσης μιλούσαν ο Παναγιώτατος Πρόξενος της Ελλάδος στην Πόλη Γεωργία, ο Αρχιεπίσκοπος Μηδείας κ. Απόστολος, ο Πανηγυρίσαντα Ιερό Ναός Αιγίου Πέτρος, ο Πρόξενος της Αμερικής του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου Μ. רו. Τ. Σαρί, καθώς και ο Πρόξενος της Ελλάδος στη Νέα Υόρκη Βακουφίων κ. Σουλτανοπόλου.

Ανακοινώνει την εν Κυρίω μακαρία κοίμη της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους, να σκέπη την Αγίαν του Χριστού της δόξης και Θεώς του ελέους.
OBITUARIES

Elder Archimandrite Ephraim

Elder Archimandrite Ephraim (Ioannis Moraitis), an archimandrite and former abbot of Philotheou Monastery on Mount Athos, spiritual guide of four monasteries on Mount Athos and of eight women's convents in Greece, and the founder of 19 monasteries in the United States and Canada, passed away Dec. 7. He resided in Arizona at St. Anthony's Greek Orthodox Monastery until his repose.

Elder Ephraim was a hieromonk for 71 years and an elder for more than 50 years. He was a disciple of Saint Joseph the Hesychast of Mount Athos and lived in monastic obedience to him for 12 years until the saint's repose in 1959. Elder Ephraim wrote many books on his experiences and homilies of Saint Joseph.

Elder Ephraim was born June 24, 1927 in Volos, Greece, on the day of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, and was given a baptismal name of John (Ioannis). He grew up in poverty and helped his father at work, but always tried to emulate the holy life of his mother, Saint Victoria (whom he later tonsured a nun with the name Theophano). He began to desire the monastic life around 14 years of age, but he did not get a blessing from his spiritual father to leave and become a monk until he was 19.

On Sept. 26, 1947, Ioannis arrived at Mt. Athos to the St. Anna's skete. Elder Joseph got to know about his arrival from the people. He met Ioannis and the kilya of Elder Joseph – St. John the Baptist. As elder Ephraim recalls in his book, at the pier he met Elder Arsenios who said: “Are you Ianakiss from Volos?” - “No, how do you know me?” – “Elder Joseph knows that from the Fair Forerunner. He appeared to him and today and said: I brought you to a sheep. Place it within your fence.”

So Ioannis became a disciple of Saint Joseph the Hesychast who tonsured him in 1948 and gave him the name Evangelist. Ephraim was subsequently ordained a deacon, and then a priest. The life in the brotherhood under Elder Joseph was very austere and ascetical, and Ephraim made great spiritual progress under his holy Elder. After Elder Joseph’s repose in 1959, Elder Ephraim continued to live in asceticism until he became the abbot of the Holy Monastery of Philotheou in 1973, where he was able to revive the spiritual life in a short time. Due to the reputation of Elder Ephraim, the monastery’s brotherhood grew rapidly. Elder Ephraim was asked by the council of Mount Athos to revive and expand several other monasteries on Mount Athos which had a dwindling number of monks. These monasteries were Xeropotamou (under Archimandrite Nomotitas), and Kakavou. He was also asked to repopulate the Great Lavra but declined. Along with the monasteries on Mount Athos, there were several monasteries in Greece under Elder Ephraim’s spiritual guidance, including the monastery of St. John the Forerunner in Serres, that of Panagia the Directress in Potaria (Volos), and that of the Archangel Michael, a formal metochion of Philotheou on the island of Thasos.

In 1979, Elder Ephraim became ill and needed surgery. Then his spiritual children asked for a blessing from Canada on surgery in Canada. The Elder agreed, the operation was successful. For more than a month Elder Ephraim stayed in America and met representatives of the Greek community. He got to know that the spiritual life in the Greek circles have been disrupted, people stayed for a long time without confession and with malice towards Communion, totally unprepared and did not keep the canons of the Church. They forgot the pious Orthodox life, Greek national traditions and were accustomed to a vicious lifestyle.

Father Ephraim decided to go to America more and more often. He first visited Canada: Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, and then he was invited to the United States. In the evening of August 20, the Holy Mountain warned him that he cannot continue this way and must choose: either the Holy Mountain, or America. The Elder began to pray and it was revealed that his place is in America. He decided to move to the U.S. – for the spiritual care of his flock and the revival of spiritual life in the Greek communities of North America.

The first monastery that was established by Elder Ephraim was that of Nativity of the Mother of God in Pennsylvania, near the city of Pittsburgh. The main monastery has the name of St. Anthony the Great and is located in the middle of the Sonoran Desert in Arizona. Here Archimandrite Ephraim resided most of the time. He arrived to the desert in 1995 with 5 monks. There was no electricity, no water and no building materials. But the Elder was not afraid of difficulties and urged the brethren not to despair and believe in God. He heard in that place Athonite Bells and saw his Elder, Joseph Hesychast there and thus he knew that there they should build the monastery. He said: “We came to build the temple and the monastery and, for our diligence, God will bless our work”. Soon people began to donate money and materials, the main church was built in just 4 months. The whole territory was planted with olive and citrus gardens.

Elder Ephraim developed a reputation as being a grace-filled confessor, a true Athonite elder, and had thousands of spiritual children around the world: monks, clergy, and laity. He is considered by many to be the first to establish an authentic Athonite monastery on American soil. In his life, Elder Ephraim founded 19 monasteries in the United States and Canada for women and men alike, as well as a nursing home.

Anthony Stefanis

BONITA SPRINGS, Fla. - Anthony Stefanis, an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and long-time member of the Archdiocesan Council, passed away at age 79 on Nov. 7 at home with his loving wife Lottie and their children at his side.

He was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., and grew up together with Carol, Paulette (Leadership 100s executive director) and Peter Poulos.

He was a graduate of New York Polytechnic University, and then went on to Harvard Graduate School of Business.

Initially trained as an engineer, he spent most of his professional career as a high-level executive with IBM, working on projects for the corporation throughout the world.

Stefanis became an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1994 and served the Archdiocese with distinction and honor under Archbishop Iakovos of blessed memory and Archbishop Demetrios.

After retiring from IBM, he devoted most of his time in service to the Church.

He served as chairman of the Archdiocesan Council Administration Committee and was an Executive Committee member for about three decades.

He was instrumental in establishing the strategic plan for the Archdiocese and travelled to each Metropolis to learn about the concerns and needs of the Metropolis and clergy to incorporate them into the plan, working closely with each Metropolis.

He moved to Florida about three years ago and became involved with the health care industry, and worked with Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta.

Anthony is survived by his beloved wife of 57 years, Lottie; a son, Nicholas; a daughter, Olga (Tyrone) Nelson, grandchildren Anthony and Nicholas, a brother, James (Georgette), niece, Xenia Stefanis-Law, Rita Stafford and many cousins.

Funeral services took place Nov. 14 at St. Katherine in Naples, Fla., with Bishop Sebastianos of Zela, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Phlemon Patitas officiating. Condolence letters were read from Metropolitan Alexios, who was on a pilgrimage at the time, and Metropolitan Gerasimos. A long-time friend, James Logothetis, delivered a touching eulogy.

Correction

On page 26 in the Sept-Oct. issue of the Orthodox Observer, the photo was misidentified. It should have read that one of the honorary doctorses Archbishop Demetrios had received was from St. Tikhon Orthodox Seminary in Pennsylvania.
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     the actual photo.)
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the King of the Jews and came to worship Him.

Today, our world needs the light of the birth of Christ to shine in the darkness. Our world needs to see that in Christ heaven and earth are united, offering to all the grace of God, salvation, and the true nature of our being and purpose. His glorious birth unites heaven and earth by restoring our communion with God, overcoming the alienation caused by sin; and this divine revelation shows us the way to be transformed in the image and likeness of God. By being born in the flesh, Christ reveals the path to holiness, to the unification of heaven and earth within each one of us.

On this blessed and sacred day, may we rejoice together in the presence of Christ our Lord, who through His love for us was born of the Virgin Mary and is now crowned with glory and honor. I also ask that on this day and those that follow into a new year, that each of you commit to offering through your lives a witness of the unification of heaven and earth. Christ is born! We are called to glorify Him in all that we do. We must be like the shepherds who, after seeing Christ, returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen. (Luke 2:20) On this glorious Feast may we be inspired in seeing that heaven and earth are united, and may we go out and give Glory to God in the Highest and share the wondrous news of His birth for our salvation!

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPOHROS
Archbishop of America

Christmas greetings
Archbishop Elpidophoros and members of the Archdiocese staff assemble for the annual Christmas tree lighting in No. 8 East 79th St. They were joined by two visiting nuns from the monastery in Chania, Crete. The group sang the Kalanda in Greek and English Christmas caroles.

“... the greatest of these is love.”
- 1 Corinthians 13:13

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