



**METROPOLIS OF  
OROPOS AND PHYLE  
HOLY SYNOD IN RESISTANCE**



**Third Clergy-Laity Gathering  
of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle**

**“The Church and Politics”**

**Thursday, November 15/28, 2013  
Holy Martyrs Gurias, Samonas, and Habib**

**O**n Thursday, November 15/28, 2013, by the Grace of God, the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle held its third regular Clergy-Laity Gathering, having as its main theme “The Church and Politics.”



**A. That** morning, His Grace, Bishop Klemes of Gardikion celebrated a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the Convent of St. Paraskeve, near Athens, assisted by two Priests, Fathers Angelos Mourlas and Athanasios Kanatsoles. His Grace delivered a brief sermon at the conclusion of the

Liturgy, at which nearly all those who were to participate in the Clergy-Laity Gathering were in attendance.

After a commemorative group photograph was taken outside of the Church, the convent Sisterhood, under its new Abbess, the Reverend Mother Justina, served breakfast in the refectory and reception hall.

**B. The** participants then drove to the Spiritual Center kindly put at their disposal through the assistance of Mayor Demetrios Bouraïmes of the Municipality of Phyle.

Around 9:30 a.m., the participants took their preassigned seats in the



hall, which had been specially prepared for the event. They were joined by a number of other interested observers, since the gathering was open to all.

His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle opened the gathering with prayer, assisted by a Byzantine choir, which, under the direction of Hieromonk Dionysios Hagiokypriantes, chanted hymns of doxology. His Eminence then read a special prayer for the occasion.



His Eminence and His Grace, Bishop Klemes of Gardikion took their seats on the dais, and the latter carried out an attendance check of the nearly fifty clergy, monastics, and lay representatives. The two Hierarchs acted as representatives of our missionary communities abroad that are directly dependent on the Metropolis.

Bishop Cyprian expressed his gratitude to those in attendance, and especially to the representatives of the local government who were present.

Following this, Bishop Klemes read messages of greetings to the gathering from His Eminence, Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna, Their



Eminences, Bishops Michael of Nora and Silvano of Luni, and Their Graces, Bishops Ambrose of Methone (who was at the time on a pastoral visit to Australia) and Johannes of Makarioupolis, as well as from our communities in Georgia, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

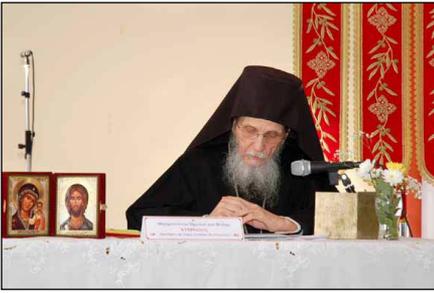
**C. Bishop Klemes** then read the gathering's first address, entitled: **“The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul Vis-à-Vis Pagan Authorities.”**

In the ensuing discussion, the subjects of the enduring relevance of the foundational attitude of the Church toward the State, of ways in which members of the Church might actively oppose arbitrary measures on the part of the State, and of the contemporary abolishment of Sunday as a day of rest from work, were explored in greater depth.

**D. Metropolitan Cyprian** then read the gathering's second address, entitled: **“The Church and Politics: A Perennial Challenge.”**

In the lively and interesting discussion that followed, questions were answered regarding, *inter alia*, the formation of a healthy political consciousness among Christians, the shared responsibility of everyone for the course of public affairs, and the dangers of partisanship. Members of





the local government joined in the discussion, which dealt in an enlightening way with the true meaning of politics and its spiritual dimensions, insofar as politics deals with man and his needs, but also, to a certain extent, with his spiritual character and formation.

**E. After** 1 p.m., there was an intermission during which fasting food was served in the hall, on this, the first day of the Nativity Fast.

**F. Around** 2 p.m., the Clergy-Laity Gathering resumed work. To begin with, Metropolitan Cyprian answered some written questions that had been left on the dais by participants regarding what had been discussed during the first half of the gathering.



**G. The** third address, “**The Progress of the Dialogue of our Holy Synod with the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece,**” by Bishop Klemes, followed. For three quarters of an hour, His Grace discussed the history, development, and fluctuations of the official dialogue and the sanguine stage at which it has arrived of late. His Grace also discussed related factors, which, in his opinion, must be taken into careful consideration in order to appreciate the importance of the dialogue and the need for its successful outcome.

For his part, Metropolitan Cyprian underscored the spiritual and charismatic dimensions of this sacred undertaking. Three Priests, who are members of our Synod’s committee in the Dialogue—Archimandrite Glykerios Hagiokyprianites and the Reverend Fathers Angelos

Mourlas and Jiří Ján—also commented on their positive experience and appraisal of the dialogue.

The subject was deemed satisfactorily covered, and none of the participants at the gathering expressed any objections.

**H. Mr.** Christos Katsoudas, treasurer of the Synodal Fund for the Needy, read his “Report of the Second Year of the Synodal Fund for the Needy and the Prospects Thereof,” in which he emphasized its existing needs, its difficulties in collecting the necessary resources, and the blessing and benefit derived from almsgiving by those with the ability to do so.



**I. Given** the late hour, three presentations—regarding social welfare work, parish activities, and the pastoral dimensions of Iconography—were shelved at the suggestion of Metropolitan Cyprian, who set forth, in conclusion, two timely matters for the better organization of our pastoral work: the securing of a special venue for this purpose and the necessity of temporarily suspending certain activities, such as the customary procession on the Feast of the Theophany, owing to the current economic crisis, so that funds can be set aside for the poor. This second proposal generated a good deal of discussion as to the desired equilibrium in the priorities of our work and of our witness. It was acknowledged that this sensitive subject needs further elaboration, since opinions are divided.

Following the concluding prayers, our third regular Clergy-Laity Gathering completed its work late in the afternoon. A special memento was handed out, along with other material, to the participants.

- This gathering was marked by its originality—one might even say boldness—especially in Part I. It gave information with regard to our Synod’s ecclesiastical affairs and needs, and also generated discussion and reflection with regard to the priorities of our multifarious work. This was yet another blessed opportunity for fellowship, in a spirit of sobriety, vitality, resolution, and hope, to the glory of God!

