



“For the Edification of the Church”

- Annals • Pastoral Activities • Presentations •
- Gatherings • Homilies • Sermons • Feasts •
- Pilgrimages • Social Ministry • Publications •

■ Messages of love and hope

From the Nativity to the Theophany A Christmas Presentation



On the evening of December 19, 2016 (Old Style), the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, the annual Christmas Presentation took place at the Spiritual Center of the Municipality of Phyle, which was once again graciously put at our disposal by the local government, half a dozen members of which honored the celebration by their presence.

In attendance were our Most Reverend Metropolitan; His Grace, Bishop Klemes of Gardikion; the Very Reverend Archimandrite Theodosios, Abbot of the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina; clergy, representatives from the monastic communities of our Holy Metropolis, and the aforementioned dignitaries.

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The presentation opened prayerfully with *troparia* from the service of the Great Feast of the Nativity, beautifully chanted by the promising Byzantine Children's Choir, newly founded by our Metropolis, under the direction of Hieromonk Father Dionysios (from the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina), who is an accomplished musician.



The large audience was greeted by the Presenter, Ms. Justina Phokianou, who invited the small "angels" from the catechetical classes offered by our Metropolis, followed by the older groups of children, to recite their charming Christmas poems.



At the request of our Most Reverend Shepherd, the members and friends of the catechetical classes attached to the parish of St. Paraskeve then performed Pontian Christmas carols, which they had also sung that morning at the Convent of St. Paraskeve, following the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy.

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There followed a superb rendition by our Metropolis' theatrical group of the Christmas narrative, "The Servant," by the "holy man of letters," Alexander Papadiamantes, one of Greece's most important literary figures (adapted as a play by Xanthoula Papoutse,†2014). The story contains powerful messages of faith, hope, forgiveness, and self-sacrificial love, amid the Light of the Feast of the Nativity.

The play was directed by Mrs. Smaragda Kaloutze, and the scenery designed by Mrs. Tamara Topala, assisted by members of the adolescent group from our Metropolis' Iconography workshop (EEE).



The program concluded with carols from various regions of Greece and Asia Minor, covering the Feasts of the Nativity, New Year's–St. Basil's Day, and the Theophany.



The audience clapped along in rhythm to the music of the "Hellenic Orthodox Heritage" orchestra, under the direction of Father Dionysios.

Our Most Reverend Metropolitan brought the celebration to a conclusion with words of thanks to all those present, and stressed the importance of such presentations, by which we draw from the waters of Faith and genuine Hellenic Orthodox culture in a creative and dynamic way.

We offer our heartfelt congratulations, thanks, and best wishes to all those who contributed to this edifying gathering, and to our God, the Giver of all good things, glory and thanksgiving!

