

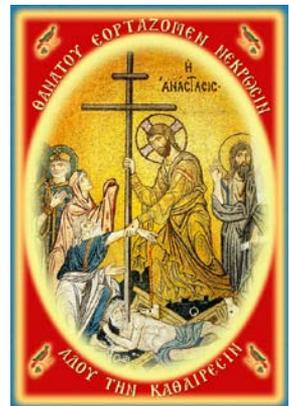
A new area of pastoral and social activity
of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle

The Inauguration of the Cultural Workshop “The All-Hymned Mother” and Paschal Festivities

in Phyle, Attica

Saturday of Renewal Week, April 24, 2016 (Old Style)

By the Grace of our Resurrected Lord, the especially palpable blessing of His All-Hymned Mother, and the prayers of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, a ceremony took place for the inauguration of our Metropolis’ new Cultural Workshop, “The All-Hymned Mother,” on a beautiful spring day. A great crowd of faithful attended the event, which was combined with Paschal festivities.



Successful beyond all expectations, this open-air presentation was organized in close cooperation by our Metropolis’ catechetical classes, the “Hellenic Orthodox Heritage” chorus and instrument ensemble, the Iconography Workshop, and an association of volunteers.

The event opened with the customary Small Blessing of the Waters and special prayers for the inauguration of an institution for social services, in the presence of the Mayor of Phyle,



Mr. Chrestos Pappous; the Deputy Mayor, Mr. Spyridon Brebos; the President of the Municipality of Phyle, Ms. Elene Liakou; Municipal Councillor, Mr. Stylianos Nikas; the Mayor's coworker, Mr. Ioannes Liakos, and his secretary, Ms. Hypapante Marazaki. The Board of Directors of the St. Philaret the Merciful Orthodox Women's Guild was also in attendance.



The officials were then given a tour of the workshop's suitably arranged facilities, which will function as a center for various cultural activities, primarily for the sake of providing support and motivation for our children and young peo-

ple in their difficult struggle against the corrupting influences of the society around them, which is rife with dangers and challenges of various kinds.

The Mayor of Phyle, Mr. Pappous, then spoke a few words of



greeting and pledged to continue supporting the multifarious works of our Holy Metropolis, to which he referred with genuine admiration.

Our Chief Shepherd expressed his gratitude to the municipal



authorities for granting use of the property, and exhorted those in attendance to prove themselves grateful and worthy of this gift by putting it to the best possible use.



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The Iconography Workshop then opened the Paschal presentation with a few words about the gifts of our Resurrected Christ—above all, that of joy—and the ways in which these gifts are depicted in our iconographic tradition.

Members of the workshop had spent the previous two days painting the landscape of the Resurrection in accordance with Orthodox iconographic tradition—the Life-giving Sepulchre and the gifts of the Resurrection from on high—as a backdrop for the theatrical sketch that followed.



The Sunday school teachers Penelope Pagone and Ma-

ria Kyriakidou then led their young students in a presentation of paschal recitations and songs.

The highlight of the event was the theatrical sketch, “The





Myrrh-bearing Women and the Glad Tidings of the Resurrection,” splendidly performed by the adolescent group, which presented the astonishing moment of the announcement of the perennial and universal message of

redemption by the Archangel: “Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here...”

The “Hellenic Orthodox Heritage” chorus and instrumental ensemble then took the stage, and greatly contributed to the gladsome and resurrectorial character of the event



with superbly rendered seasonal folk songs, which touched the hearts of all those present, who, “with the ranks of them that love and keep this festival,” celebrated “the saving Pascha of God.”

The adolescents spontaneously led the dance before the scene of the Empty Tomb, to the glory of our Risen Lord, just as the people of Israel once did following their *pass-over* (“Pascha” in Hebrew) through the Red Sea, “celebrating the death of death, the destruction of Hades, the beginning of an everlasting life, and with leaps of joy they praised the Cause thereof.”



The festivities included an outdoor meal and the Paschaltide custom of cracking red eggs, which always spreads joy to all, and especially to small children.



The abundant raffle prizes, and also the mementoes (Icon prints of the All-Hymned Theotokos, the special Patron of the Cultural Work-



shop) distributed as a blessing by His Eminence, were not only another source of good cheer, but also gave the children the opportunity to approach their spiritual Father and taste of his paternal affection and love, amidst which this historic event was brought to a conclusion, to the glory of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and in honor of the All-Hymned Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. Amen!

