



## The Patronal Feast of the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Phyle, Athens October 2, 2023 (Old Style)



**T**he Feast Day of our beloved Holy Martyrs Cyprian and Justina fell on a Sunday this year, thereby gracing the celebration at the monastery dedicated to them in Phyle, Athens with especial resurrectional joy.

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**On the afternoon** of Saturday, October 1/14, 2023, Great Vespers was chanted in the Cathedral, with His Eminence, Bishop Auxentios of Etna and Portland presiding, at the invitation of the Ruling Hierarch, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, whose Nameday it was.

**Officiating** together with Metropolitan Cyprian were Their Eminences, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attica and Boiotia, Metropolitan Klemes of Larisa and Platamon, Metropolitan Ambrose of Methone, and His Grace, Bishop Serafim of Sozopolis, (representing His Eminence, Metropolitan Photii of Triaditza, of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Bulgaria).

**A** large throng of pilgrims, monks, and nuns were in prayerful attendance.

**The** monastery choir, under the direction of Hieromonk Father Dionysios Hagiokyprianites in the right choir and Protopsaltis Nikolaos Polychronos (from Thessalonica) in the left choir, chanted with festal solemnity.

**Before** the dismissal, His Eminence, Bishop Auxentios delivered





a profound festal homily in English, which was translated into Greek by Metropolitan Ambrose. Bishop Auxentios concluded with a heart-felt and timely prayer: “May our beloved and rightly honored Saints Cyprian and Justina deliver each and every one of us from the spirit possessing and tormenting this ‘evil generation.’ May they renew an upright and reasonable spirit within us, helping us to repent and return to the path our Lord Himself walked and set before us, that we might heed His counsel and resist the passionate promptings of our fallen nature. And so let us meekly forbear and submit to one another, preserving peace and harmony, and fleeing strife. In sacrificial love for our brother, whether he be friend or foe, let us be merciful.”

The Grace-filled reliquary containing portions of the Relics of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, which is normally kept in the monastery cloister, was brought to the Cathedral so that throughout Vespers, and again the following day, the faithful had the opportunity to venerate them.

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**On Sunday** morning, October 2/15, 2023, Orthros for the Resurrection and the Martyrs was celebrated, followed by the festal Hierarchical Divine Liturgy.

The Ruling Hierarchy, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian was the principal celebrant, as His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos was unable to attend, owing to ill-health.



Concelebrating were Their Eminences, Metropolitan Gerontios of Piræus and Salamis, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attica and Boiotia, Metropolitan Photios of Demetrias, Metropolitan Klemes of Larisa and Platamon, Metropolitan Ambrose of



Methone, and Their Graces, Bishop Auxentios of Etna and Portland and Bishop Serafim of Sozopolis. Priests and Deacons belonging to our Church also participated.

Many representatives of the local government honored the celebration with their presence, and a large throng of pious faithful filled the large Church and the courtyard.

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During the communion of the clergy, Metropolitan Cyprian delivered a homily on the powerful message of the Gospel passage of the day: *“Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping nothing again... Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”*



His Eminence stressed that these commandments, as well as other evangelical injunctions, are humanly impossible to accomplish.

The New Commandment of love is not an innovation in itself. What is new is that Christ, by His Incarnate Economy, gave us the ability to accomplish the Commandments. How? By granting Himself to us in His Church, by means of the Holy Mysteries and prayer.

He assured us that, “He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him” (St. John 6:56), and regarding those who aspire to the likeness of God: “We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him” (St. John 14:23).

Thus everything that was impossible for us becomes possible by the Grace of Him Who abides in us, as the Holy Apostle Paul describes: “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13); “nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20).

By His Incarnation, our Lord granted us Himself, founded the Church, which is His Body —of which all of us who were baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and who confess the faith and participate in the Holy Mysteries, are members—and enabled us by His Grace to keep the Commandments.

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With compunction and good order, many of the pious faithful partook of Holy Communion.

After the Dismissal, Metropolitan Gerontios extended Name-day greetings to our Most Reverend Shepherd on behalf of Archbishop Kallinikos and the Holy Synod, that he may for many years to come shepherd the flock entrusted to him, with health, strength, and patience.

Metropolitan Cyprian then thanked the clergy, lay people, and representatives of the local government in attendance, exhorting everyone to cultivate the spirit of evangelical love and selfless cooperation for the edification of our people.

There followed the customary procession of the Holy Icon and the Relics of the Saints, after which the Blessing of the Loaves was celebrated in the monastery courtyard next to the Church.

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**At the ensuing reception** in the monastery’s guest hall, brief festal greetings were offered by Metropolitans Photios and Kl-





emes and Bishops Auxentios and Seraphim, as well as by the Mayor of Phyle, Mr. Christos Pappous and the Deputy Mayor of Volos, Mr. Konstantinos Loulis, who praised the witness to the faith and genuine Christian ethos of both of the Hierarchs and the Fathers of the monastery.

**O**ur Most Reverend Shepherd reminisced fondly about the ever-memorable Founder and first Abbot of the monastery, Metropolitan Cyprian of blessed memory, and thanked all those present, once again expressing the wish that their cooperation and love in Christ be preserved and strengthened in the face of the great challenges facing us at a national, global, social, and ecclesiastical level.



**I**n the monastery cloister, the customary festal monastic meal was served to the Hierarchs, clergy, and those who helped in the preparations for the feast day, while mementos and refreshments were distributed to the rest of the pilgrims.

**C**rowds of faithful continued to come to the monastery until the evening, so as to venerate the Holy Relics and receive the blessing and grace of the Saints.

**G**lory and thanksgiving to our munificent Lord, Who is wondrous in His Saints!

