

A Special Spiritual Experience

Parish Convocation at the Church of the Annunciation of the *Theotokos* and the Ordination of a Deacon

(November 24, 2008 [Old Style], † St. Clement of Rome)

With the special blessing, consolation, and overshadowing of the Immaculate *Theotokos*, on Sunday, November 24, 2008 (Old Style), the regular parish convocation of the Church of the Annunciation was held at our Synod's Spiritual Center in downtown Athens (Patron 12, Kolonos).

For some months now, this Church of ours has sponsored almost monthly a parish convocation, consisting of a Hierarchical Sunday Liturgy, a sermon, and a meeting in the parish hall, where the serving Bishop can interact with the faithful in a fraternal atmosphere, hearing and responding to various inquiries, taking responsibility for informing them of current serious ecclesiastical matters, and so on.

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On Sunday, November 24, His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, Acting President of the Holy Synod, liturgized at the parish, assisted



by the Reverend Presbyters, Fathers Apostolos Kagioglou and Constantine Soteriades, Hierodeacon Father Theochares Agiokyprianites, and the Subdeacons, Monk Antonios and Demetrios Giatrakos.

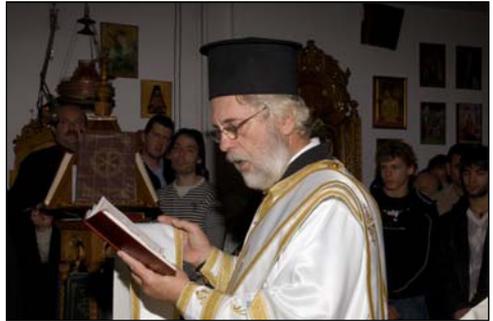
During the Divine Liturgy, His Grace, Bishop Cyprian ordained to the Diaconate his brother-in-the-flesh, Subdeacon Soterios Gioules, in the midst of a throng of faithful and of profound compunction.



At the time of Communion, His Grace spoke on the Gospel passage of the day (the thirteenth Sunday of St. Luke, concerning “the very rich ruler” who asked “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”). His Grace referred to the essence of greed (the lack of faith and hope in God) and the fact that, unless we become as

“children,” completely yielding in trust, through the *Theotokos*, our existence to the hands of God, we cannot experience freedom in Christ or be worthy of the Kingdom of God.

The greater part of those in attendance communed of the Immaculate Mysteries, and at the conclusion of the Liturgy His Grace gave his newly-ordained brother an Icon of the Washing of the Feet. He exhorted Deacon Father Soterios to have constantly before him this scene, in which our Lord serves us, washing the feet of His Disciples, and enjoins us, as Pastors, to do the same: coming not to be served, but to serve His Image. The Priesthood is not a matter of authority but of the ministry of Him Who served, and serves, us in the Person of our Brother.



The parish convocation followed in the parish hall of the Spiritual Center, in an atmosphere of warm love. All were offered coffee and sweets, while heartfelt expressions of profound emotion were ad-



ressed to our well-known and beloved Deacon Soterios. As well, His Grace, Bishop Cyprian referred in brief to the course of the union dialogues with the Synod of Archbishop Chrysostomos (Kiouses) and listened to the hopeful views of those present regarding this prospect.

The newly-ordained Deacon Father Soterios Gioules, second son of the six children of Constantine (†) and Irene Gioules, was born in Athens in 1946. He married his wife, now Diakonissa Georgia, in 1974, and is the father of five sons (ranging in age from 23 to 32 years of age).



He is a graduate in civil law from the University of Athens School of Law (1978). His Ordination as a Presbyter has been set for the Sunday before the Feast of the Nativity (Christmas), December 22, 2008 (Old Style), at the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina. He is praiseworthy on many accounts, though in particular because, at his age, he heeded the voice of our Church, which called him to offer his gifts to the service of our increasing parish needs. May the Most Blessed *Theotokos* protect and guide him in his new and lofty service.

