



## “For the Edification of the Church”

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

## Pilgrimage and Visit to the Detention Center of Amphissa December 14, 2025 (Old Style)

**O**n Saturday, December 14, 2025 , with the blessing, guidance, and participation of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, the St. Philaret the Merciful Orthodox Women’s Guild made its twenty-third visit to the Detention Center of Amphissa.



It was an exceptional blessing and experience, one that left a deep impression on the hearts of all who took part.

Volunteers of the St. Philaret the Merciful Guild, together with Members of the Volunteer Association of our Holy Metropolis, worked together to gather and package the essential personal-care items that private individuals and stores had donated to the Guild, for distribution to our Imprisoned Brothers—180 in number, as the Social Worker had informed the Board.

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**B**y the grace of God, the trip took place without delay, despite earlier warnings about possible obstacles along the way. The weather, rainy at the outset, cleared in Boeotia and allowed the planned visits to proceed smoothly.

**A**fter the customary prayer program for these pilgrimages, Metropolitan Cyprian made use of the travel time with psalmody and the reading of a short text on what a clergyman truly is. The Pilgrims received a memento containing a passage from a homily



by St. Gregory the Theologian entitled “On Love for the Poor.”

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**The Chief Warden** welcomed our Most Reverend Shepherd and the rest of the fifty-member group with his characteristic warmth, and led them to the

inner courtyard of the facility, where our imprisoned brothers had gathered.

**Metropolitan Cyprian** greeted our brothers, expressing his hope that none of them would still be there at our next visit. He encouraged them to make good use of this time of trial with prayer, self-examination, and patience, so that when the time comes for them to be released, they may return to society with an increased sense of responsibility and eagerness to contribute.

**Afterward**, our small family ensemble, together with other children, sang songs from our folk Tradition with their pure voices, accompanied by the lyra, bringing joy and spiritual refreshment to the prisoners, staff, and visitors.

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**Everyone** then went to the visiting area. There, our Most Reverend Shepherd met personally with each of our incarcerated brethren, offering them the prepared gift bags (items of basic necessity) together with his fatherly embrace and his blessings. The children tirelessly continued singing traditional songs, taking turns with the hymnody of the Nuns. Our incarcerated brethren responded with smiles, gratitude, and best wishes for the holy Days.

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**F**ollowing this blessed visit, His Eminence and the pilgrimage group went on to the historic Holy Monastery of St. Luke the Stylite, where the Saint spent the last seven years of his ascetic life (946–953).

**T**he construction of the first church, dedicated to St. Barbara, began while the Saint was still alive and was completed after his repose. The Saint was buried beneath the floor of his cell, over which the monks built a cruciform structure in 955.

**A**t the beginning of the eleventh century, the new magnificent Katholikon was erected, where the Translation of the Saint's holy Relic took place in 1011.

**D**uring the years of the Turkish occupation, as well as in the Revolution of 1821, the monastery, because of its location, often became a center of attacks and clashes, but also a base and refuge for *armatoloi* (Christian militia under Ottoman rule), *klephts* (resistance fighters who lived outside Ottoman control), and, more generally, the fighters of the Revolution.



**T**here, in the early hours of March 27, 1821, after Orthros, Bishop Isaias of Salona formally proclaimed the Beginning of the Struggle. He raised the banner of the Revolution for Roumeli (Central Greece), and one by one the future fighters kissed his hand. On April 23, he became the first Bishop to fall in battle during the Greek Revolution.



**T**he contribution of the Monastery also extended to the generous provision of supplies, chiefly food, to both fighters and local inhabitants

● **T**he group of pilgrims had the blessing of venerating the

Holy Relic of St. Luke. They then presented to him their petitions for peace and salvation and took in the elevating majesty of the mosaics and the other adornments of the *Katholikon*.

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**O**n the return journey, the group read together an account of the miraculous healing of a sick man during the veneration of the flowers of the *Epitaphios*. Taking this narrative as his point of departure, our Most Reverend Shepherd emphasized with how much reverence and care we must safeguard everything that has been used for sacred purposes. Afterwards, Resurrectional Vespers was chanted.

**T**he pilgrims returned safely to the place from which they had set out, giving thanks to our Lord for the many blessings of this twofold pilgrimage.

