

## Theophany and the Great Blessing of Waters at San Diego Parish

On the weekend of the Feast of Theophany, 2009, Archbishop Chrysostomos and Bishop Auxentios travelled to our Exarchate parish of Sts. Seraphim of Sarov and St. John of Kronstadt, in San Diego, CA, where they were hosted by the parish. On the Sunday before Theophany, His Grace, Bishop Auxentios celebrated the Divine Liturgy, the Blessing of Waters, and the preparatory services for the Feast. He celebrated, as well, on Theophany itself.

During the Sunday Liturgy, Father Yakov Ferens, pastor of the parish, and Protodeacon George Skvor were both presented with a purple *kamilavka* (*kallymavchion*), in recognition of their many years of superb service to the Church. Father Yakov was also awarded a gold Cross. Since the parish follows the Slavic *typikon*, this honor was approved by the Holy Synod.

On the day of Theophany, following the Divine Liturgy, the parish was taken by bus to a local lake, where the Great Blessing of Waters took place. Archbishop Chrysostomos joined Bishop Auxentios and the faithful for the blessing, which the two Hierarchs conducted together. As on the previous day after Liturgy, the parish served a wonderful Agape meal, with Russian fare, following the blessing of the lake waters. (*See photographs of the activities below.*)

The two Bishops were joined by Abbess Elizabeth and one of her nuns, Mother Kypriane, from the Convent of St. Elizabeth in Etna, CA, who were also warmly welcomed by the parish. Matushka (Presbytera) Agnia, Father Yakov's wife, was in Greece with one of her sons—Matthew—for the magnificent annual celebration of Theophany at



the port city of Oropos.

The visiting Bishops and nuns were shown inimitable hospitality by the parish and were hosted by Alexis and Ekaterina Lukianov at their beautiful home in Rancho Santa Fé, near San Diego.

