



## “For the Edification of the Church”

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“I was in prison and ye came unto Me” (St. Matthew 25:36)

## Visit to the Detention Center of Amphissa

†Fourth Saturday of the Fast of the Holy Apostles  
June 17, 2018 (Old Style)



**O**n the fourth Saturday of the fast of the Holy Apostles, June 17, 2018 (Old Style, commemoration of the Holy Martyr Isauros), with the blessing, guidance and participation of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, there took place our thirteenth visit to the Detention Center of Amphissa.

As usual, the members of the St. Philaret the Merciful Guild cooperated with members of our Metropolis' Association of Volunteers to gather and package personal care items, which were donated to our Guild by private individuals and stores, in order to be distributed to 150 of our incarcerated brothers.

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Following the autumnal temperatures and rainy weather in the first part of the month, the group regarded the sunny day as a blessing from heaven, as they drove through picturesque parts of the country.

After the customary rule of prayer for these pilgrimages, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian made use of the travel time with hymnody and the reading and discussion of a text regarding the salvific influence of pious teachers on the pure hearts of children.

The pilgrims were given a memento with Patristic messages, entitled: "Lord, set us free from ourselves!"

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At the detention center, the prison's chief warden, social worker, and other members of the staff warmly greeted our Most Reverend Shepherd and the rest of the group and led them to the inner courtyard, where the inmates had gathered.

For the sake of giving the prisoners some enjoyment, at Metropolitan Cyprian's exhortation the children played and sang rhythmic Greek folk songs.



His Eminence greeted our brothers and assured them that we do not remember them only during the few hours of our visit but also in our daily prayers.

Father Soterios then invited the inmates to say a few words to the audience. One of the prisoners expressed his emotion and gratitude since, as he said, "Many of us have been forgotten by our families, and now you are giving us the opportunity to experience moments of family joy and relaxation."

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**M**etropolitan Cyprian and the group of pilgrims then moved on to the visiting hall.

**H**ere, as is his custom, he met with each prisoner individually, accompanied by the chanting of the nuns, and gave them his paternal embrace,



smiling words of encouragement, and the humble care packages (containing the personal care items). At his side, Father Soterios distributed small icon prints, crosses, and prayer ropes, as well as a brief text containing a message of love.

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**A**fter the conclusion of this blessed visit, our Reverend Shepherd and the group of pilgrims went to Itea, where they ate by the seashore, enjoying the view of the bay and the food prepared by our volunteers.



**D**uring the return journey, the group once again made a pilgrimage to the renowned Monastery of St. Luke of Steirion to venerate the Saint's Grace-filled Relics and ask for his intercessions.

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**A**midst the atmosphere of joyful sorrow of the Fast of the Holy Apostles, this blessed pilgrimage and our visit to our incarcerated brothers helped us to ask ourselves once again how aware we are that freedom is a gift, and how much we endeavor to achieve true, spiritual freedom, by means of deeds of love and genuine repentance.

