

Feast Day of the Convent of St. Philothei of Athens, in Grillby, Sweden

On Monday, February 19, 2013 (Old Style), the Convent of St. Philothei of Athens, in Grillby, Sweden, celebrated its Feast Day with monastic modesty and simplicity.

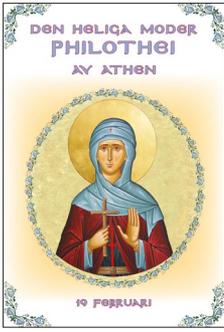
For the first time since the establishment of the convent in 1988, its founder, the ever-memorable Mother Philothei (†November 16, 2012 [Old Style]), was present only in spirit. Her joy, however, at the continuation of the convent, where she had lived for so many years in prayerful struggle and solitude, was perceptible to all present, and lent a special grace and gladness to the festivities.



Nuns Magdalene and Lydia—who received their monastic training at the Convent of the Holy Angels, in Greece, before being sent to the convent in Sweden in August of 2011—chanted Matins and the Divine Liturgy in Greek, Swedish, and English. In his homily, Father Anders Åkerström, the convent Priest of seventeen years, expressed his emotion at celebrating this Feast Day for the first time without Mother Philothei, but also his joy at seeing the seeds she had planted now bearing fruit. A monastic community, he explained, is a place of continual repentance, and therefore a prayerful haven for those in the world wishing to replenish their spiritual batteries.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy, the faithful were invited to venerate a portion of the Relics of St. Philothei, a gift to the con-





vent from the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Phyle, Attica. The traditional procession was then made through the snow around the convent, ending at the grave of Mother Philothei. After a light meal, during which Sister Magdalene read aloud the Life of St. Philothei in Swedish, a *Trisagion* was served at Mother Philothei's grave.

Many of the faithful expressed their spiritual joy on this occasion. As one guest exclaimed: "Only one hour away from home, and yet it is like being in Greece!" Before departing, the faithful were each given a copy of the Life of St. Philothei, which the sisters had prepared for the occasion, to the glory of God, the praise of His Martyr, St. Philothei, and in grateful memory of our own beloved Mother Philothei.

