

The Annual Nameday Tribute

“Thanksgiving 2009”

“I Love, Therefore I Am”

On Sunday, October 5/18, 2009, the Brotherhood of the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Phyle, Attica, held the traditional “Thanksgiving” celebration that is organized annually in honor of the Nameday of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle on the Sunday following the monastery’s Patronal Feast.

Despite the fact that our much-revered Father was absent for the second consecutive year, on account of his continuing ill health, the tribute was held as usual (at the Novotel Convention Center in downtown Athens), since it provides an excellent opportunity for clergy and laypeople alike to gather together to demonstrate their love and respect for our ailing Archpastor, while simultaneously deriving spiritual benefit and Christian edification from the various presentations.



The rich and carefully-prepared program, which lasted nearly two hours (7-9 p.m.), centered on the theme of love, with a pertinent keynote address, Church hymns and folk songs, the offering of

a gift, and a short, but expressive and moving film.

The Hierarchs of our Holy Synod present in the large audience were His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, Acting President of the Holy



Synod, and the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Bishops Michael of Nora, Silvano of Luni, Chrysostomos of Christianoupolis (serving as Master of Ceremonies), Auxentios of Photike, Ambrose of Methone, and Klemes of Gardikion (main speaker). Also in attendance were many of our Holy Synod’s clergy, as well as monks, nuns, and hundreds of laypeople, among whom a number of dignitaries, most notably the Members of Parliament for Attica, Mr. Basileios Oikonomos and Mr. Nikolaos Kanteres.

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In Part I, the Byzantine Choir of the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina chanted the following hymns, aided in their superb rendition by chanters from our parish choir in Thessalonica:



- The *Apolytikion* of Sts.

Cyprian and Justina, in the Plagal of the First Tone; • verses from the Great Doxology, in the Fourth Tone (*larghetto*), by Petros the Peloponnesian; • selected verses from “Blessed is the man,” by Petros Lampadarios, abridged and embellished by Manuel *Protopsaltes*, in the Plagal of the Fourth Tone; • “In thee, O Full of Grace, all creation doth rejoice,” by Triantaphyllos Georgiades, arranged by Chrysanthos Theodosopoulos, in the Plagal of the Fourth Tone; • and “O Supraëssential Trinity,” a hymn of doxology and supplication, set to music by Monk Dositheos Katounakiotes, in the Plagal of the First Tone (with a prelude played on the *kanonaki*).

In Part II, His Grace, Bishop Klemes of Gardikion delivered the festal address entitled “I Love, Therefore I Am,” which eloquently and engagingly explored basic aspects of the Mystery of love.



The Master of Ceremonies then presented a gift in honor of Metropolitan Cyprian: a painting from the Icon Studio of the Convent of the Holy Angels depicting the third appearance of the Precious Cross, which took place during the All-Night Vigil served on the



Eve of the Feast of the Elevation of the Precious Cross, September 14, 1925 (Old Style) at a Church in the foothills of Mt. Hymettos, near Athens. As is well known, the Cross shone in a miraculous manner over the crowd of anti-

innovationist Orthodox traditionalists attending the Vigil, thereby strengthening them in their struggle and putting to shame their persecutors from the innovationist New Calendar Church.



In Part III, The “Hellenorthodoxe Kleronomia” Chorus and Instrumental Ensemble charmingly rendered the following pieces of folk music:

- “The duck had a garden,” a dance melody (*Kalamatiano*) from Moria, in the First Tone;
- “My swift little swallow,” a song from Aetolia-Acarmania and Thessaly, in the First Tone;
- instrumental music from the islands of the Aegean Sea;
- and “A partridge boasted,” a dance melody (*Kalamatiano*) from the Peloponnese, in the Plagal of the Fourth Tone.



In Part IV, a short film produced by our monastery and entitled “Love: Patristic Teachings. *Praxis* and *Theoria*” was shown. This film offered a visual presentation of the Patristic teaching on love,

ending with moving video footage of several charitable visitations made by the St. Philaret Orthodox Women's Guild.

In Part V, Bishop Cyprian brought the tribute to a conclusion with edifying words of counsel and best wishes, while thanking those who contributed to and attended the event. In particular, he stressed that true love is not an easy matter, but a way of life that involves struggle and sacrifice.



Finally, treats and a small memento were distributed to those present: a small reproduction of the painting of the third appearance of the Precious Cross.

This was truly an unforgettable tribute, thanks to its high level of spirituality, its diversity, and the power of its messages. Words on true, Christian love, which is selfless and sacrificing, always attract, entice, and console wearied man, even though such love calls for a sense of responsibility and effort. Love gives substantial meaning to life and *is* true life, since we were created by the God of love and exist in order to love.

