

The Annual Patronal Feast of the Holy Convent of St. Paraskeve, Acharnai

On Saturday, July 26, (Old Style), the historic Convent of the Holy, glorious Virgin and Nun-Martyr Paraskeve, in Acharnai, Attica, celebrated its Patronal Feast with splendor.

An All-Night Vigil (*Agrypnia*) was held, beginning at 8:00 p.m. on Friday and ending at around 4:00 a.m. on Saturday. The festivities attracted a large crowd of faithful, among whom were several Members of Parliament and representatives of the local authorities.

His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, Acting President of the Holy Synod in Resistance, was present from the beginning of the compunction-evoking Vigil, at which the nuns of the Convent of the Holy Angels



(under Abbess Taxiarchia) chanted. Also present were four presbyters, Fathers Dorotheos Xynarianos, Konstantinos Terzakes, Jiří Ján, and Konstantinos Soteriades, as well as three subdeacons.

Towards the end of Great Vespers a procession took place, preceded by the sacred icon of St. Paraskeve, a portion of her holy relics, and the venerable skull of the convent's ever-memorable founder, Elder Hieronymos Hagiopaulites (†1943). The procession concluded in the spacious courtyard of the convent, in front of the *Katholikon*, where wheat, wine, and oil were blessed, along with countless loaves (*artoi*).

• **Before** Orthros, Bishop Cyprian delivered a timely sermon, the central idea of which was that St. Paraskeve, like all of the Saints, constitutes, *inter alia*, a perennial model for emulation and sends out, especially in our day, a resounding message to a world in the throes of a grave and multifarious crisis: “All of its problems, all of its sicknesses, and all of its confusions are due to the cultivation—unfortunately even by us Christians—of the fearful and universal passions of ambition, avarice, and hedonism. The Saint overcame these passions by humility, love, poverty in Christ, and purity (in both the narrow and broad senses of the word).”



His Grace also addressed an appeal to the civil authorities that “both Church and State should be aware that they are servants of the people, not overlords, and that they ought to put forth a common effort to serve the Greek people on the basis of the inestimable wealth of the Hellenic Christian tradition of our nation. Thus will our nation emerge from the dreadful crisis that afflicts it and will, at the same time, offer a radiant witness anew to the rest of the world.”

A large number of faithful communed of the Immaculate Mysteries, and at the end of the liturgical banquet a meal was provided for all those in attendance. It was a wonderful night in the foothills of Mt. Parnes, and the unexpected cool contributed greatly to the positive attitude of the worshippers.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Cyprian spoke briefly along the same lines as his homily of the previous evening and thanked the Reverend Abbess of the Convent, Mother Makrina, and also the six

members of her sisterhood for their Evangelical hospitality and their great exertions to rise to the demands of this important day.

• **Glorified** and wondrous is our God in His Saints, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

