

## Visit to Holy Ascension Parish, Rochester, New York

On his return from the annual meeting of the Holy Synod in Greece and his visit to the Holy Land in October, His Grace, Bishop Auxentios made a four-day visit to the Church of the Holy Ascension in Rochester, NY, a parish of the American Exarchate of the Holy Synod in Resistance, on the first weekend of November (New Style) and two ensuing weekdays. He was joined in Rochester by His Eminence, Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna. On Saturday, the first day of their visit, the Bishops were treated to a wonderful meal hosted at the parish manse by the community's Priest, the Reverend Father Nicholas Chernjavsky, his wife, Matushka Christine, and their five children. The meal was followed by the Saturday evening Vigil of Vespers and Matins, according to the Slavic *typikon*.

On Sunday morning, His Grace, Bishop Auxentios served the Divine Liturgy with Father Nicholas, the physician-Priest Deacon Father Peter Bushunow, Father Anthony Gunin, a married Priest from our Sister Church, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, who serves the St. Nicholas Convent, also in upstate NY, several Subdeacons, and a host of attending altar servers. The services, in English and Slavonic, with some responses in Greek, were beautifully chanted by the parish choir, under the able direction of Dr. Adam Foley. His Eminence, Archbishop Chrysostomos, (*at right below*)



was in prayerful attendance and delivered the sermon, which centered on St. Gregory Palamas' habitual prayer for the enlightenment of his darkness and its importance in forming our spiritual efforts to live, struggle, theologize, and achieve union with Christ within His deifying Light. The faithful, a group of whom can be seen above (*at left*) in front of the *templon* (iconostasis), which is still under construction, then gathered for the *Agape* meal in the basement Church Hall.

After the *Agape* Meal, Father Nicholas welcomed the visiting Hierarchs and asked His Eminence, Archbishop Chrysostomos to speak with the parish about various matters concerning the Synod in resistance and its efforts to unite the anti-ecumenical Orthodox.



*Left to right, Mr. Alexander Soubotin, parish warden, the Hierarchs, Father Nicholas, and Father Anthony. On the wall behind the table, plans for a new addition to the Church building.*



*↑Lunch with the parish sisterhood on the Tuesday before the Bishops' departure. (The Archbishop is not visible in the photograph.)*



During their stay in Rochester, His Grace and His Eminence were provided accommodations in the elegant home of the parish Priest's mother and father, Sergij and Valeria Chernjavsky. (*See above, at right—left to right—Subdeacon Paul Daniels, who graciously provided transportation to the Bishops, Sergij Chernjavsky, Deacon Father Dr. Peter Bushunow, and the Hierarchs.*)

His Grace and His Eminence were also, during their stay, the lunch or dinner guests of Mrs. Larissa Dmohowski, mother of Deacon Father Peter; Father Peter and his wife, Diakonissa Melitza; Dr. and Mrs. Adam Foley; their hosts, Sergij and Valeria Chernjavsky; and the indefatigable parish Sisterhood.

The Hierarchs returned from their visit to Rochester with deep appreciation for the remarkable parish there, established by a community of cultured and educated Russian émigrés who, in the diaspora, have held to and shared their precious Orthodox Faith.