



“For the Edification of the Church”

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“I was in prison and ye came unto Me” (St. Matthew 25:36)

Pilgrimage to the Detention Center of Amphissa

† First Saturday of the Dormition Fast, August 7/20, 2016



At the prompting of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, this year the St. Philaret the Merciful Orthodox Women’s Guild organized a visit to a detention center for the first time during the Dormition Fast,

since fasting without acts of charity is meaningless in the tradition of the Orthodox Church.

On the first Saturday of the Fast, August 7, 2016 (Old Style, commemoration of the Holy Monk-Martyr Dometios), with the blessing, participation, and guidance of Metropolitan Cyprian, we made our ninth pilgrimage to visit 160 inmates at the Amphissa Detention Center.



The inmates were each given a care package containing items to meet their basic and personal needs, which were kindly donated to the Guild by its various sponsors, private individuals, and department stores.

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As always, His Eminence saw to it that the bus ride to the de-



tention center was spent in a spiritually profitable way, with prayers, chanting, and the reading and discussion of various edifying texts, with particular emphasis on the dignity of women.

The pilgrims were each given an aesthetically appealing memento containing passages from the homilies of St. John Chrysostomos on blessed almsgiving.

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Our meetings with the facility's personnel and our incarcerated brothers—first in the courtyard and then in the visiting area—took place in an especially heartfelt and cordial atmosphere.

For this, we have in large part to thank the many members of the beloved Routse family, who once again entertained our brothers with beautiful melodies and folk songs. Visitors and inmates were united as they clapped along in time to the music.



His Eminence then offered the spiritual refreshment of words of consolation and encouragement to our incarcerated brothers, as well as his paternal embrace, to which they responded with warmth and emotion.



In the visiting area, everyone was given a letter (in Greek, English, and Arabic), small Icon prints, Crosses, and prayer ropes, and also bags containing basic necessities.

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On our return journey, we stopped at the Monastery of Ho-



sios Loukas, where we had the opportunity to venerate the relics and tomb of the Holy Ascetic, to marvel at the unparalleled spiritual magnificence of the mosaics in the large Church, and to savor the wondrous beauty of the monastery's surroundings.

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We arrived home, edified yet again by this ministry of love bound up with the period of the Fast, and with feelings of gratitude to our Lord and of responsibility towards our fellow men.

May our All-Merciful Lord grant us merciful hearts, prayerful compassion, and readiness to come to the aid of our suffering brothers and sisters in a spirit of self-sacrifice, repentance, and thanksgiving.

