

ST NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX and NATIONAL SHRINE

A Place of Prayer and Peace - a Place of Hope and Love". These are the words His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios expressed at the Ground Blessing of our new St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine October 18, 2014. Paul Lillios and I had the privilege of being there that day and it was truly a day of many blessings that included the writing of the name of our beloved Ascension of Our Lord Church on the wall that will be part of the permanent structure. We all can recall where we were on that fateful day of 9/11 and most importantly where we are today. We have the opportunity now to have a lasting impact on the future and the reestablishment of the only house of worship destroyed on 9/11.

The significance of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center will someday be compared to the deep significance of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island – especially so for our community since this is where many of our yiayias and papous, mothers and fathers began their new life in America.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios determined that this small church rising in the middle of Sacred Ground, itself in the center of history, could serve to define the 21st century in terms of religious freedom and the right for every American to worship as they choose to.

Archbishop Demetrios has lead this campaign to not only rebuild St. Nicholas that served so many Greek Orthodox faithful throughout its existence, but to rebuild it also as a National Shrine for all Americans and for all people of the world. This is truly a special time for all of us as Greek Orthodox Christians and as Americans – We all can have a prominent role in the rebuilding of the St. Nicholas Church and National Shrine.

With the Lord's blessing, the goal of rebuilding this new Church and National Shrine by 2017 will come to fruition.

Allow me please to read this brief message from Father Alex Karloutsos, Spiritual Advisor for the St. Nicholas Church and Shrine: Read the paragraph from Father Karloutsas' newsletter.

Please take some time and give thought to your role in this vital ministry of our Holy Archdiocese. To rebuild St. Nicholas for all those who daily need a moment of solace and prayer. And for future generations and for the millions of people who will visit every year the new World Trade Center, the National September 11 Memorial Museum, **there will stand our St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine, the only house of worship at Ground Zero.**

Never in our lifetime has Christianity been under attack as it is right now. The rebuilding of our St. Nicholas Church and National Shrine will serve as a living testimonial that our Faith as Greek Orthodox Christians will never be defeated.

Thank you.