

Address
By Deacon Emmanuel Lemelson upon his Ordination to the Holy Priesthood
Chapel of the Holy Cross
Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological School
Sunday July 24th, 2011



Your Eminence Metropolitan Elpidophoros of Bursa
Your Grace Bishop Ilia of Philomilion
Reverend Fathers
My beloved Theodora, Emmanuel, Katerina and Sofia
My dear Mother, brothers and sisters
Honorable Professors
Ladies and Gentleman

Through the Love of the Lord Jesus Christ, the harmonious approval of Your Eminence Metropolitan Elpidophoros and your Grace Bishop Ilia and by the Love, witness and endorsement of reverend Father Vassilios, today I enter into the magnificence of the second order of Holy Priesthood.

As I journeyed to the house of the Lord I heard the sweet words "I Love You and I am so Happy", and I came to see that in the Lord joy and sadness are but one in the same, and that "...the bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh..." (Gen. 2:23) is undeniably a "Gift from God"

The hand of the Lord stirs with strength and places His servant where He wants him. His divine wisdom spoke through his servant from on high, where his testimony read aloud was as the Angels proclaiming the Glory of the Lord in perpetual ecstasy. As a deaconess bound to the Reverend Father as one, the Lord used His tools to bring my person closer to the divine glory until with weakened fear and charged bewilderment, I entered into the company of Angels.

As if this were not enough, the Lord saw fit that I should also be adorned with the inestimable light of filial love, at once new, and yet as the fragrance of myrrh, remembered.

What Have I done to deserve such a distinction, a sacred presence and paternal Love envied? Yet, the Lord saw fit that through you I should come to see more completely the heart of our Lord, and with the happiness of one taught by a friend I was moved by humility cloaked and the certainty that Love is the Primary thing.

Love growing in your spirit and bearing overwhelming fruit, was a glimpse I sought to hold on to for "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (Jn. 15:13) and yet the popular reports will present something other than what I grasped, surely something less, for in your presence I beheld the very thing our Lord speaks of.

Thus came to an unexpected end my careful design to serve you out of mere appreciation, for the Lord's great Love was impatient and seeking greater things than my fragile imagination could comprehend. While plotting my futility you reached out your hand as Christ to offer the best food of the mystical banquet, so that by your hand, the Glory of the priesthood would be embellished and enhanced.

And in a dream, there was a vision of one who sat at the head of a mystical table on high, and a servant of the Lord aided those who could not themselves ascend the ladder to join him at the banquet.

When the time for dreaming was over, and rest had escaped me, I saw the image of strength standing by your side as a rock which cannot be moved. His vestments I am unworthy to touch, for the resemblance to Christ our King and Savior is too near. Strengthened by his blessings once before, and now by God's divine economy, permitted to receive this blessing undeserved, I became as the thief on The Cross. I have seen that "...all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth..." (Lk. 4:22), and I saw him "... passing through the midst of them..." and going his way (Lk. 4:30). And as the prophet Ilias "His zeal

for the glory of God can only be compared to fire, and his speech for teaching likened unto a burning lamp”, for where he is, so also is the church.

When you made the sign of the cross upon my skull, the Lord spoke through your lips and the prayers penetrated my being, and the memory of those who came before me, and who sacrificed out of Love that I might stand before His holy alter and find no other purposes in my existence than to glorify His name passed all at once through my mind.

Exiting the Holiest of Holies, a simple petition went unheard, that my strength should follow me, for his name is “God is with us” and when the others did not listen, the Lord intervened through your lips, and at your direction, he was brought to me as an Angel of the Lord, and clothed in a garment of light sat at my feet; the gaze of his blue eyes reflecting a stunning greeting from Bursa.

Always remembering those who have come before us, and those who are with us in Spirit, and those who journeyed from afar to honor me with their presence:

I pray through the intercessions of the noble Christina that I may love as one pierced by the Lord, and as one who shatters idols, be found worthy to suffer for His kingdom.

I give thanks to my beloved Mother Katerina and my Father Larry

My Brothers Stephan and Jason and my sisters Alexandra and Elizabeth and my God mother, together with their families

All the clergy, my dear friends and esteemed professors

It is with sound reasoning that I came to discern that the immutable truth of Christ reaches its perfection within our Orthodox faith, and the richness of the uncreated and pure light of His divine knowledge shines more brightly in our hearts through the throne of the first Hierarch of Orthodoxy. Long did I search for this apex on earth of that which is but a reflection of paradise, and when I failed to find it, the Lord brought it to me as a gift from above.

So my service in the Lord finds its excellence in the Holy and Apostolic Throne of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and I encroach on your humility once more, to offer an episcopal prayer for I come to you

“as friend on a journey” (Lk 11:5) for it has been said “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Lk 11:9)

Finally, I ask for the prayers of the venerable Bishop of Philomilion, Ilia and the modest patience of his flock. Behold, the mystery of His Love for it has been ordained that though I am not your brother in flesh and blood, my children are, and are they not also of my flesh? So to my Albanian brothers and Sisters in the Lord I extend a warm greeting and a fervent prayer in the Lord, and may my service be found worthy in His eyes!

Amen