

Press Release

Saint Spyridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral

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Bishop McManus To Be Welcomed by His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios as a Guest at a Celebration Service at Saint Spyridon Cathedral, Worcester, MA

A True Welcoming Gesture Between Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian Churches

On Sunday, January 29, 2006, His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios, of Boston, and Reverend Father Dean N. Paleologos, spiritual Dean of Saint Spyridon Cathedral, Worcester, MA, welcome **The Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Worcester** as a guest of the service of the Feast of the Three Great Hierarchs. Also referred to as “An Earthly Trinity,” the Three Hierarchs who were great fathers of the church and Ecumenical Teachers, and are celebrated that day are, St. Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostomon. Participating in the Divine Liturgy will also be Reverend Father Gregory Christakos, Saint Spyridon’s newly assigned assistant pastor, and Deacon Nathaniel from Boston.

This auspicious hierarchical event on Sunday represents a true and significant ecumenical encounter by spiritual leaders of the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Massachusetts. Further significance of this gathering represents the continuity and unity of dialogue, healing, and reconciliation of Christian churches, especially between Orthodox and Roman Catholic that commenced with the important and historic encounter between Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI in 1964, and facilitated by his Eminence Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church of America. This profound and significant encounter in 1964 resulted in the so-termed “lifting of the anathemas” that had painfully divided the Churches of the East and West since 1054. Furthermore, Bishop Bernard Flanagan, then Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Worcester who was zealously committed to implementing the decrees of the Pope for unity, and Archbishop Iakovos also a strong proponent, started the historic Orthodox and Catholic dialogue in Worcester, MA.

Reverend Dean Paleologos states, *“It is with great joy that Metropolitan Methodios and I are joined on Sunday by his Excellency Bishop McManus. By welcoming Bishop McManus we pray for continued peace and mutual respect for the Orthodox and Roman Catholic faith.”*

In all Greek Orthodox parishes, including Saint Spyridon, the Feast of the Three Hierarchs is combined with a celebration of Greek Letters. This usually includes special events which are dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of the ideals of Orthodox Christianity and Hellenic education. The Three Hierarchs were great men of letters who were not only defenders of Orthodox Christianity, but great intellectual giants and supporters of Greek learning. The celebration of Greek Letters, an important component of the event that day, is hosted by Mr. Nikoloas Tzoumbas, Saint Spyridon Greek School Principal and a scholar in his own right, the Greek School Teachers and PTA. Special guests who will be attending are, Mrs. Flora Vekarides, President of the Greek Teachers Association of the Metropolis of Boston established in 1934, as well as other board members and members. Also attending the ceremony is Mr. Georgios Vlikides, head of the Department of Greek Education of the Greek Consulate in New York City, and Mrs. Ekaterini Economou representing the Greek Consulate General in Boston, and others making this a most auspicious gathering.

“The Jesus prayer states that ‘all may be one...that the world may believe’ highlights Christ’s will for all who claim the title Christian,” states Dean Stamoulis, newly elected President of Saint Spyridon Cathedral Parish Council. *“While there are differences in Christian belief and practice, it is equally true that both Orthodox and Roman Catholics share a common faith in Jesus Christ as Son of God and Savior of the world,”* Mr. Stamoulis goes on to say. He also expressed an invitation to the area’s Catholics, to come to Saint Spyridon and along

with Metropolitan Methodios, Fathers Paleologos and Christakos, and Bishop McManus and Father Peter R. Beaulieu, Episcopal liaison to Saint Vincent Hospital, to visibly proclaim our “unity in Christ.”

More On The Feast of the Three Hierarchs

The month of January, in the Eastern Orthodox faith, traditionally celebrates the memory of so many glorious bishops, confessors and ascetics, and recapitulates the memory of all the Saints who have witnessed to the Orthodox faith by their writings and by their lives. The culmination, at the January 29th service, is the feast that honored specifically three hierarchs who served as comforters of the people, fiery pillars of prayer, while also serving the whole ministry of teaching of the holy Church throughout their lifetime. Also referred to as “An Earthly Trinity” these three luminaries of the Church have shed the light of the Orthodox Faith all over the world, scorning dangers and persecutions. These honored hierarchs are: St. John Chrysostom, meaning Golden Mouth, considered by theologians to be the foremost orator and preacher for the Orthodox Church; St. Gregory, known as the most eloquent voice, an intellectual, theologian and religious leader; and St. Basil the Great, who rose to angelic rank by his virtues.

On November 27, 2004, responding to the request of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, spiritual leader of over 250 million Orthodox Christians around the world, Pope John Paul II, returned relics of St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory the Theologian that had been taken from Constantinople in 1204 by mercenary crusaders and ended up in Rome where they have been kept in St. Peter’s Basilica until 2004. With a world wide Pan Orthodox event, the relics were returned to their original resting place enshrined in the Ecumenical Patriarchate Cathedral of St. George in Constantinople. This conciliatory gesture by Pope John Paul II, emphasized the love and mutual respect between the Roman Catholic and Christian Orthodox churches.

For more information about The Feast and Commemoration of the Three Hierarchs service and the Celebration of the Greek Letters, call Saint Spyridon Cathedral at 508.791.7326, www.spyridoncathedral.org

To Arrange Press Coverage, Interview, Photo coverage, or more information

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