

It is truly a great honor for me to receive the Award that bears the name of Patriarch Athenagoras, and not just an honor, but an impetus and call to duty, to serve God, the Church, and the congregation entrusted to me with all my might, as Patriarch Athenagoras served."

ATHENAGORAS
HUMAN
RIGHTS
AWARD

Metropolitan Epiphaniy
Remarks upon receiving the

Athenagoras Award

ARCHON WEEKEND COVERAGE BEGINS ON PAGE 2





#### Construction to resume on St. Nicholas WTC

"This house of worship will serve as a reminder that our collective faith is something we can always count on to move past our painful memories and build a better tomorrow." –NY Governor Andrew M. Cuomo

#### Historic St. Andrew Ecumenical Patriarchal Fund Established

The Board of the St. Andrew Ecumenical Patriarchal Fund met for the first time together





#### **Archon Pilgrimage to Constantinople**

11 Led by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, pilgrims traveled to receive the blessings of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew





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His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America

#### **Spiritual Advisor:**

Rev. Alexander Karloutsos

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The Order of Saint Andrew's fundamental mission is to promote the religious freedom, wellbeing and advancement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate—the spiritual center of the world's 300 million Orthodox Christians. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is headquartered in Istanbul, Turkey.

The Archon is published by the Order of Saint Andrew, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America. Members are encouraged to submit material pertaining to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Orthodoxy. All material should be typed and submitted electronically. The editor reserves the right to edit all material submitted for publication. ©2020

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### Archdiocesan Delegation accompanies His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Belgium

ith the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros America, an Archdiocesan delegation accompanied His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew Ecumenical to Brussels, Belgium from November 9 to 11, 2019 on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary/Golden Jubilee of the Orthodox Archdiocese of Belgium. His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium hosted the delegation, which was led by Father Alexander Karloutsos, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of America and Spiritual Advisor of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, and Presbytera Xanthi Karloutsos.

Distinguished delegates in attendance were the National Commander of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis and Dr. Maria A. Limberakis, Archon John A. Catsimatidis, Vice-Chairman of the Archdiocese, and Margo Catsimatidis, Archon Hon. B. Theodore Bozonelis, National Secretary of the Order and Secretary of the Archdiocese, and Helen Bozonelis, Archon Michael and Libby Angeliades, Archon William and Elizabeth Doucas, Archon Dr. George Korkos, Archon John and Marisa Payiavlas, Maria Allwin, Dr. Peter Michalos and Jillian Nelson.

The delegates were greeted in Brussels on Saturday, November 9 by Archon Boris Gurov of the Holy Metropolis of Belgium and his wife, Youlianna Gurov, who assisted the delegation and also served as its host in Belgium, accompanying the delegation to all events and participating in them.

Upon their arrival in Belgium, the delegation traveled to Kasterlee, Belgium, where they attended a luncheon in honor of His All-Holiness hosted by Archon Theo Roussis of the Metropolis of Belgium. Each delegate had an op-

portunity to introduce himself or herself to His All-Holiness, and to express their respect and love to him.

Later in Brussels, the delegation attended Vespers, led by His All-Holiness at the Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Archangels in the presence of Belgian authorities, diplomats, representatives of other denominations, and the Orthodox faithful.

Thereafter, Archon Boris and Youlianna hosted a dinner in honor with discussions centered on religious freedom, the European Union, and other important issues

On Sunday November 10, the delegation attended Matins and Divine Liturgy presided by His All-Holiness at the Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Archangels, with multiple Orthodox bishops and clergy. An official banquet in honor of His All-Holiness, was hosted by the Metropolis of Belgium, with over 1000 in attendance. In his remarks, His Eminence recognized the participation of and expressed gratitude to the Archdiocesan delegation of America and

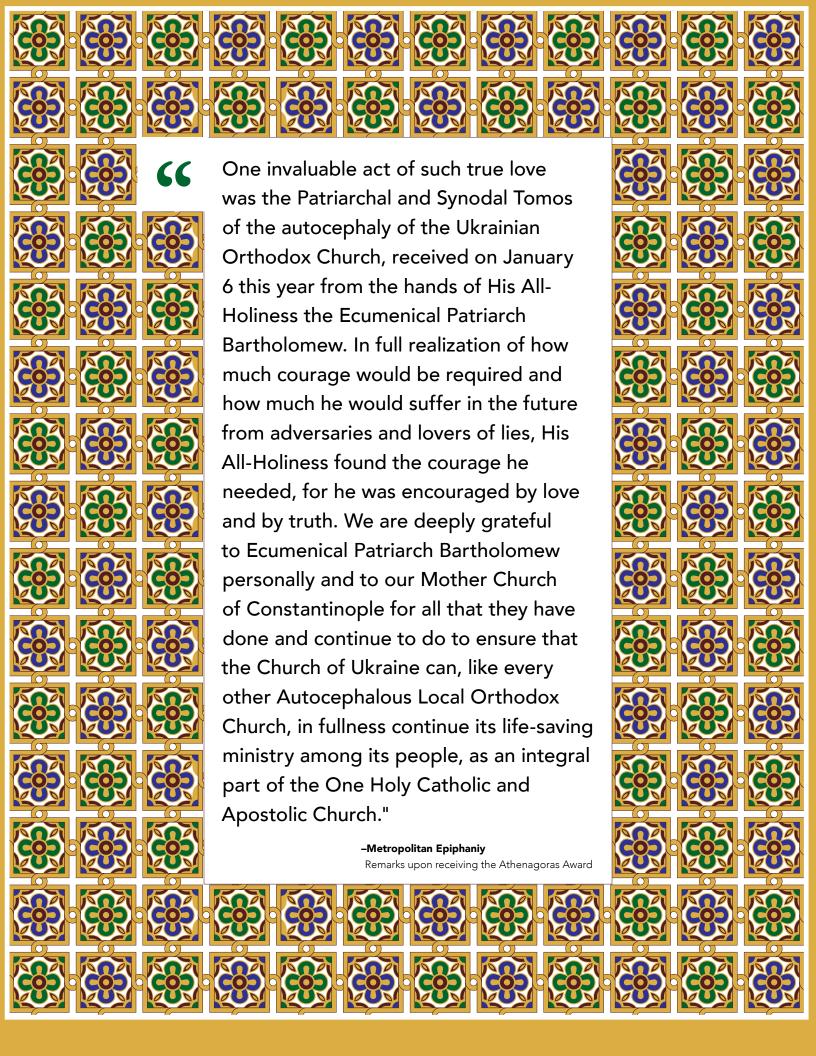
the Archons of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle.

On Monday, November 11, the Order, led by National Commander Limberakis, hosted a private breakfast in honor of His All-Holiness, in which each delegate was given time to address His All-Holiness on issues of concern for the Archdiocese of America and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The delegates engaged in candid and frank discussions with His All-Holiness on various important and pertinent matters, and all expressed their gratitude to His All-Holiness for the election and enthronement of Archbishop Elpidophoros. His All-Holiness listened intently and made remarks as each delegate spoke of their concerns. His All-Holiness commented upon and clearly recognized the importance of the issues.

The delegation concluded the events with a luncheon hosted by Belgians Alexander and Catherine Kartalis at their home in Brussels as discussions summarized the importance of all events attended and the special and productive time spent with His All-Holiness.









# His Beatitude Metropolitan Epiphaniy of Kyiv and All Ukraine

#### 2019 Recipient

is Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, together with the Order of Saint Andrew's National Commander Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, presented the Athenagoras Human Rights Award to His Beatitude Metropolitan Epiphaniy of Kyiv and All Ukraine during the annual Athenagoras Human Rights Award Banquet held at the New York Hilton Hotel on October 19, 2019, with over 600 Archons and guests in attendance.

In a message commemorating the occasion, His All-Holiness 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."

In presenting the Award, His Eminence 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  $\pi\eta\gamma\dot{\eta}$  the Ukrainian Church sprang – the Life-Giving Fountain of the Queens 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 circumstanc-



es where a Local Church has forestalled the Ecumenical Throne. As the Mothers in this room know very well, birthgiving 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 highest Orthodox Christian recognition in America, the Athenagoras Human Rights Award? It's simple: the Ecumenical Patriarch has the prerogative and the responsibility of granting autocephaly status to local churches based on Canon 28 passed by the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon in 451, that's 1568 years ago! And we as Archons

must defend that prerogative, as WE are THE Defenders of the Faith.... That's who we are and that's what we do!"

Accepting the Award, His Beatitude Metropolitan Epiphaniy stated: "If this award were for me alone, I would hardly dare to accept it, as I do not consider myself worthy 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 personally, 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 Sister Churches, is the youngest to be proclaimed, but is ancient and glorious in its history. This Church, the Primate of which I was by Grace of God elected by decision of the Unification Council held on December 15, 2018, is the fruit of the long work, efforts, prayers and struggles of many generations of God-fearing ancestors, hundreds of hierarchs, many thousands of priests, and its millions of believers." ■





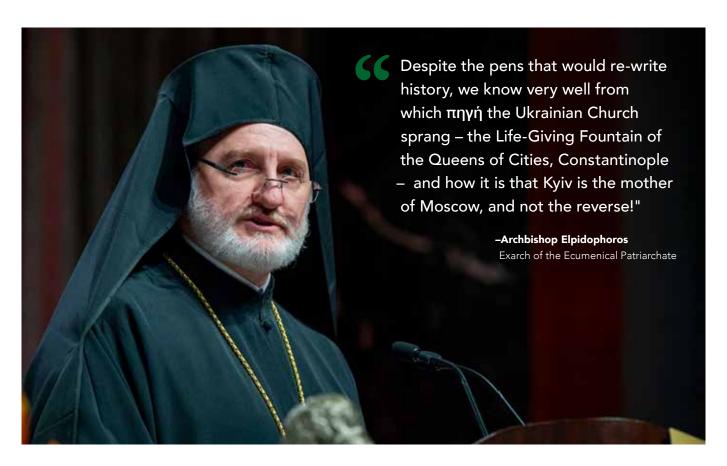






**Supporting Ukraine's Independence** 

Hierarchs, clergy and faithful gathered together at the New York Hilton Midtown in support of religious freedom for the people of Ukraine.







## John Socrates Zavitsanos, Archon Ekdikos, Is Presented With The Nicholas J. Bouras Award for Extraordinary Archon Stewardship

ohn Socrates Zavitsanos, Archon Ekdikos, is this year's recipient of The Nicholas J. Bouras Award for Extraordinary Archon Stewardship for his outstanding service to the Orthodox Church as an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.The Award was presented to Archon Zavitsanos on October 18 by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America and the National Commander of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, in a ceremony at the New York Metropolitan Club as part of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle's annual three-day assembly, Archon Weekend.

In a message commemorating the occasion, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew noted of the late Archon Nicholas J. Bouras that his "spirit of charity, generosity and philanthropy still resonates deeply within the echelons of your distinguished body, and constitutes the noble ethos that each of you aspires to attain and exemplify." His All-Holiness continued: "Indeed, for more than fifteen years, Mr. Zavitsanos has embodied and promoted these qualities in both his service to the Church and to the community at large. As an accomplished lawyer and prominent attorney in the state of Texas, he has represented nu-

merous individuals over the years, many times without accepting any monetary compensation in return. He has exhibited a great amount of zeal and enthusiasm in upbuilding and enhancing the induction process of new Archons, so that in deepening their knowledge and understanding of the Great Church of Christ, a stronger bond may then be forged between them. He has even offered his services on an international level-beyond the borders of his local community—in order to aid the Ecumenical Patriarchate's pursuit to reclaim the historic Prinkipo Greek Orphanage, and to raise awareness on the basic human and religious rights of Christians in the Middle East."

At the ceremony, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros stated: "By your faithful διακονία in the Order of Saint Andrew, Archon John, you have demonstrated your worthiness to join the ranks of George Behrakis, the first recipient, and all the others including our Vice Chairman of the Archdiocese Council John Catsimatidis, and last year's honoree, George Safiol. Your philanthropic offering is worthy of the memory of Nicholas J. Bouras, and the excellence of your life and work speak of your humility and graciousness in living up to your high calling in Christ."

National Commander Anthony

J. Limberakis, M.D., praised Archon Zavitsanos' "tremendous stewardship of time, talent and resources in support of the Mother Church of Constantinople, the Orthodox Christian Church throughout the United States, and to the mission of the Order of Saint Andrew in which all children of God should be granted religious freedom as a fundamental, inalienable human right."

Zavitsanos' Archon daughter Anastasia noted that he "believes in the basic rights and freedoms of every human being, and vocalizes and lives that truth, even when it could be dangerous for him...His resume is unbelievable. He's created the Sponser A Day Program, raising over one million dollars for the Order. He's helped reclaim an orphanage for the Ecumenical Patriarchate, after successfully suing the government of Turkey. He's a member of Leadership 100. He's helped the Annunciation Cathedral in Houston in so many ways, but especially through making it one of the largest stewardship programs in the country."

"I am personally honored, humbled and happy to receive this Award," Mr. Zavitsanos said in an interview after the ceremony, "particularly considering for whom the Award has been established, Nicholas J. Bouras."













**Celebrating Archon John's Achievements**Archon Weekend kicked off at the Metropolitan Club, celebrating John Zavitsanos' success in the Order's Exarch Appeal's restructuring.









#### **Joint Meeting**

The National Council and Regional Commanders held their annual joint meeting at the New York Hilton Hotel to kick off the annual Archon Weekend.



#### **Orientation Breakfast**

National Commander Limberakis addresses the new Archon class on their roles and responsibilities.







#### **Annual Meeting**

Archons listen to various reports during the meeting held on that Saturday morning.



#### **Agape Luncheon**

Joni Zavitsanos, modern Byzantine iconographer, was the featured speaker at the lunch, and later honored by Archbishop Elpidophoros, National Commander Limberakis and Dr. Maria A. Limberakis.



Peter John Gouris, Prepositos, Elkins Park, PA

Nicholas Balidis, Maestor

Rye, NY

Mark S. Boardman, Esq., Ekdikos

Birmingham, AL

Sergio Deligianis, Depoutatos

Flushing, NY

George G. Demos, Esq. Nomophylax

Sacramento, CA

Stilianos Evangelos Efstratiadis, MD

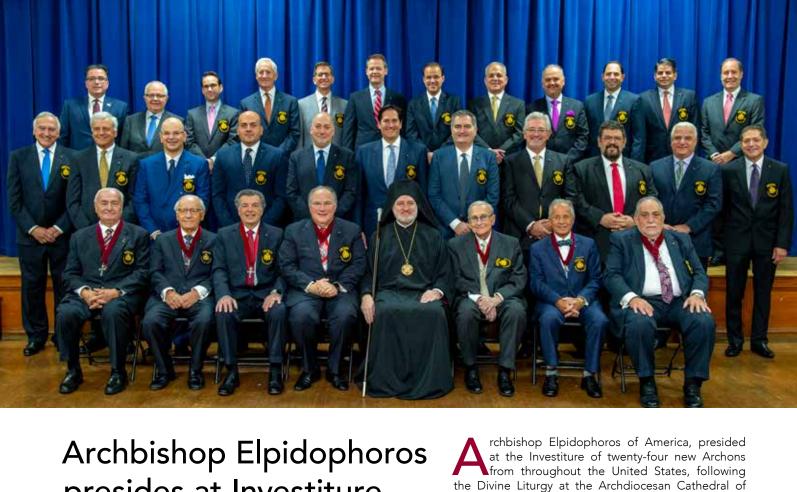
Hypomimneskon, St. Louis, MO

James Alexander Frangis, Notarios

Marietta, GA

Theodore Germanakos, MDiv,

Hartoularios, Bronx, NY



### Archbishop Elpidophoros presides at Investiture of Twenty-Four New Archons

John T. John, Esq., Protonotarios, Seattle, WA

Arthur Thomas Katsaros, Ostiarios Naples, FL

Issam Hanna Khoury, Quaistor Hillsborough, CA

Michael Thomas Koinis, Kastrinsios Houston, TX

Nicholas Fotios Kourtis, Esq., Protekdikos, Weston, MA

Girard Mitchell, Exarchos Boca Raton, FL

Jeremy Oryhon, MD, Dierminefs Palatine, IL

Stephen Petrick, Esq., Dikaiophylax Bayonne, NJ Nicholas Rallis, DDS, Aktouarios Port Washington, NY

the Holy Trinity, on Sunday, October 20, 2019. His Eminence told the new Archons: "Today is truly a day

of rejoicing in the Church, for we embrace new Archons of the Ecumenical Throne – new defenders of the Faith, who have committed themselves to the Great Church

of Christ with all their heart, soul and mind."

Nicholas George Scandalios, Archon Skevophylax, Southampton, NY

Perry Chris Siatis, Esq., Archon Hieromnimon, Palatine, IL

Nikolaos Spanos, Archon Hartophylax, Manhattan, NY

Lambros K. Stassinos, Hypomnimatografos, Plymouth, MI

Stephanos Tenedios, Primikerios Tenafly, NJ

Theodore Vavoulis, Depoutatos Pasadena, CA

Demetrios John Ziozis, Eftaxias Manhasset, NY





# Establishment of St. Andrew Ecumenical Patriarchal Fund to Aid the Financial Independence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

n December 13, 2019, the inaugural meeting of the St. Andrew Ecumenical Patriarchal Fund, a new initiative to enhance and contribute to the financial independence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in its worldwide mission and ministries, was held in the Conference Room of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in New York City. This historic undertaking represents the very first such charitable entity in the world established to secure the financial underpinnings of the Spiritual Center of World Orthodoxy. The Fund is incorporated as a Not-For-Profit Corporation in the state of New York.

As stated in its bylaws, the purposes and objectives of the Fund are:

- to support the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its religious, educational and philanthropic institutions;
- to support ecumenical events and activities sponsored, approved or authorized by the Fund's Board;
- 3. to assist the Ecumenical Patriarchate in upholding and defending its canonical authority in the United States and elsewhere;
- 4. to defend and preserve the Ecumenical Patriarchate's leadership role among the various

Orthodox jurisdictions and organizations around the world; and

5. to engage in tax-exempt charitable, religious, educational, literary and scientific activities, including grants to other tax-exempt organizations, through obtaining IRC 501(c)(3) status.

At the meeting, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros presented a November 21, 2019 letter from His All-Holiness approving the proposed bylaws of the Fund, and appointing His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros as the Ecumenical Patriarchal Board member and representative serving at the pleasure of His All-Holiness and, under the proposed bylaws, not subject to term limits.

His Eminence also expressed the gratitude of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and praised the vision of its National Commander, Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, in leading the effort to create the Fund. His Eminence further addressed the historical significance of establishing the Fund.

The inaugural Board members include His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, Patriarchal Representative and Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; Father Alexander Karloutsos, Vicar General and Director of Public Affairs of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Spiritual Advisor to the Order of Saint Andrew, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, National Commander of the Order of Saint Andrew, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; Maria Allwin; Hon. B. Theodore Bozonelis; Thomas S. Cappas, Esq.; John A. Catsimatidis; Thomas E. Constance, Esq., Peter Kakoyiannis, Esq.; Dean Poll; Michael G. Psaros; George E. Safiol; Aphrodite Skeadas; and Christopher Stratakis, Esq.

Dr. Limberakis was elected Chair of the Fund, with George E. Safiol as Vice-Chair, Peter Kakoyiannis, Esq. as Secretary, and Michael G. Psaros as Treasurer. Committee Chairs were also appointed, including Investment Chair John A. Catsimatidis; Grants Chair Maria Allwin, with Dean Poll as a Committee member; Communications Chair Skeadas; Audit Chair Dean Poll; and Development Chair Father Alexander Karloutsos. Advisory (Ex Officio) Chairs of the Fund Board, present and past, will comprise the Committee and choose additional advisors.

The announcement of founding members may be made during the visit of His All-Holiness to the United States in and around May11, 2020, when His All-Holiness is in Washington D.C. ■

# PHOTO BY E. DAMIANAKIS, A. KARTALOPOULOS AND C. PAPAS

# ARCHON PILGRIMAGE to CONSTANTINOPLE

Led by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America





Archon Pilgrims to Constantinople Granted Audience with His All-Holiness, Visit the City's Renowned Holy Sites

is Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America from November 17 to 23, 2019 led an Archon Pilgrimage to Constantinople to receive the blessings of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

On their first full day in Constantinople, Sunday, November 18, 2019, the pilgrims visited Zoodochos Peghe Monastery at Balukli, where the Patriarchal graves of past Ecumenical Patriarchs such as Athenagoras, the former Archbishop of America, can be found. They prayed the Trisagion at his gravesite. The pilgrims also saw the underground shrine of Zoodochos Peghe, the Holy Spring, one of the most famous ancient shrines of Constantinople. Then they visited the Baloukli Home for the Aged.

After that, the pilgrims continued to Panagia Blacherna, the most famous shrine of the Virgin Mary in Istanbul. Then they visited the Church of the Holy Savior of Chora, the second most important

Byzantine Church in Istanbul, known for its magnificent mosaics and frescoes. They are by far the most important and extensive series of Byzantine paintings in the city and among the best in the world. Then they went to the famous Grand Bazaar, a maze of over 4000 tiny shops selling gold jewelry, leatherworks and fine carpets.

The following day, the pilgrims enjoyed a full-day private tour of the old city. Their first stop was the Hagia Sophia, the Church of the Holy Wisdom of Christ. It is one of the world's greatest architectural and spiritual masterpieces and was the Cathedral of the Ecumenical

#### PILGRIMAGE TO CONSTANTINOPLE



#### Zoodochos Peghe Monastery at Balukli

Pilgrims pray at the grave of Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, the former Archbishop of America.



Archbishop Elpidophoros explains about the the historical theological school which has been closed for over 40 years. Patriarchate of Constantinople for more than one thousand years. After the tour, they attended Great Vespers at the Ecumenical Patriarchate at Saint George Cathedral to celebrate the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple. After Vespers, they were granted a private audience with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

At this audience, His All-Holiness told the pilgrims: "Here in the Mother Church of Constantinople there is a concentrated wisdom and the experience of many centuries. We are instruments of divine providence, we ourselves, to carry on this long tradition. And for you, it is an honor and privilege to belong to this First-Throned Church."

In his address, His All-Holiness once again praised the gifts and abilities of the new Archbishop of America, as well as his willingness to strengthen the links between his Ecclesiastical Province and the venerable Center, reviving the tradition of regular pilgrimage visits to the City.

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros noted that the Archons "have one common characteristic: they're all devoted to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. They have the fervency of a soldier, but they are not simple soldiers. They are your officers, Your All-Holiness, and they always look at you, your face, to receive your orders, to feel your concerns, for you to show the way for them to follow you...and to do whatever is good for the Mother Church of Constantinople." He said that the Ecumenical Patriarchate is the center of faith, the foundation of hope and the source of love for all believers in the United States." He also expressed his gratitude to the Lord for the valuable time the Archons have devoted to the purposes of the Church and to the support of those in need.

On behalf of the Order of Saint Andrew, Archon Peter Skeadas stated: "The Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America express our agape, respect, and supreme gratitude to our worldwide spiritual father, Your All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, for selecting His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros, as our beloved Archbishop." He expressed the dedication of the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the U.S. to the person of His All-Holiness, and spoke of their efforts to strengthen and protect religious freedom around the world.

Then on Thursday, November 21, the pilgrims attended the Divine Liturgy at the Ecumenical Patriarchate in celebration of





#### **Divine Liturgy**

His Grace Bishop Apostolos and Father Andreas Vithoulkas, Chancellor, lead Archons, left, to Saint George Cathedral for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, at the Ecumenical Patriarchate in celebration of the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple.



#### PILGRIMAGE TO CONSTANTINOPLE

The Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America express our agape, respect, and supreme gratitude to our worldwide spiritual father, Your All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, for selecting His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros, as our beloved Archbishop."

#### Archon Peter J. Skeadas

The National Treasurer addresses His All-Holiness during a reception.





the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple. After that, they visited to Topkapi Palace and Ayia Ereni within its grounds. It was considered the most important church of Constantinople during the time of Justinian, and before that, the Second Ecumenical Council was conducted there in the year 382.

That evening, the Order of Saint Andrew attended a banquet in honor of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Four Seasons. At the banquet, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America offered a toast to His All-Holiness, saying: "My heart runs over with gratitude and humility on this first trip back to the Queen of Cities as the Archbishop of America. I am humbled by the tremendous honor be-

stowed by the Great and Holy Synod in my election. And I am grateful to you personally, Your All Holiness, for the confidence you placed in me, and for your wholehearted support of my ministry to the sacred flock in the United States of America—the preeminent eparchy of

the Ecumenical Throne."

His Eminence said of the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate: "They have been awarded the title of Archons, and rightly so. For they are leaders indeed, by word and example. Each one, in his own way, brings us closer to the day when the Theological School of Halki is open again; and when all the rights of your Sacred Throne may be exercised without impediment. Another master of men, Napoleon, once said: 'We only lead the people by showing them a future: a leader is a provider of hope.' These Archons are leaders in just this way! For they show us a future of freedom, and they provide hope for a era of peace for the Mother Church."

On Friday, November 22, the pilgrims visited Halki, the home of the renowned Halki Patriarchal School of Theology. St. Photios the Great is believed to have founded the monastery in the late 19th century. His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the beloved and late Archbishop lakovos are among the visionary and outstanding graduates of the School. Presently, the School is closed although there are worldwide efforts to reopen this center of Orthodox learning.

Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, National Commander of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, stated: "This spiritual Odyssey was a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate our dedication and resolve on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the sacred person of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, as well as enjoy the company of our beloved Archbishop Elpidophoros."

The pilgrims flew home on November 23. ■

#### **Educating the Pilgrims**

Archbishop Elpidophoros, above left, offers a historical lesson in one of the Churches, shortly after a boat ride with the pilgrims, below, as they travel to Halki.



## How Moscow is Damaging the Unity of the Church, and What Orthodox Primates Must Do

n this brilliant and profound article, Archon Ostiarios Evagelos Sotiropoulos explains how the Moscow Patriarchate's fanatically intransigent stance on the Autocephaly of the Church of Ukraine belies its stated concern for the unity of the Church. It also articulates why it is so important for the life and unity of the Church that Orthodox primates and hierarchs stand up to Moscow now and act for the good of the people of God, rather than for political concerns. Evagelos Sotiropoulos is the Editor of an important compendium of articles on why the Ecumenical Patriarch's decision to grant Autocephaly to the Ukrainian Church was justified from both a canonical and a pastoral perspective: The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Ukraine Autocephaly: Historical, Canonical, and Pastoral Perspectives, published by the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle.

#### It is time for Orthodox primates and hierarchs to stand up to Moscow and ensure Church unity

#### **Exclusive Commentary to The Orthodox World** By Evagelos Sotiropoulos

"Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do" (Matthew 23:3).

The reaction of the Moscow Patriarchate to the recent decisions by the Ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria, as well as the Church of Greece, to formally recognize the Orthodox Church in Ukraine (OCU) and its primate, Metropolitan Epiphanios of Kyiv and all Ukraine, reminds me of the Bible passage above.

Last November, in my article "Caring for the Church of Ukraine: Constantinople's Calmness the Day" published in Providence Magazine, I wrote that local Orthodox churches should seriously examine Moscow's reaction to the granting of the Tomos of Autocephaly to the OCU

by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate: "For today the target is Constantinople, but tomorrow it could be them, if their interests do not align with those of Moscow."

This is precisely what is unfolding in the aftermath of the decisions taken by Patriarch Theodore and Archbishop Ieronymos; Moscow's purported priority to honour and uphold pan-Orthodox unity, is not consistent according to their

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who dwell in all places and fill all things, treasury of good things and giver of life, come and abide in us and cleanse us of every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Seemingly without any sense of humility or fear of God, the Church of Russia has become the self-appointed arbiter of where the Holy Spirit is present.

Following the formal recognition of the OCU, Moscow responded to the Patriarchate of Alexandria and Church of Greece the same way it did to the Ecumenical Patriarchate – it severed communion with both local churches. That is, it weaponized the Body and Blood of Christ, the very source, the mystery that manifests the unity of all Orthodox who are one in Christ Jesus (cf. Gal 3:28), in order to advance its long-standing and politically-motivated agenda.

For the Church of Greece, however, Moscow also created and published a list of metropolises in Greece that can and cannot be visited by Russian pilgrims. The Church of Russia announced that they would monitor the situation and update this list if additional metropolitans from the Church of Greece concelebrated with OCU hierarchs. In effect, Moscow, according to its own judgment, wishes to determine where the Holy Spirit dwells and fills. It is as if the Holy Spirit is a robotic commodity that can be contained and distributed only where Moscow mandates. This, like many of

#### **PATRIARCHAL NEWS**

Moscow's ecclesiastical actions, betray a lack of Christian philanthropia and spiritual maturity.

Another example to highlight this point is the Church of Russia's approach towards Mount Athos, specifically the Russian-speaking Monastery of St. Panteleimon (which, ironically in this context, means "all-merciful"). According to Moscow, the only Athonite monastery that has the grace of God, the only Athonite monastery where the Holy Spirit dwells and fills is St. Panteleimon. Not because they have a different presiding bishop (all monasteries on the Holy Mountain, including St. Panteleimon, commemorate the name of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew), not because they practice a different faith or have different liturgical customs, but because, wait for it ... they are Russian! Whatever happened to the timeless words of St. Paul that there is neither Jew nor Greek (cf. Gal 3:28)?

What is the root problem of the current division? Is it a matter of Christian faith? No. Of Orthodox dogma, perhaps? No, again. There is one agenda here and it is the Russian World one. It is no surprise that almost all intra-Orthodox disagreements have a common denominator: the desire of Moscow to undermine Constantinople, directly or by proxy, and supplant it as the First Throne of Orthodoxy. And for this, if we are to be sincere, primates and hierarchs from all local churches, to a greater or lesser extent, bear some responsibility.

#### A multi-generational problem

The primary challenge to contemporary Church unity is not as a result of Constantinople's decision vis-à-vis Ukraine. The fallout from the creation of the OCU is symptomatic of a larger, multigenerational problem. The problem is Moscow's ecclesiastical approaches which are not firmly rooted in the good soil (cf. Luke 8:8) of the Church's history, canons, and pastoral care for its flock. The question is: what kind of Orthodoxy do primates and hierarchs want? Do they prefer the Church be governed synodality, according to the holy canons, with the proper ecclesiastical order? Or do they prefer fleeting and narrow national interests, bullying tactics and, if we are to be sincere, the discreet disbursement of significant financial sums to determine Church decisions.

Consider, for a moment, how Moscow grants autocephaly whenever and wherever its interests are served: the establish-

ment of the Orthodox Church in America is especially instructive here. Not only were the clergymen who comprised the OCA's predecessor, the Metropolia, non-canonical up until the day Moscow decided to bestow autocephaly to it (without any canonical basis or prerogative to do so), Moscow has maintained multiple ecclesiastical bodies in the United States to the present day. This includes the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, which has had its own questions of canonical legitimacy in recent decades (making the vociferous accusations against the Phanar from its clergymen that much more ironic).

Consider, as well, Moscow establishing autonomous churches throughout the oecumene. Preferring not to celebrate the Divine Liturgy with other Orthodox clergy, but instead employing Russian embassies and consulates as places of worship. Establishing parishes in other local churches under the banner of 'Moscow Representation' – even in Turkey – because while there may be no Jew or Greek, there certainly is Russian!

More recently, His Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia of Georgia wrote to Patriarch Kirill with concerns about the invasion of Moscow onto the canonical territory of the Church of Georgia. This and other types of related actions have been repeated many times over many decades; if we are to be sincere, this is the standard operating procedure for Moscow.

In 2017, for example, I wrote "Crete, Korea, and the Future of Orthodoxy" in Huffington Post about how the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea (under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate) was a canary in the coal mine. I described in detail how Moscow's expansionist tendencies were destroying the unity of the Orthodox faithful in the Korean Peninsula and that hierarchs should intervene to ensure the continuation of the proper canonical order there. (Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea has written extensively about the non-canonical and disturbing actions of Moscow in Korea.)

And when others – be it local churches or individual clergymen – do not toe the political line, not only does Moscow hasten to weaponize the Holy Eucharist, they systematically employ the threat and execution of excommunication to both intimidate and bully dissidents and denigrate the opinion and outlook of others. Rev. Dr. Nicholas Denysenko has written extensively on how the Moscow Patriarchate has used excommunication

as a coercive tactic to remove critics and diminish their credibility.

A case study from Estonia is especially instructive here. Following the Ecumenical Patriarchate's reestablishment of the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Estonia in 1996, Moscow immediately suspended eight priests and one deacon, labeling them as schismatics. Not because of an egregious canonical error or apostasy, but because they preferred to employ their God-given freedom to be under the canonical jurisdiction of Constantinople.

Before a formal agreement to re-establish communion between Constantinople and Moscow, the latter agreed to revoke the ecclesiastical penalties against the nine individuals. Does this not make a mockery of canonical punishment? Is this not one of many examples where the Church of Russia attempts to determine who has the grace of God and when they have it; in other words, where the Holy Spirit dwells and fills?

A final, related point on Estonia: following Constantinople's 1996 decision, the Russian Parliament passed legislation to place burdensome financial sanctions on the Estonian government in retaliation – one example in a long list of the Moscow Patriarchate relying on and leveraging the Kremlin to advance its own, and indeed a common, Russian World agenda.

#### Showing its true face to the world

The steely resolve and Job-like patience of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to, after more than one hundred years, bring canonical order to the historic Orthodox country of Ukraine and its God-fearing faithful, has disturbed Moscow's mandate and showed the world the true face of Russia

The recognition of the OCU has also brought to light what many Orthodox hierarchs and observers of the Church have known for a long time: the Moscow Patriarchate's modus operandi often involves bullying, threats and outright fabrications. But there is no need to believe this author, bishops from the Ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria as well as the Church of Greece have publicly confirmed these tactics.

During the extraordinary meeting of the Church of Greece hierarchy in October, for instance, bishop after bishop outlined in precision and with concrete examples the intimidating tactics, threats of punishment, and options for black-

mail methodically planned and executed by Russian clergymen, including senior bishops such as Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk.

(As it relates to Metropolitan Hilarion, he travels from one local church to another leveraging Moscow's financial clout and deploying the aforementioned tactics, making a mockery of Orthodox synodality in the process and especially taking advantage of some of the ancient patriarchates who find themselves in tenuous situations.)

However, hierarchs from around the world are now beginning to speak out, they are beginning to challenge the norm of accepting Russia's actions because they are often not aligned with the proper ecclesiastical phronema (mindset).

It is therefore insincere when Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Hilarion speak about the dangers of papism, arguing that: "Our Church [Moscow] does not strive for power at the pan-Orthodox level. We only wish to preserve the canonical order and we cannot allow that a likeness of papism, a 'quasi-papism', should emerge in Orthodoxy." It is a well-known tactic to vociferously accuse opponents, without any merit, of tactics employed by oneself.

Kirill's words are again a reminder of Matthew 23:3, because while the patriarch's words may be wise, his actions betray his works. There are many examples to support this point, the most egregious being Moscow's underhandedness vis-à-vis the Holy and Great Council in Crete in 2016. In February I wrote:

Many are now calling for dialogue and the need for pan-Orthodox synodality to solve the issue of Ukraine; the pretense of virtue here knows no bounds. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew made concession after concession, mostly to Moscow, in order to realize the Holy and Great Council, it was not enough. When Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew agreed to have the autocephaly agenda item removed from the Council's agenda, when he agreed to shorten the length of the Council, and when he agreed to move the location of the Council, it was not enough.

Let us briefly examine the words and works of His All-Holiness, not only as they relate to the Holy and Great Council, which alone speak volume, but his initiation and organization of six Synaxis of Primates since being enthroned Ecumenical Patriarch in 1991. Both of these initiatives, and many other related ones emanating from the Phanar, are the exact opposite of Moscow's baseless charges of "papism."

"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt..." (Col 4:6)

Where does Orthodoxy go from here and how can the unity of the Church be ensured?

While the contribution and opinion of lay people – and even most Orthodox clergy - are important, the time has come for the Holy Synod of each local church to publicly speak out against the long standing practices of the Moscow Patriarchate.

It is time for primates and hierarchs to do the right thing. To follow the Ecumenical Councils, the well-established canonical and pastoral tradition of the Church that have been handed down from the Apostles to the Church Fathers and now to present-day bishops.

Primates and hierarchs will resolve the current stalemate if they follow the commandments of Christ – by loving one another, even their enemies (cf. Matthew 5:44)! By exemplifying Christian compassion and genuine mercy.

Moscow may be boxing themselves into a corner, which could help to explain its increasing reliance on extreme and zealous language focusing on "evil". This in turn has created a group of fanatical Orthodox, particularly on social media, obsessed, not with love and forgiveness, but with schism, heresy and damnation.

Compare this to the language coming out of the Phanar and the homilies of His All-Holiness, which are based on and characterized by love and unity. There is no malice. No revenge nor retribution. Despite repeated personal attacks and countless character assassinations, there is the Ecumenical Patriarch, at every Divine Liturgy, commemorating and praying for Patriarch Kirill. Is this not the calling of a Christian? Let the reader consider it for themselves.

During its Patronal Feast last month, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate decided to officially enter Elder Sophrony of Essex into the catalogue of Saints of the Orthodox Church. The Christ-centred teachings of this holy Russian-born ascetic of the twentieth-century, who was wholly devoted to the Lord, could serve as a blueprint for understanding and reconciliation.

If all parties involved focus on Church

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Hieromnimon Bonita Springs, FL Departed on 7/7/19

unity, if their works are consistent with their words, then they will put self-interest aside and make room for the Holy Spirit, Who indeed dwell in all places and fill all things, leading primates and hierarchs to the knowledge of His truth. ■

# All Florida Archon Retreat in Naples, Florida, Jan 18–20





he Archons of Florida and the Christian Rights and Freedom Institute are co-sponsoring an All Florida Archon Retreat in Naples, Florida on January 18 and 19, 2020 at St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church, offering a packed schedule of incisive lectures and engaging social events. All members of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and their spouses are cordially invited to attend.

The retreat will feature two Saturday afternoon lectures in the Cultural Hall of St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church, beginning at 1PM and ending at 4PM. The first will be by Archon Dr. George Demacopoulos, historian for the Order of Saint Andrew, professor of Historical Theology and co-founder of the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University, on "Prospects for a United Orthodoxy in America." The second, by Lauren Green, chief religion correspondent for FOX News, will be

on "Understanding this 'Present Evil Age' in the Persecution of Christians." A question-and-answer session will follow, after which Lauren Green will sign copies of her book, Lighthouse Faith: God as a Living Reality in a World Immersed in Fog.

On Saturday evening at 7 o'clock, there will be a traditional Vasilopita Dinner Dance celebration, featuring live music by the Peter Lambropoulos Band and a dinner.

On Sunday morning, Orthros begins at 8:30, followed by the Divine Liturgy at 9:30. At 1PM there will be a luncheon for Archons and their spouses at the Stonebridge Country Club, sponsored by Christian Rights and Freedom Institute.

Attendance at the lectures is free; however, pre-registration is required; please submit your form to attend. There is a \$60 per person charge to attend the Vasilopita Dinner Dance with live Greek music; payment with registration is required. Please submit with your form by

mail or call to pay by credit card.

All Archons and their spouses are invited to the Sunday luncheon as guests of Christian Rights and Freedom Institute. Information on this will be provided to those who register.

If you live outside of the Southwest Florida area, it is important to book your Hilton Hotel. St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church enjoys a significant discount with them in high season, but the rooms are limited. Take advantage of this opportunity and book early; there is only a 48-hour cancellation required, which secures your room almost till the last minute. You have nothing to lose when booking early, but if you delay the rooms may be gone!

For questions about this uniquely informative and enjoyable event, contact Dr. Harry G. Dimopoulos, Archon Chartophylax, 7620 Palmer Court, Naples, FL 34112. Phone: 484-515-9052. Email: dimopohg@comcast.net ■

#### **PHOTO BRIEFS**



#### Archons welcome Archbishop Elpidophoros to Church of Our Saviour in Rye, NY

On December 8, 2019, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America visited the Church of Our Saviour in Rye, NY for his first visit. His Eminence was welcomed by several Archons, along with Protopresbyter Fr. Elias Villis and Deacon Sotiris Michelatos. National Council Member Michael Psaros, together with his wife Robin, underwrote the luncheon following the service.



Metropolis of Chicago Archons attend St. Andrew's Day Vespers

On Friday, November 29, 2019, Metropolis of Chicago Archons attended the Vespers Service for the Feast Day of their Patron Saint, Saint Andrew, at St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church in Chicago. Prior to the Service, His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago led the procession of clergy and Archons down the center aisle of the church, an annual tradition.



#### **Metropolis of Atlanta Archon Religious Retreat**

On September 14, 2019, the Metropolis of Atlanta Archons held their Religious Retreat at the Diakonia Retreat Center. The retreat was led by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta and Regional Commander Dr. Manuel Tissura who reported about His Eminence leading an interesting and informative discussion about our faith and our heritage.

# PHOTOS BY D. PANAGOS AND M. SELLAS

#### **PHOTO BRIEFS**





#### Blessing Service at St. Nicholas National Shrine

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America officiated at a blessing service (Agiasmos) at the Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center. Several Archons represented the Order of Saint Andrew. Among them, Archons Alexander Pritsos, Inspector John Kassimatis, Nicholas Karacostas, Andrew Veniopoulos, Theo Nicolakis, Dimitrios Panagos. Below left is John Stratakis, Christopher Stratakis, Peter Kakoyiannis, pictured above left, George Tsougarakis and George G. Horiates, AHEPA Supreme President, above right.







Construction to resume on St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at World Trade Center

On January 2, 2020, Archbishop Elpidophoros and Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced plans to resume the rebuilding of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center. The project will be driven by a new non-profit organization with an independent, 13-member board - the Friends of St. Nicholas. The new entity has been formed to ensure that the sacred space is completed as expeditiously as possible and can begin welcoming visitors from around the world. The Friends of St. Nicholas will aim to resume construction with a two-year target to complete the church. Archons Dennis Mehiel, Michael G. Psaros and John A. Catsimatidis, top right, were among those present at the meeting.

### SAVE THE DATE



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Steven Lukac • Hubbard, OH • 10/16/11 Spiro J. Macris • Wrightsville Beach, NC • 3/3/96

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