



The Patronal Feast of the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina Phyle, Athens October 2, 2015 (Old Style)

By the Grace of our Lord, the Patronal Feast of the Holy and glorious Martyrs Cyprian and Justina was celebrated again this year with exceptional order and splendor at the Monastery dedicated to these Saints in Phyle, Athens, the headquarters of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle, belonging to the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece.

The fair and balmy weather that prevailed during the two-day festivities contributed to the spiritual beauty of the Feast as a true gift of God.

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On the afternoon of Wednesday, October 1/14, 2015, Great Vespers was celebrated, with His Eminence, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attica and Boiotia presiding, at the invitation of the Ruling Hierarch, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, whose Nameday it was. Officiating together with them were Their Graces, Bishop Sofronie of Suceava, Bishop Glicherie of Iași, and Bishop Dionisie of Galați (from the True Orthodox Church of Romania, under His Eminence, Metropolitan Vlasie); His Grace, Bishop Kirill of Voronezh (from the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, under His Eminence, Metropolitan





Agafangel); and Their Graces, Bishop Photios of Marathon, Bishop Ambrose of Methone, Bishop Michael of Nora (from Sardinia), and Bishop Klemes of Gardikion.

A large number of clergy, including some from abroad (Romania, Russia, and Italy), as well as a large multitude of monks, nuns, and pious faithful were in prayerful attendance at this vesperal glorification of God.

The monastery choir, under the direction of Hieromonk Father Dionysios Hagiokyprianites, a musicologist, chanted superbly and in a festal style, as befits such occasions.

A perceptible atmosphere of prayerful stillness and compunction held sway among the large congregation.

- Before the Dismissal, His Eminence, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attica and Boiotia conveyed Nameday greetings to Metropolitan Cyprian and made laudatory remarks about the founder of this historic monastery, Metropolitan Cyprian of blessed memory (†May 17, 2013). He then delivered a festal homily in which, referring to the Life of the Saints being honored, he focused on the *free choice* they made to renounce idolatry and the *spiritual steadfastness* they showed thereafter, by which they elicited the special Grace of God to achieve perfection by martyrdom. Their commemoration calls upon each of us to “come to ourselves” and, by our own free choice, to follow with consistency in the footsteps of Christ. The power of repentance is the response to the dispiriting and multiform dead-end faced by contemporary societies. In this power resides the hope-bearing message of the Church of Christ.



On the morning of Thursday, October 2/15, 2015, Matins for the Feast was served, followed by a festal Divine Liturgy concelebrated by a multitude of Hierarchs.



The principal celebrant was His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos, and taking part were Their Eminences, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, Metropolitan Gerontios of Piræus and Salamis, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attica and Boiotia, Their Graces, Bishop Sofronie of Suceava, Bishop Glicherie of Iași, Bishop Dionisie of Galați (from Romania), His Grace, Bishop Kirill of Voronezh (from Russia), Their Graces, Bishop Gregory of Christianoupolis, Bishop Photios of Marathon, and Bishop Ambrose of Methone, Bishop Michael of Nora (from Sardinia), and Bishop Klemes of Gardikion. Dozens of Priests and Deacons joined the Hierarchs in celebrating the Liturgy.

A large throng of faithful and many dignitaries filled the large Church, spilling out into the courtyard and praying with order and stillness.

• **Before** Holy Communion, His Grace, Bishop Gregory of Christianoupolis preached a sermon in which he touched on many points of great importance. Basing his words on the Life of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, and in particular the moment of their repentance, His Grace spoke about the marks of genuine self-knowledge and genuine repentance: only in fidelity to Patristic teaching and the Tradition of our



Church can a person come to understand his “self-image” in Christ, that is, his sinfulness, and to act with “self-assurance” in Christ, that is, with the steadfast strength that the Grace of God gives to those who genuinely repent.

With exemplary order and compunction, very many of the faithful communed from four Chalices, following the preparation set forth by the Tradition of our Church and in accordance with the exhortation of our Ruling Metropolitan.

After the Dismissal, Archbishop Kallinikos offered his greetings and blessings to the faithful who were celebrating the Feast, to Metropolitan Cyprian on the occasion of his Nameday, and to the Abbot of the Monastery, Archimandrite Father Theodosios and his Brotherhood. Metropolitan Cyprian in turn thanked His Beatitude and those participating in the Feast Day. In addition, Bishop Klemes expressed his thanks to the concelebrating Hierarchs.

There followed the customary procession of the Holy Icon and a portion of the Holy Relics of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, along with the Blessing of the Loaves, which was celebrated in front of the Church, in the midst of the congregation of the people of God, praying together in gladness of spirit.





Thereafter, at a reception in the monastery's large reception hall, Their Graces, Bishop Michael of Nora, Bishop Kirill of Voronezh, and, on behalf of the Romanians, Bishop Dionisie of Galați expressed their salutations, all refer-

ring to the blessing and joy in Christ of the Union and their prayerful hope that others will join us in this Union, that the *Family of Christ* might bear a unified witness.

In the monastery cloister, the customary festal meal was served to the Hierarchs, the clergy, and many of the male pilgrims.

The Fathers took care to distribute mementos and refreshments to all who had come to this place of pilgrimage, as dictated by monastic hospitality.

Throughout the course of the day, until late in the evening, a stream of pilgrims came to the monastery to render honor and thanksgiving to our Saints.

This was truly a particularly blessed Feast Day, characterized by inter-Orthodox love and unity, to the glory of God and our Holy Protectors, Sts. Cyprian and Justina, and also for the benefit of the innumerable pious pilgrims.

Glory to God for all things! Holy Trinity, glory to Thee!

