



Eulogy
by
His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain
at the Funeral Service of the late Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia
1st September 2022

Your Eminences,

Reverend Clergy and Monastics

Sisters and Brothers from other Christian traditions and faith communities,

Beloved people of God,

I never imagined that one day I would have to offer the eulogy for such a noble and dignified hierarch of the Holy Church of Christ. But this honour and blessing have been given to me and I stand before you, offering my poor words to praise such a great man. The providence of God has brought me to this moment in time, so I might have this honour and blessing.

I called to mind the words from the hymnology of the Church when Joseph of Arimathea asked of Christ - "and how shall I bury You - and what humans and words of praise can I offer?" I find myself in the same position. How can I, the younger student, speak of the elder and teacher. While, our dear Metropolitan Kallistos was a hierarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Mother Church of Constantinople, he seemed to belong to everyone, the universal Church and the world at large. He was the teacher, shepherd, father, mentor, for countless people - Orthodox and not.

There is little or no need for me to expound on what he offered the academic world; all these things are evident. but, through his role and position, he offered much more to a world that is seeking truth and answers - a world thirsty for spiritual nourishment. He offered the living waters of Christ. This is the truth and the refreshing waters that the Church offers all those who seek and desire to find God. He simply opened the door for people to enter and explore.

In the Hebrew Scriptures and especially in the Book of Judges, we are reminded that God would raise up His servants to protect, guide and shepherd His people. These individuals would protect what had been entrusted

to the generations before them, so that truth would not be lost and altered. So, Metropolitan Kallistos was anointed by God and filled with grace, so he might carry on this task in our days and times. He did not fail us. He shared his own path and struggles, as he also searched for deeper meanings, always remaining faithful and true to his calling. Tall in stature and also in virtue. Firm, dedicated, committed - yet, open, thoughtful, rare, just, unique and special. But he heard the soft voice of the Saviour speak to him and say, come to me all you that are heavy laden and I will give you rest. He is now at rest and in peace, suffering no longer.

Our tradition teaches us that we are not to eulogize or preach about the person who lies in our midst. Rather, we were taught to speak of the Resurrection, eternity and so many other theological expressions. But, when one speaks of these, he speaks of Kallistos Ware - the theologian and man of prayer. For he lived and taught countless numbers these eternal truths through his words, spoken and written, but even more so by his example. He found the Way and the Path and wanted only to share these ideals and truths with all. Because of him, Orthodoxy became known to a greater world. Sadly, our world is now a poorer place - there is a vacancy and an emptiness. There is almost a silence that has taken hold.

We know that the great Prophet Elias left his mantle to his disciple Elisaïos, as he ascended into the heavens. Our beloved Metropolitan left his treasury of writings, struggling even to finish another volume of translation. We, his disciples and heirs, find even some comfort in knowing this.

In our tradition, we end the funeral service and the memorial service with a hymn and chant the words "may his memory be eternal". These words are a prayer of sorts, as we ask that someone not be forgotten. I know and believe that you will agree, that Metropolitan Kallistos will not be forgotten - his memory will live on into eternity. His writings, his teachings, and recordings will continue to be read and heard by generations. But, more importantly, his words have been inscribed on our hearts, and these will carry with us, no matter where we go.

As the representative of His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, I offer paternal love and sympathies to all, just as I do on behalf of the Holy Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain. All of our clergy, the monastics and people offer their respects and love to this noble man and thank him for his love, patience, efforts and so much more. We would like to thank the Oxford Oratory Church of St. Aloysius Gonzaga and the Church of St Giles. We also wish to acknowledge the kind and gracious care that the clergy and faithful of the two Orthodox parishes offered him, especially Simon and Francis. I also express my gratitude to His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium for traveling to be here and pray with us.

In these final days and hours, Metropolitan Kallistos called upon Christ and reminded us that Christ is in our midst – and his final words to me were his blessing for my efforts and this blessed Archdiocese – his native land. What could be more meaningful?

There is an ancient practice that at a moment like this, we bow before the hierarch and do a small prostration and kiss his hand. This is so we might ask for his blessing and forgiveness, this last time. We all bow down to you and ask for your blessing. We also ask that you remember us in the Kingdom where you will be. For certainly, you have already heard the words - "well done my good and faithful servant". You will receive the blessings, joy, and light that have been prepared for you.

May his memory be eternal.