

ODOIPORIKON

ORTHODOX MISSION IN THE EAST

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE PATRIARCHAL FOUNDATION

OF ORTHODOX MISSION IN THE FAR EAST

Issue #86 January - March 2024



Ioannis Lappas *A priceless Collaborator in Christ*

The figure of Ioannis Lappas of blessed memory (29/12/1929-18/10/2023) has left a permanent mark on the members of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea since his participation as a voluntary teacher at the crash course of the Theological Seminary of St Nicholas in Seoul, (March 1st-May 2nd, that is the September-December trimester of the academic year 1996. At the second semester, he came to Korea along with his late wife, Olga, who also taught at the Parish Seminar the course of Social Work. He himself taught Introduction and Interpretation of the Old & New Testament, Christian Ethics & Dogma. The students were from Korea, Malaysia, India, the Philippines & Indonesia. He used to refer to the names of his students always with great love and affection, and he would always ask about their progress and priestly ministry after their graduation with great interest. This is why everyone remembers him with deep gratitude and great love.

The faithful in Korea, though, also remember him from his other visits to participate at historical events of the Church of Korea, as for example the 2nd visit in Korea of His All Holiness, our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, in 2000. Also, his visit for the ordination of his loyal friend and close collaborator, the late Bishop Soterios of Zela in 1993, and his enthronement as First Metropolitan of Korea & Exarch of Japan in 2004.

Anyone who had the great blessing to get acquainted with the late Ioannis Lappas can confirm that he was a «velvet» person, with inimitable kindness & unrequited love, a true gentleman and dignified in every aspect. Until the end of his life, his humility was his characteristic, despite his significant scientific knowledge and impressive linguistic capabilities, which both are often the cause of pride for many. On top of these, his deep level of ecclesiastical sentiment, his Ecumenical consideration of Orthodoxy, his empathy towards the human pain, and his disposition of offering and ministering would always distinguish him.

In addition, he had an exceptionally open spirit, which allowed him to incorporate new ideas and perceptions, always with great wisdom and discretion, without provoking or scandalizing anyone. His acquaintance with the people of the Far East and his concern had positive impact on them; always with great respect to the local traditions combined with the Orthodox spiritual heritage, he was seeking different ways and methods to spread the Orthodox witness, so it could be realized and come into being.

He was one of the founding members of the Patriarchal Institution of the Orthodox Missionary for the Far East, where he worked for 28 years with admirable zeal/eagerness and dedication, empathizing behind the scenes with everything that was taking place at the missionary field. More precisely, he served as a member at the Patriarchal Institution from June 6th 1989 to February 29th 1996 and as a Chairman from March 3rd 1996 to February 28th 2014. Also, even after his voluntary resignation, he kept working as a simple member (March 1st 2014 till February 28th 2017. This current magazine of the Patriarchal Institution, «Οδοιπορικό» («Odoiporikon») saw its first edition during his Chairmanship (2001), while its name, which derives from the well-known «Travelogue of Aetheria» (4th century A.D.), was also the inspiration of the late Ioannis Lappas. During his service at the Patriarchal Institution, both as a regular member and even more as its President, he worked tirelessly and with many sacrifices to process important cases at different State Ministries and other Public as well as Private Services. Even in his old age, he also worked as a porter, carrying containers that would be sent to the mission at the Far East. And he did everything with deep consciousness that he was serving the Mother Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate for which he had a great respect.

The late Ioannis Lappas also worked hard to find the funds needed for many projects of the Church of Korea and in other countries in East Asia. Many a times, his name alone was enough to “open the doors”, as several ministers, MPs,

Directors, and other persons of significant positions in the business and political world of Greece had previously been his students during his 30-year educational ministry at the Greek American Educational Institution called «College of Athens». The respect that everyone paid towards him, thanks to his kindness, his sense of responsibility and his educational flexibility was very obvious so people expressed their love and respect as soon as they would see him years later or even when they would just hear his name.

It is thanks to his priceless ministry at the missionary Fields of the Church of the Far East that the Ecumenical Patriarchate honoured him with the officio «Supreme teacher of the Gospel of the Holy Great Church of Christ». It was an honour suggested by the Late Metropolitan of Pisidia, Sotirios, who had previously served in Korea, and it was an honour which made Ioannis Lappas deeply moved and grateful towards His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. At the time of his ordination at the Church of Aghia Skepi (Holy Protection) in Papagos Athens by Metropolitan Sotirios, who was serving as the representative of Patriarch Bartholomew (27/5/2014), Ioannis felt the Grace of the Holy Spirit, as he



confided, while the title «teacher of the Gospel» that was given to him, he considered it «unbearable» (as in being «too heavy»).

Our highly respected teacher of the Gospel, we wish and pray that you may hear from Christ, whom you loved a lot since your youth: «Well done, good and faithful servant! ...Enter into the joy of your Lord». (Math.21:25)

†Ambrosios Metropolitan of Korea & Exarch of Japan

The Event Organized by the Patriarchal Institution of Orthodox Mission in the Far East at “Parnassos” Hall

On Sunday February 4, 2024, the Patriarchal Institution of orthodox Mission organized a great event at the Hall of the Philological Society “Parnassos”. The main speaker was the Metropolitan of Korea & Exarch of Japan Ambrosios, who spoke on the subject: “Adaptation–Integration – Sarcosis. A suggestion.”

Present at the event were His Eminence Metropolitan of Laodikeia Theodoritos, representing the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, as well as His Eminence Bishop of Thespies Paul, representing his Beatitude, the Archbishop of Athens & Greece Ieronemos. They both offered a short greeting speech.

The schedule included a short film about the

building of the Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God and the collateral Cultural Centre in Jeonju. The iconography of the dome and the niche of the Church was completed by Professor Sozon Giannoudes and his team, as well as some Koreans & Taiwanese volunteers.

At the end of the event, there was a musical performance of songs by the multi-awarded Children’s Choir of St. Barbara Parish in Argyroupolis, which impressed the crowds offering joy and thrill to the audience.

New Year and Theophany in Seoul

The two great feasts of our Lord's Circumcision and the feast day of St Basil the Great were celebrated with the first Divine Liturgy of the New Year 2024 at the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea.

The New Year 2024 is dedicated to the 20th anniversary since the foundation of the orthodox Metropolis of Korea and Exarchy of Japan (2004-2024).

At the New Year's Message, Metropolitan Ambrosios, referring to the 20th anniversary of the Metropolis, mentioned, among other things, the following:

This historical event gives us the opportunity to express, first of all, our endless gratitude to our benevolent God for all his mercies according to his Providence during these 20 years. In addition, we wish to extent our gratitude to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and more specifically to His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, because thanks to his unceasing pastoral care for the Far East, he raised the Church of Korea to a Metropolis & Exarchate of Japan, which previously belonged under the jurisdiction of the Metropolis of New Zealand.

This 20th anniversary should also become the motivation for more systematic work so that the orthodox witness can spread more widely among the Korean & Japanese people of good will... In 2024, let's become God's suitable instruments so more people can know the true God & become members of His uncreated Church on earth.

The morning of Friday 5th January 2024, after the service of the Royal Hours of Theophany, a group-baptism took place at the church of St Maxim

the Greek, in Seoul. The catechumens received with great emotion the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Chrismation, and became members of the uncreated Church of Christ upon earth.

The evening of the same day, the Great Vespers of Theophany & the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great were celebrated at St Nicholas Cathedral in Seoul.

The following day, Saturday January 6, many faithful & catechumens participated at the Matins of Theophany, the Divine Liturgy & the Great Blessing of the waters at St Nicholas Cathedral.

On Sunday January 7, despite the harsh weather conditions –as it had heavily snowed the previous evening–, the faithful celebrated the feast of St John the Baptist but also the feast of Christmas (for the Slavonic faithful following the Julian Calendar) who filled the Cathedral in Seoul since early in the morning. During the entire service of Matins, the choir of the church chanted in Korean –as the Slavonic-speaking people had already had Vespers & Matins on Saturday evening; however, during the Divine Liturgy both the choir of the church & the choir of the Slavonic-speaking faithful chanted in parts. At the end, the Slavonic faithful sang Christmas carols. Two young kids recited poems, and then, presents were offered to all the children. At the church's exit, there were Christmas sweets & cakes made by the Slavonic-speaking people, for anyone who wanted to buy.



The 20th Clergy-Laity Assembly of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea

On Sunday January 21st 2024, the 20th Clergy-Laity Assembly took place at the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea. The main subject was the word of St. Paul the Apostle: “...**for woe is me, if I do not preach the Gospel**” with the subtitle: ‘*Missionary work is not an option but Christ’s command to all of us*’.

The Metropolitan of Korea, during his introductory homily, he passed on to everyone the fatherly and venerable wishes of His All Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for good health, longevity, and every spiritual and material progress for every member of the Korean Church, and he also sent his warm wishes for the Assembly to be a successful one. Metropolitan Ambrosios made a reference to the 20th anniversary (2004-2024), since the foundation of the Metropolis of Korea under the Ecumenical Patriarchate and emphasized that: “*This anniversary is a very important landmark for the history of our local Church, and it should become the opportunity for the beginning of a dynamic struggle for the qualitative & quantitative increase of the members of our Church*”.

Then, he analyzed the passage: “...for woe is me, if I do not preach the Gospel.”, emphasizing that missionary work is not an option but Christ’s command to all of us. He continued by elaborating on the following seven practical ways, which we can relay the message of the Gospel to the society we live in, “...so that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified...” (2 Thess. 3:1):

1. To evangelize others, it is a necessary that we have a stable and unshaken faith and love for Jesus Christ. Therefore, our first and most important concern should be our spiritual struggle to be united with Christ. A daily struggle for our “inchristation”. That is, a continuous struggle “until Christ is formed in us.” (Gal.4:19). A struggle to imitate Christ.

2. This will result in a life and example which will radiate Christ around us, so that the people who see us can see Christ in us. If our example

does not “speak” of Christ, neither will our empty and dry words about Christ will benefit anyone. Because it has been ascertained that nobody will be able to touch anyone by their theoretical faith if their actions do not agree with his faith. For instance, how could you say that you are against drugs trying to persuade others to stay away from them, if you are a drug addict yourself? Is it ever possible, for instance, to speak to someone about Christ’s love, if yourself don’t love your fellow humans in a Christian way? Could you persuade someone to struggle for his in-Christ transformation if you have not transformed yourself? St Gregory the Theologian teaches us this great truth by saying: “We need to clean up ourselves first, then clean others. To acquire wisdom, then make others wise. To become light, so we can enlighten others. To approach God ourselves before we bring others closer to Him. To sanctify ourselves, so we may sanctify others. To hold and guide by hand, to advice with prudence”. St John Chrysostom has given us a very nice practical example to understand how we can teach someone God’s word with our example: “...preach God’s word with your kindness. Somebody has offended you? You keep silence and if you can, praise them, and this way you taught God’s word, you taught kindness, you taught meekness. I know many who do not feel so much pain when it comes to body-injuries but they are more traumatized by words; because the first is against the body but the latter against the soul. We may we not feel pain, or even better, when we do feel pain, may we show patience”.

3. After the witness given by someone’s example, then comes the witness given by someone’s word. The first –the example- is a missionary way possible for everyone without exception. The latter –the word, the preaching- requires knowledge and qualities that not everyone can have. This is the reason why the Church appoints the systematic work of catechism to people trained for this sacred work.

**“만민 내가 복음을 전하지 않는다면
나에게 화가 미칠 것입니다.” (고린토 전 9:16)**
선교는 선택이 아니라, 그리스도께서 모두에게 주신 계명입니다.



However, when saying “witness of the word”, we are not referring to the work of systematic catechism. Instead, we are referring to one’s courage to confess their faith; to share discreetly a word about the Orthodox Church to someone who is oblivious of its presence; to offer discreetly the Bible, an orthodox text or something relevant, which could attract to the Orthodox faith a fellow human being, if they are a “fertile field”; to invite a friend or an acquaintance to our parish to attend a Service or an event; to contact someone who might need to speak with someone, and to offer them a word of comfort and love; to visit the sick, the imprisoned, to help the needy; to welcome kindly someone visiting our parish for the first time and help them feel familiar not like foreigners. All these things and many more we can do without the need of any special theological knowledge; we only need love and zeal and interest for the salvation of our brethren.

4. The first ones to receive our Orthodox witness should be our relatives, of course. We need to start from our own homes. St Paul the Apostle says: “Anyone who does not provide care for their relatives, especially for their own household, they have denied the faith, and they are worse than an unbeliever”. (1 Tim. 5:8) St. John Chrysostom helps us understand the deeper meaning of the words of St Paul: “Here St Paul refers to any care relevant to the soul and body, because this is also care... If someone ignores their relatives-in-the-flesh and they are not connected spiritually with them, how are they going to be affectionate towards others? Are they not going to be told that they have vanity since they care about foreigners but despise their own people and do not care

about them? What does it mean, again, when they catechize others, but they leave their own people in the dark, although it would be easier as well as an obligation to benefit them? ... Are they not going to be told justifiably by others that Christians are not affectionate since they disregard their own people?”

5. Following our mission work towards our relatives, next our missionary spirit should focus on our neighbors as our receptors. Neighbors are those who live in the same area with us and we see them more frequently than anybody else. Therefore, you have a duty to speak to them about Christ in the best way possible. It is to them you need to show your love and care about their salvation. Every home of the members of our Church as well as every church have neighbors. Especially right now, our parishes in Jeonju, Seoul, and Incheon, where new blocks of flats have been built and are still being built and many new people are moving to our neighborhood, the missionary field where we can work is increasing.

At this point, I would like to ask you to pay attention at the following very important matter: When saying ‘spreading’ of the orthodox witness to our relatives, neighbors, friends, colleagues, and our fellow human beings, we do not mean proselytism. In the Orthodox Church, we have never used proselytism as a method of mission work. In the contrary, we address any person of good will who would like to hear our word, without the use of any violence or unfair measures, fully respecting their right to make a choice in freedom. The Gospel says: “come & see” (John 1:47), by which Philip invited Nathanael is the only means we use to speak about Christ when

we apply His commandment: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” (Mat.28:19)

6. Another missionary field is the children and youth, whether they are in our direct family environment or not. The Orthodox parents, grandparents, godparents, and relatives have a duty to guide the children and youth to Christ and His Church. The teachers also, not so much by their words (as in Korea it is not allowed to speak about Christ in the classroom due to a state relevant law, but mainly by their Christian attitude, they can influence their students in a positive way, so that their students can find the way to the Truth one day.

7. The last point which is most important in power effectiveness to draw souls close to Christ is the missionary aspect of prayer. Prayer for the non-Christians is a proof of great missionary love and interest for the salvation of the world, for whom Christ shed his precious blood. St Silouan the Athonite was praying for the whole world like this: “I pray Thee, O Merciful Lord, let all mankind, from Adam to the end of time, come to know Thee, that Thou art good and merciful, that all nations may rejoice in Thy peace and behold the light of Thy countenance”. (St. Silouan the Athonite, by archimandrite Sophrony, p.319) And in another prayer he says: “... I beseech Thee, O Lord, let all peoples come to know Thee “. If our prayer for the salvation of our fellow humans who are not in the Church is extensive and warm, God will hear our prayer and make a miracle in our local Church, too, as He did with the Ancient Church where “the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power (Acts 19:20).

My beloved, this year’s celebration of the 20th anniversary since the establishing of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea and Exarchate of Japan will be a meaningful one only if we all work for the further spreading of the orthodox witness within our jurisdiction. The new conditions that appear around our parishes are a challenge a ‘golden’ opportunity which should attract the interest for the evangelization of our new neighbors to every single one of us. Let us always remember what St John Chrysostom says to us today: “The way the sun superintends the whole of the earth, the same way the preaching of the Gospel should spread everywhere”. Amen.

The Celebration of the Feast of Theophy by the Slavophones at the Monastery of the Transfiguration in Gapyeong



On Sunday, January 21, 2024, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Fr. Roman Kavchak and 35 Slavophones at the Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Saviour in Gapyeong and the consecration of the waters in the river near the monastery.

Also on this day was the feast of St. Maximos the Greek, one of the 24 patron saints of the Korean Orthodox Metropolis, whose holy relic fragment is kept at the monastery and churchgoers were especially blessed to venerate it.

After the Divine Liturgy, a memorial service was held at the grave of Metropolitan Soterios. Then all those present, chanting and holding the Cross, Exapteriga, and Icons, started the procession to the river, where the ceremony of consecration took place. Finally Fr. Roman blessed the river and the faithful, sprinkling them with holy water.

On the walk back to the monastery, it was very beautiful to see the river, the mountains and trees covered with snow, and the birds playing by the river.

Upon arriving at the monastery, everyone enjoyed a shared meal of love and had a fruitful spiritual discussion with Fr. Roman.

At the end, all the participants helped to clear the snow around the monastery, and the chapel and tidied up the underground dining room.

News from the Holy Metropolis of New Zealand

We thank and praise the Most-merciful God of Love for His precious gifts and the great blessings He grants to us daily.

The writer of these words performed the tonsure and ordination to the diaconate of monk Nathanael, whose name in the world was Georgios Karofylakis by the advice, official permission, and the presence of the Rev. Metropolitan of Petra & Heronesos Gerasimos. The tonsure took place at the Holy Monastery of St George Selenari of the Metropolis of Petra and Heronesos, during the Vespers of the Meatfare Sunday, 9th March 2024.

On Meatfare Sunday, the ordination to the diaconate of monk Nathanael took place at the Holy Trinity Church in the city of Aghios Nikolaos in

Lassithi, Metropolis of Petra and Heronesos.

Fr. Nathanael is experienced in serving for many years the brethren at the various Institutions of the Metropolis of Petra and Heronesos, as well as the catechesis of the children of the Parish of the Holy Trinity. He is now going to serve in time at the Metropolis of New Zealand and the mission on Fitzi and Tonga Islands.

It was the missionary documentary “Hello Orthodox” which strengthened the zeal and determination of Fr. Nathanael to join the priesthood and offer himself to the Church and to Christ in this way.

We would like to kindly ask you, our dear brethren, to add in your prayers hierodeacon





Fr. Nathanael, so that God may strengthen and support him in his work in the diaconate and for the salvation of his soul.

With God's mercy, we are expecting in the following days the arrival of two technicians from Greece, who had assisted in the past our missionary efforts. They are going to stay for 3 months and help us on the replacement of the roof of the Missionary Centre of St Paraskevi at Sabeto Fitzi, the completion of the Church of St George in Tonga and the upcoming works for the construction of the Missionary Centre of St John the Theologian in Samoa.

The schools have opened. And the Theological School of St Andrew of the Archdiocese of Australia, in Sydney, is going to accommodate our good child Amphiloios, from the orphan-

age of St Tabitha, to attend the 1st year of the Theological course, with the support of the Reverend Archbishop of Australia Makarios.

Also, our other good child, Moses, is going to attend online the lessons of the 2nd year of the same Theological course having received a scholarship by the Archdiocese of Australia. Moses had previously graduated from Patmiada Church School.

Our dear brethren, we ask for your prayers for all the brethren working today creating the future of the newborn Church at the Pacific Ocean.

Have a good and soulful Great Lent.

† Myron Metropolitan of New Zealand

An Unforgettable Winter Camp weekend (Retreat)

From Friday, January 12 to Sunday, January 14, 2024, the Winter Camp Retreat of the youth group “SYNDESMOS” took place in Chuncheon, which many Orthodox believers and Catechumens from the parishes of Seoul, Joenju, Ulsan and Chuncheon attended.

The program was rich in liturgical opportunities, with sermons, Bible Study, and discussions on the central theme: The work of evangelism is not a choice, it is Christ’s command to all.

On Saturday evening, after the Great Vespers, the Service of the Sacrament of Confession was held at the camp chapel of St. Boris with the participation of all those who wished to go to confession. One by one, the participants attended the Sacrament by confessing their sins and receiving Absolution. On Sunday morning, during the Orthros (Matins) and the Divine Liturgy, all the young members of SYNDESMOS sang together and participated in the Holy Eucharist.

The program was also rich in entertainment, indoor and outdoor group games walks in the beautiful winter nature, and doing work in preparing meals, cleaning the grounds, etc.

The thick, fluffy snow that started falling just before the end of the Retreat was a very pleasant surprise and the best farewell. It served both as an occasion of praise to God for the beauty of His creation as well as His many blessings during the three-day camp, and as an “alarm” for everyone to get ready quickly for departure, so as not to be blocked by the falling snow.



Winter camping weekend in the parish of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Jeonju

On Saturday and Sunday, January 13-14, 2024, a winter camping weekend (retreat) for elementary, high school, and middle school students was held at the parish of the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Jeonju under the topic: “Christian Life”.

The program included spiritual discussions, participation in the Holy Services, communal meals, exercise, and recreation.

The participants, under the guidance of their priest Father Hilarion Jeong, had a blessed and joyful weekend. May the Lord bless the children as they progress more and more in their spiritual life.





Winter Student Camp 2024

The winter student camp was held from February 14 to 17 at the facilities of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea in the city of Chuncheon.

The participant Students came from the parishes of Seoul, Incheon and Ulsan. The general theme of the camp was based on the Clergy-Laity Assembly of the year 2024: “The evangelization of people is not a choice, but a command of Christ to all”. Every day an effort was made to impress upon the students the personal duty of each member of the Church to spread the Gospel message to their environment, drawing examples from the Bible, the lives of the Saints of the Church, as well as from contemporary stories.

The daily schedule included morning and evening Holy Services in the church of St. Boris, Bible study, discussions on the general theme of the camp before lunch and dinner, the Sacrament

of Holy Confession, rich entertainment, a visit to the Animation Museum, games, etc.

The camp ended on Saturday morning with the Divine Liturgy, during which special mention was made of the birthday of our Church in Korea, because 124 years ago, i.e. on February 17, 1900, the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in Seoul.

Warm thanks are due to the camp staff, who worked with admirable zeal to keep the program and take care of the students, and to all those who worked hard to prepare the food for everyone present. Students and adults alike left from the Camp with the best of memories wishing each other to meet again during the summer camp.

Winter camping weekend at the Nursery School in Busan

On Friday and Saturday, January 26 and 27, 2024, a winter camping retreat for children aged 6-7 years was held at the Nursery School of the Annunciation of the Theotokos Parish in Busan, under the guidance of their pastor Father Alexander Han and Presbytera Patapia Yoon.

This program, which takes place twice a year, summer and winter, plays an important role in making the Orthodox Church known in the parish neighborhoods. Many thanks to all who helped, especially the teachers, the women’s group and the Syndesmos youth group.



A New Pastoral Visit to Japan

On the weekend of 17 and 18 February 2024, the Metropolitan of Korea and Exarch of Japan Ambrosios made a new pastoral visit to Japan accompanied by Rev. Fr. Roman Kavchak.

On Saturday he participated in several meetings with Japanese and other nationalities of the faithful to discuss issues of the Exarchate and on Sunday he presided at the Divine Liturgy with co-celebrants Fr. Paul Koroluk and Fr. Roman Kavchak.

His Eminence Elder Metropolitan of Chalcedon Emmanuel and His Eminence the Metropolitan of Vila Tserkva Efstratios participated in the Divine Liturgy. Also present were the Ambassadors of Greece in Tokyo Mr. Demetres Karamitsos – Tziras and Mr. Yannis Michaelides of Cyprus.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Ambrosios welcomed the distinguished guests with very warm words. Among other things, he said: “Your Eminences, we thank you warmly for your very honorable presence among us and we ask you to please address a word to the multi-ethnic flock of the Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Japan”.

His Eminence Elder Metropolitan of Chalcedon Emmanuel gave a short speech conveying the revered paternal blessings of His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. He also stressed the importance of celebrating the Eucharist by the small, at present, but dynamic flock of the Exarchate, under the pastoral care of the Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Japan Ambrosios.

His Eminence Metropolitan Efstratios of Vila Tserkva followed by conveying the blessings of His Beatitude Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv, of the Autocephalous Church of Ukraine, and thanked His Eminence Metropolitan Ambrosios for permitting him to participate in the Eucharist. He concluded by emphasizing the value of the simplicity with which the Divine Liturgy was celebrated and expressed his wish for the continuation of the work of pastoral ministry to the Orthodox faithful living in Japan and the further evangelization of more people in the future.



Finally, Fr. Paul Koroluk mentioned how “today’s Eucharistic gathering is of historical significance in that for the first time three Metropolitans are present among us” and invited everyone to attend the reception held in the hall of the church, during which everyone had the opportunity to talk with His Eminences Metropolitans and priests.

The Annual Memorial of the Missionary Workers and Benefactors of the Church in Korea

On Sunday, February 18, 2024, for the second year in a row, was held in all the parishes of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea. a memorial service of all the missionary workers and benefactors of our Church in Korea.

Since the year 2023 we have established the celebration of the aforementioned commemoration on the Sunday after February 17, the day on which we celebrate the anniversary of the first Divine Liturgy that took place in the Korean peninsula in 1900, as a sign of honor and gratitude for all the Russians, Greeks and Koreans who have contributed to the birth and development of the Orthodox Church in Korea.

May they all have rest in God’s kingdom and may their memory be eternal.

Prayer for the Victims of the War in Ukraine

On Saturday, February 24, 2024, at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Seoul, with the participation of Ukrainians and Koreans and in the presence of His Excellency Mr. Dimitro Poromarengo, Ambassador of Ukraine to Seoul, a memorial service was held for the repose of the victims of Russia's war against Ukraine and a special prayer was offered for the end of the war and the establishment of peace.

In his brief greeting, the Metropolitan of Korea and Exarch of Japan Ambrosios, after conveying the paternal blessing of His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, wished: "that this year's black anniversary of Russia's war against Ukraine be the last.

In other words, I wish and pray that this cursed war, which while it lasts only causes evil and misery to all, will finally come to an end.

Let us ask Christ, the Lord of Peace, to enlighten the minds and hearts of those who started the war and those who, out of sinful interests, maintain it, so that they may think rationally and cease their pro-war sinful behavior.

And let all of us who are far from the battlefields try by our peaceful conduct to contribute to the prevalence of peace within ourselves and around us, so that peace may prevail throughout the world."



The Orthodox Metropolis of Korea on the Passing Away of His Beatitude Patriarch Neophytos of Bulgaria



On Monday, March 18, the Metropolitan of Korea and Exarch of Japan Ambrosios, accompanied by the Dean of St. Nicholas Cathedral in Seoul, Fr. Anthony Lim, visited the Embassy of Bulgaria in Seoul to express to His Excellency the Ambassador of Bulgaria, Mr. Petar Kraytchev his personal condolences, as well as those of all the faithful of the Korean Orthodox Church, on the passing away of His Beatitude Patriarch of Bulgaria and Metropolitan of Sofia Neophytos.

May His Memory be eternal!

Vigil at the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Saviour in Gapyeong



On Friday, March 15, we were honored with a special blessing: a Vigil at the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Savior in Gapyeong in memory of St. Theodora of Arta, whose honorable relic is kept at the Holy Monastery.

On Friday afternoon many faithful arrived at the monastery and at 8 p.m. the Great Vespers began with the procession of the holy icon and the relic of the Saint, followed by the Artoklasia Service and a sermon by Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea and Exarch of Japan.

Then, the Jesus Prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me”, was recited by each faithful in turn with devotion. What inspiring moments everyone experienced! It was as if Heaven had descended to Earth and the small Chapel was full of angels, saints and, above all, the Almighty God and the Lady of Angels, the Virgin Mary!

Afterward, the Orthros and the Divine Liturgy were celebrated, culminating in the sacrament of the Holy Communion, where almost everyone participated and received the Divine Gift, the Immaculate Body and Blood of the Lord.

Following the Vigil, the faithful venerated the holy relic of St. Theodora of Arta. After receiv-

ing the Antidoron, they all went down to the monastery’s Trapeza for a meal.

The next morning, the First Hour Service was held followed by a sermon by the Metropolitan on the life of Saint Theodora and the deep spiritual lessons we learned from her.

Afterward, the memorial service of the blessed Metropolitan Soterios was held in front of his grave. Tears of emotion and praise to the Holy God who deemed us worthy of such a holy person filled the morning atmosphere. The delicate breeze carried the prayers before the throne of the Lord with the request that He guard and care for His Vineyard unceasingly with his intercessions.

For one more time, we went to the monastery’s Trapeza, where everyone enjoyed a branch but more than that we received rich blessings.

Finally, thanking the Lord again for this spiritual opportunity He gave us, we returned to our destinations full of joy and spiritual experiences through the intercessions of Saint Theodora and our spiritual Father late Metropolitan Soterios.



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Filellinon 4 105 57 ATHENS - GREECE

