

The Ordination of a Presbyter in Ptolemaïs

On Saturday, June 13/26, 2010, our brother in Christ, Nikolaos Matsoulas, was ordained a Deacon, and on Sunday, June 14/27, 2010, a Presbyter by His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methone at the Church of All Saints, in Ptolemaïs, where the new Priest will serve as Rector.



A large throng of faithful from Ptolemaïs and other regions of Greece gathered for the festal Divine Liturgy on Sunday, in order to partake of the spiritual joy of this worthy elevation to the Priesthood of a beloved, modest, and pious member of our ecclesiastical jurisdiction.



Also taking part in the Divine Liturgy were Archimandrite Athanasios Hagiokyprianites, Father Nikolaos' spiritual Father, who came from Agrinion with a group of faithful; Archimandrite Glykerios Hagiokyprianites, who came with a group of faithful from Thessalonica and Kymina; Archimandrite Mark Hagiokyprianites, who happened to be visiting Greece from the Congo; and another new Priest, Father Ioannes Oikonomou, who

recently joined our Synod. (A native of Thessalonica, Father Ioannes will be moving to Toronto, Canada in a few months, God willing, to serve in our Holy Synod's Greek Church of Sts. Raphael, Nicholas, and Irene.) Several of our distinguished chanters also contributed to the celebration.



The Ordination profoundly moved the large congregation, and first and foremost Father Nikolaos' family—his pious wife, Presbytera Irene, and his three small children—and his relatives, friends, and acquaintances.

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Father Nikolaos read the following address with deep compunction:

Our Most Reverend Father, Metropolitan Cyprian, absent in body on account of illness, but present in spirit, your blessing!

Your Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methone, your blessing! Please accept my *metanoia* and my gratitude.

Reverend Fathers, your blessing! May your love grant me strength.

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, biological and spiritual relatives, both present and absent, I thank you and ask for your prayers!

At this great spiritual turning-point in my life, the only words I can utter are “forgive me” and “thank you.” O Christ my God, I am devoid even of innermost thoughts regarding the magnitude of Thy love for mankind and of Thy wondrous Providence on behalf of my unworthiness. Being unable to discern or to say even the slightest thing, I acquiesce in the unfolding of Thy Holy Will, through Thy holy servants, and especially through Bishop Ambrose, who personally attended to the matter of my Ordination in every way. Through the collective assurances that I have received from God, the Holy Synod, our spiritual Father, Metropolitan Cyprian, and the faithful this great miracle has been accomplished in me today.

As I behold the loftiness of the Priesthood and the depth of my weakness, I quail. I take courage in your prayers alone.

I derive joy from our Most Reverend Father's thought, which he re-



peatedly expressed, that the Church will be restored to health by bringing forth laborers for the harvest from our midst. In this I find prayerful consolation and hope.

Pray that my new ministry be delineated by holy obedience and, by extension, a holy accord. From the sermons of our Most Reverend Father and the teachings of His Grace and of the Fathers, I have gleaned that he who is good at obedience will do well in everything. I am confident, and I pray, that such will be the case in my Priestly duties. Keep me in your prayers! Amen.

Please allow me to express my particular thanks to my spouse—henceforth my Presbytera—my children, my much-revered parents, and, in general, to all of my relatives according to the flesh.

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After the Divine Liturgy, the clergy and faithful were served refreshments in the Church's courtyard, followed later by a festal *agape* meal in the banquet hall of a local hotel.

Father Nikolaos Matsoulis was born in Kozane, in 1967, and raised in Ptolemaïs, where he completed his secondary education. After graduating from the Merchant Marine School in Mechaniona, Thessalonica, he fulfilled his military service in the Navy. He then worked as an employee and merchant in the private sector. Around ten years ago, he married Irene Tsiopstia, the daughter of Mr. Zeses Tsiopstias, a pious member of the All Saints parish, and the couple now has three charming young children. Since then, he has been conscientiously involved in the



ecclesiastical life of our parish in Ptolemaïs, where he served as President of the Church council, being distinguished for his manifest piety and irreproachable character.

He also recently graduated from the Higher School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE) in Ioannina, so that he will be able to earn a living by teaching mechanical engineering at a technical high school.

His ministry, not only in Ptolemaïs but also in northern Greece in general, is expected to help cover our pastoral needs, to the glory of God and the benefit of immortal souls.

