



“For the Edification of the Church”

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The Inauguration of the Offices of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle

On Saturday, September 14, 2014 (Old Style), the Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious Cross, a ceremony took place for the inauguration of the new offices of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle and of the St. Cyprian Orthodox Men’s Guild, which are located in the Municipality of Phyle, Greece.



These joint offices—which are bright, suitably arranged with low partitions dividing the various services, and furnished with simplicity, functionality, and a certain dignity—

will serve as a workplace for our Holy Metropolis, but also, more generally, as a place of witness to the local community, for the promotion and accomplishment of the ministrations and visions of our Holy Metropolis.

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Attending the inauguration were Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, His Grace, Bishop Klemes of Gardikion, Archimandrite Theodosios (Abbot of the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina) with members of his Brotherhood, and also the Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Phyle, Mr. Spyridon Brebos, with his coworkers, quite

His Eminence, Metropolitan





a few representatives of other public welfare institutions, and a dozen government officials.

The members of the St. Philaret the Merciful Orthodox Women's Guild, with its President, Mrs. Eirene Archontoule, assisted in welcoming and attending to

those who had come for the ceremony.

Metropolitan Cyprian celebrated the service of the Small Blessing of the Waters "On the Occasion of the Inception of an Ecclesiastical Ministry," whereupon he also read a special prayer for the mission of our Metropolis' offices.

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After the Blessing of the Waters, the President of the St. Cyprian Guild, Mr. Andreas Kouneles, welcomed the attendees and expressed his gratitude to the friends of the Guild and to the local government for their support.

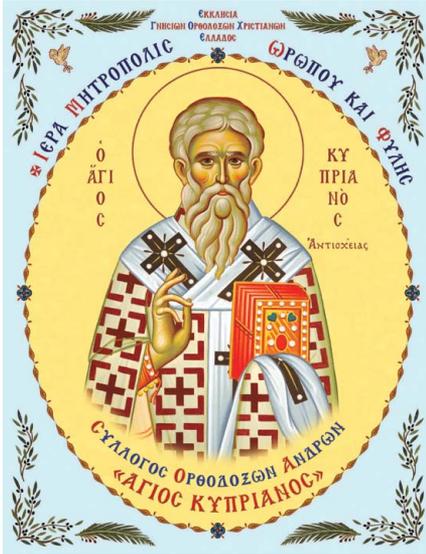
Metropolitan Cyprian then delivered an address in which he spoke about the Ministry of genuine Shepherds, through which ministry, with "vision and hope," "the living and vivifying presence of Orthodoxy" is shown forth "for the awakening of the ecclesiastical and national self-understanding and the re-evangelization and re-catechism" of our people.

The final speaker was Mr. Demetrios Kourakos, the administrative and economic advisor for our Metropolis, who pithily and inspiringly described his work in organizing the structures of our Metropolis and also the spirit of his coöperation with our Most Reverend Metropolitan.

At the conclusion of his speech, all those present joined together in gratitude, fervently wishing "to our Father and *Despota*, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian, of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle, Many Years!"



At the end of the evening, everyone was offered refreshments and a beautiful memento.



Address by Demetrios Kourakos, Administrative and Economic Advisor to our Metropolis

Your Eminence, Metropolitan of Oropos and Phyle, my *Despota*;
Venerable Fathers;
Venerable Mothers;
Honorable Municipal Officials;
Ladies and Gentlemen;
My Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In the fortieth year of my scholarly career, having placed myself under the *Omophorion* of our Most Reverend Metropolitan, I was granted the greatest honor of being entrusted with the administrative and economic reorganization of the social, philanthropic, and economic structures of the corporate, monastic and parochial entities of our Holy Metropolis.



The drafting of a law recognizing the equal rights of the religious communities of Greece was at that time under discussion.

This is the law that, having been discussed and approved in its entirety by a special committee of the Greek Parliament, was turned over to the Plenum for ratification, and will, within the next few days, be made a state law.

It was a great challenge; it is not every day that a Metropolis is constituted.

I imagined that a great deal of work lay ahead of us. I did not let the size of it concern me. And, with the blessing of our *Despota*, we began.

Twenty-four hours a day, we occupied ourselves with an in-depth reorganization of the existing economic structures and entities.

We worked in tandem with important organizations, such as the Greek Red Cross—of which I have the honor of being a member—and [the volunteer program] “PRO.T.E.K.T.A” [“protect oneself and others”], for the protection of the homeless, and also in coöperation and communication with the German Institute for Economic Research, through the Universities of Essen and Bonn.

In all of this, I was not alone. I have had the full coöperation of the two Presidents of our Metropolis’ philanthropic guilds, Mrs. Eirene Archontoule and Mr. Andreas Kouneles.

Mrs. Archontoule, the backbone of the Metropolis’ social work, is a consummate coworker and source of encouragement in times of fatigue. “Don’t stop,” she would tell me—and continues to tell me—“the prayers of our *Despota* will give you strength.” She knew what she was talking about. I was just a novice and she was right.

As for Andreas Kouneles and his disciplined and dedicated workers from the St. Cyprian Guild, whatever I asked of them, their answer was: “*Na einai evlogemeno*. May it be blessed.”

At this point, I must also make special mention of the blessed, harmonious, and complete coöperation between myself and His Grace, Bishop Chrysostomos of Christianoupolis, the Steward of the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, whose experience and skills I greatly appreciate in our work together.

I spoke about fatigue. You know, His Eminence and I are exactly the same age. We work twenty-four hours at a time, and whereas I become exhausted, *he* works with the energy of an adolescent. You see, I use the techniques of my field of knowledge, but he draws strength from the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Permit me to say that he has a better work

environment....

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I could tell you impressive numbers and figures:

The 900 parcels of food distributed every month to our fellow human beings who are in straitened circumstances.

The daily distribution of ready-cooked meals and bags of bread to fifty people by the St. Philaret Guild.

The 11,000 meals that will be provided during the next school year for the Remedial Instruction School run by the Red Cross of Piraeus.

The tons of fresh fruit and vegetables that we have now begun to provide.

The one hundred bags of school supplies we handed out to needy students, the special allocations of hundreds of kilos of meat and fish that are already being distributed, the homeless who are given shelter, the assortment of clothing we have ready for distribution....

I would primarily like to stress, however, that all of this is being done with the full coöperation and assistance of the local authorities, and in particular with the Mayor, Mr. Pappas, the Deputy Mayor, Mr. Brebos, and the President of the District of Phyle, Mr. Liakos, with all of whom we are coöperating in order to provide relief for our fellow citizens. We have, moreover, decided to proceed in common with social programs for philanthropy and culture, laying claim to what we are due from the special departments of the Greek government and the European Union.

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At this point, Holy Fathers, ladies and gentlemen, please allow me to confess something.

When we began this effort, I asked our Metropolitan: “Your Eminence, what is our goal? What is our vision?”

“Our goal,” he replied, with special emphasis, “is for us always to be an open embrace for our neighbor, regardless of nationality, race, or religion. Our enemy is pain, hunger, poverty, sickness, and despair.”

“Your Eminence,” I told him, “we will do what is humanly possible.”

“No,” he replied, with the same emphasis. “Our goal is the impossible. As for us, we will do our work well, and our Holy God, through the intercessions of our Patron Saints and of Metropolitan Cyprian of blessed memory, will work the miracle, because God is Love. That is our vision: love.”

Ladies and Gentlemen, my brothers and sisters in Christ:

Trusting that I am speaking for everyone, allow me to wish:

To our Father and *Despota*,
His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian,
of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle,
Polla ta ete! Many Years!

