

Holy Theophany 2009

BY THE GRACE of our Savior made manifest, on Monday, January 6, 2009 (Old Style), the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Greece, Holy Synod in Resistance, celebrated with special splendor the Feast of Theophany at Oropos, Attica, Greece. Contributing to this splendor was the beautiful weather—unusual for this time of year—which held forth through the entire duration of the day.

The Great Blessing of the Waters at the port of Oropos was celebrated by His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, Acting President of the Holy Synod (acting on behalf of our ailing Metropolitan, the Most Reverend Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle), who delivered a message appropriate to the Feast.



An immense number of faithful from Athens, Attica, and other parts of the Greek Motherland took part, as well as many clergy and laymen from Romania, Sweden, and the United States of America.





With pomp fitting to the sacred Feast, nine other Hierarchs took part in the celebration: from Romania, representing our Sister Old Calendar Orthodox Church in that country, Bishops Ghenadie of Bacău, Sofronie of Suceava, Joseph of Botoșani, and Evloghie of Sibiu; from Greece, His Eminence, Bishop Chrysostomos of Sydney and New South Wales, who resides in his episcopal dependency in Petalidion, Messenia, and the Vicar Bishops Chrysostomos of Christianoupolis, Ambrose of Methone, and Klemes of Gardikion; and from Stockholm, Sweden, Bishop John of Makarioupolis.

The Abbot of the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery in Etna, California, Archimandrite Father Akakios, represented the American Exarchate of our Church.

In addition, clergy from the parishes and monastic institutions of the Orthodox in Resistance, along with many monks and nuns, participated in the celebration.



For the appointed festal procession from the Cathedral Church of St. Xenia to the port of Oropos, as well as on the return, scores of young people in traditional folk costumes, carrying banners and flags, escorted the clergy, accompanied by the municipal band of Ano Liosia.

Among those on the official dais were representatives of the local prefectural government and other organizations.



Festal Message on the Feast of Holy Theophany 2009

The Archetype of Man



My Christ-loving and Christ-bearing Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Glory to God for all things.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit!

Universal is this Feast and celebration—universal the gladness.

God, in His love for mankind, reveals to us the **Mystery of God** and, at the same time, the **Mystery of Man**.

O our Lord and God!

“What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?” (Psalm 8:5).

What is man, O my God, that Thou deignest even to heed him? What worth does this fallen descendant of Adam possess, that Thou visitest him with such paternal affection?

Today our Lord and our God answers this awestruck question of the Holy Prophet David, which is a question from all ages.

He reveals to us Christ the God-Man and assures us, in the streams of the Jordan, with the seal of the Holy Spirit, that His incarnate Son, Who is being Baptized, is the **Archetype of Man**, the true **Man**.

And through Him, the God-Man, insofar as He lives in us, we are restored to the **great dignity** of being **living images** of the Living God.

Man is really and truly man only in the God-Man Christ.

God's loving *response* is the Incarnation of the Word and, through Him, the entrance of man into the bosom of the All-Holy Trinity and his deification.

This exaltation of man, through the God-Man, has led him to the incomparable majesty of his *ultimate fulfillment*, beyond which there is nothing greater or worthier for him.

* * *

Christ-bearing Brothers and Sisters:

This response of our Lord today, in the Uncreated Light of the Holy Trinity, is a response of hope and peace.

The only exodus from all impasses, the only solution to all problems, is the God-Man, to Whom the Heavenly Father bears witness today and Whom the Divine Comforter affirms.

- In these days we are living through tragic times in our homeland; yet again we have discovered the great truth that, when man does not strive to become god-man, he is then led into dehumanization and bestialization.

We who call ourselves Christians, and who habitually forget our proper vision, bear enormous responsibility for this harrowing bestialization of our society. We fail to nurture our ontological yearning for **ultimate fulfillment**: becoming god-men; we participate, albeit passively, in the charge towards neo-barbarism, and we worship the sundry images of the beast-man of the Apocalypse. We do not cultivate in a systematic way either charitable solidarity or compassionate mutuality in humility.

* * *

Light-wrought Children of Orthodoxy:

Let the Uncreated Light of Holy Theophany illumine our hearts unto profound and resolute self-criticism, both personal and collective.

It is now time, and the demand urgent, that we realign ourselves against the spirit of the world, so that we might transform the world and not be conformed thereto.

- In this hopeful journey towards our renewal, let us draw support and strength from the prayers of our Chief Shepherd, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, and also from the prayers of the venerable members of our Holy Synod and of the Orthodox Community of those in resistance, who follow the traditional Church Calendar.

- In conclusion, we feel bound to offer our warmest thanks to all those taking part today in this radiant celebration of Orthodoxy, but especially to the Holy Hierarchs and Priests from abroad, the parliamentary representatives, the local authorities, the police, the Port Authority of Oropos, and the traffic police of Malakasa: May the Most Blessed *Theotokos* bless them during this New Year of 2009.

May God be with all of you!

January 6, 2009 (Old Style)

† *Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi*

