

## **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 receiving 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 Soterios.



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