

The Annual Patronal Feast of the Holy Metropolitan Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina

On Tuesday, October 2/15, 2013, the Holy Metropolitan Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Phyle, Athens, celebrated its Feast Day with splendor, by the Grace of God, and with the participation, as always, of a large throng of pious worshippers.

The celebration brought together clergy and laity from the capital city of Greece, Athens, and from various regions of the country, as well as from abroad.

In the afternoon of the eve of the Monastery Feast, His Grace, Bishop Klemes of Gardikion celebrated the customary Blessing of the Waters



in honor of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, and the sacred Relics of the Saints were set out for veneration.

Later on, at 7:00 p.m., Great Vespers was celebrated with ecclesiastical order and spiritual stateliness. His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, *Locum Tenens* of the Metropolitan See of Oropos and Phyle and Presiding President of the Holy Synod, presided, together with His Eminence, Bishop Photii of Triaditza, Chief Hierarch of our Sister Old Calendar Church of Bulgaria, along with Bishops Michael of Nora (from Cagliari, Sardinia); Silouan of Luni (from Pistoia, Italy); Chrysostomos of Christianoupolis; Auxentios of Photike (from Etna, California); Ambrose of Methone, and Klemes of Gardikion.

His Eminence, Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna (U.S.A.) and His Grace, Bishop Johannes of Makarioupolis (Sweden) were unable to attend, for reasons of ill health.

Also present were many clergy—in addition to those from Greece—from Bulgaria, Sweden, Italy, England, Kenya, the Congo, Brazil, and Russia, monks and nuns, and multitudes of the faithful.

Two Priests, Father Alexander Sipakin from St. Petersburg, Russia, and Father Constantin Bussyguin from São Paulo, Brazil, represented the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, under His Eminence, Metropolitan Agafangel, who sent a message of festal greetings. The usual delegation from our Sister Old Calendar Church of Romania was absent on account of internal problems, as we were informed by His Eminence, Metropolitan Vlasie a few days before the Patronal Feast.



At the end of Vespers, Bishop Cyprian delivered a festal homily, drawing upon the marvellous example of the Holy Martyr Justina, the Godly-minded, concerning the true position and calling of Christian women.



• On Tuesday morning, the principal celebrant at the Festal Divine Liturgy was His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, who was observing his Nameday. The seven aforementioned Hierarchs concelebrated with him, and dozens of Priests, three Hierodeacons, and many Subdeacons also took part in the service.

Among the innumerable faithful were delegations from our monasteries, parishes, and communities in Greece and abroad.

During the communion of the clergy, Bishop Klemes delivered a festal sermon concerning, first of all, the sense of the spiritual presence, amid the joy of the Feast Day, of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian, who reposed only a few months ago, and the need for us to give him solace and gladden him. Bishop Klemes also spoke about how we should fulfill the spiritual longing of our souls with Christ, as did St. Justina, for our personal and common good, and not with the Devil, as the fearsome sorcerer Cyprian initially did before he turned to Christ and was reborn. The latter learned from experience, His Grace observed, that the Devil “lends”—and that at a very high “interest rate”—but does no



favors, whereas our Lord, in His self-sacrificing love for mankind, not only forgives all of the transgressions of His repentant children, but also gives a hundredfold in return by way of eternal life. Science and right reason, education and material prosperity and progress—such things do



not cover the entirety of man's needs. Rather, without the true God, they lead to inhumanity and utter catastrophe. His Grace stressed that it is essential that we existentially discover the meaning of life unto salvation,



and Sts. Cyprian and Justina are vivid examples for us in this regard, as well as wellsprings of Divine gifts to those seeking their consoling aid.

After the Dismissal at the Festal Divine Liturgy, at which the choir of the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina chanted superbly—as they did





also at Great Vespers—His Grace, Bishop Cyprian offered brief festal salutations, thanking the dignitaries who were present, and His Eminence, Bishop Photii read a message of greetings for the Feast in Greek.

The customary procession of the Holy Icon and the Holy Relics of Sts. Cyprian and Justina was then held, amid an atmosphere of compunction and spiritual gladness, and the Blessing of the Loaves was celebrated in front of the Cathedral.

Refreshments were provided in the monastery's large reception hall, where Father Theophylaktos, an Athonite Hieromonk, Bishop Michael



of Nora, Bishop Photii of Triaditza, Mr. Demetrios Bouraïmes, Mayor of Phyle, and Mr. Nicholas Kanteres, Member of Parliament for Attica, all offered greetings on the occasion of the Feast.

At the ensuing meal in the Trapeza, Bishop Silvano of Luni delivered a message of festal salutations.

- On Tuesday afternoon, after Vespers, the traditional Memorial Service for the founders of the monastery was celebrated by Bishop Klemes of Gardikion.

- Glory and thanksgiving are due to our Holy Triune God for the great gift of this blessed Feast of the Wonderworking Saints Cyprian

and Justina, which constitutes an event of spiritual and inter-Orthodox importance, and also a witness to anti-ecumenism.

