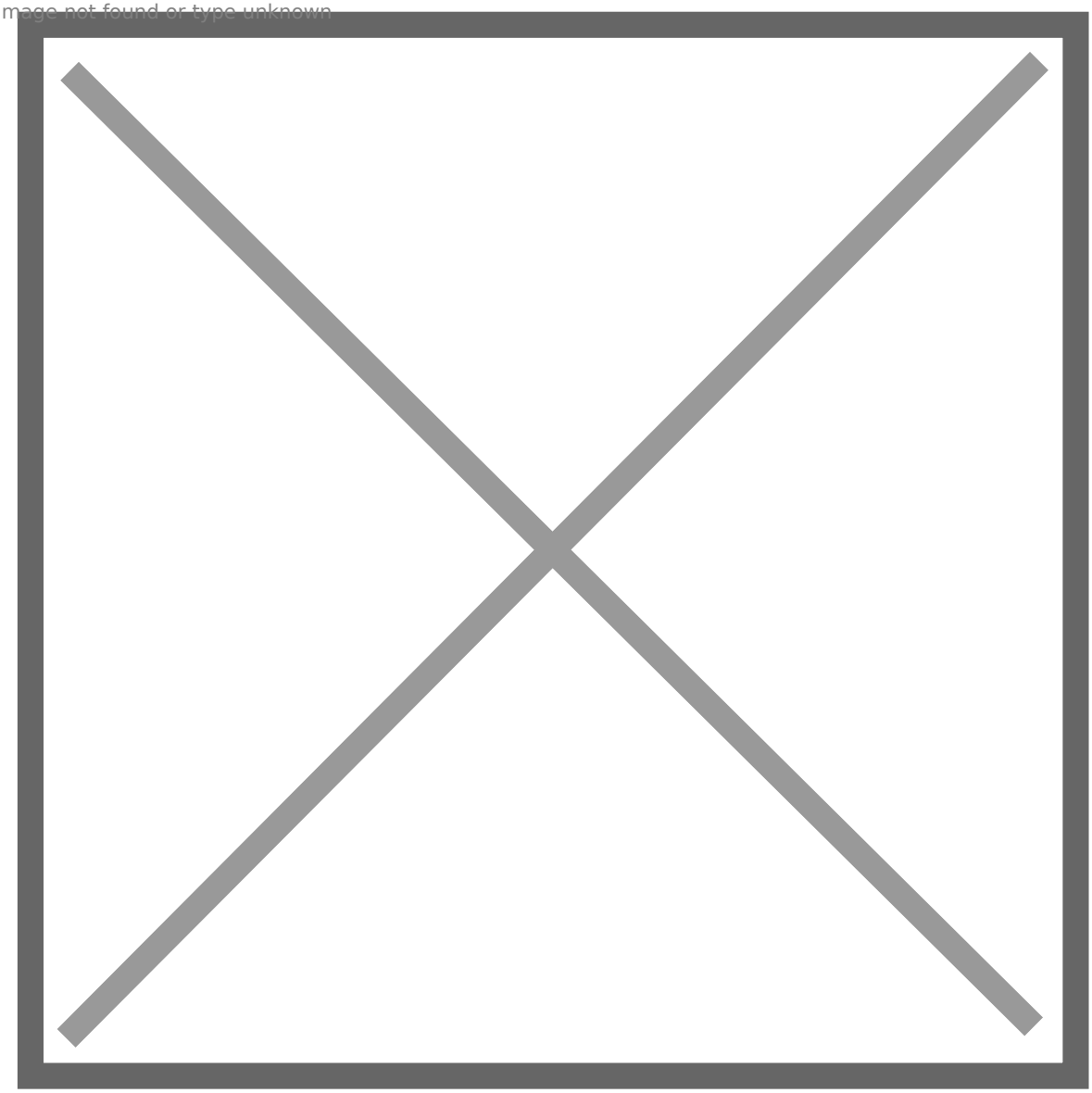
01/07/2024

Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church Marks Beginning of 2024 Clergy-Laity Congress



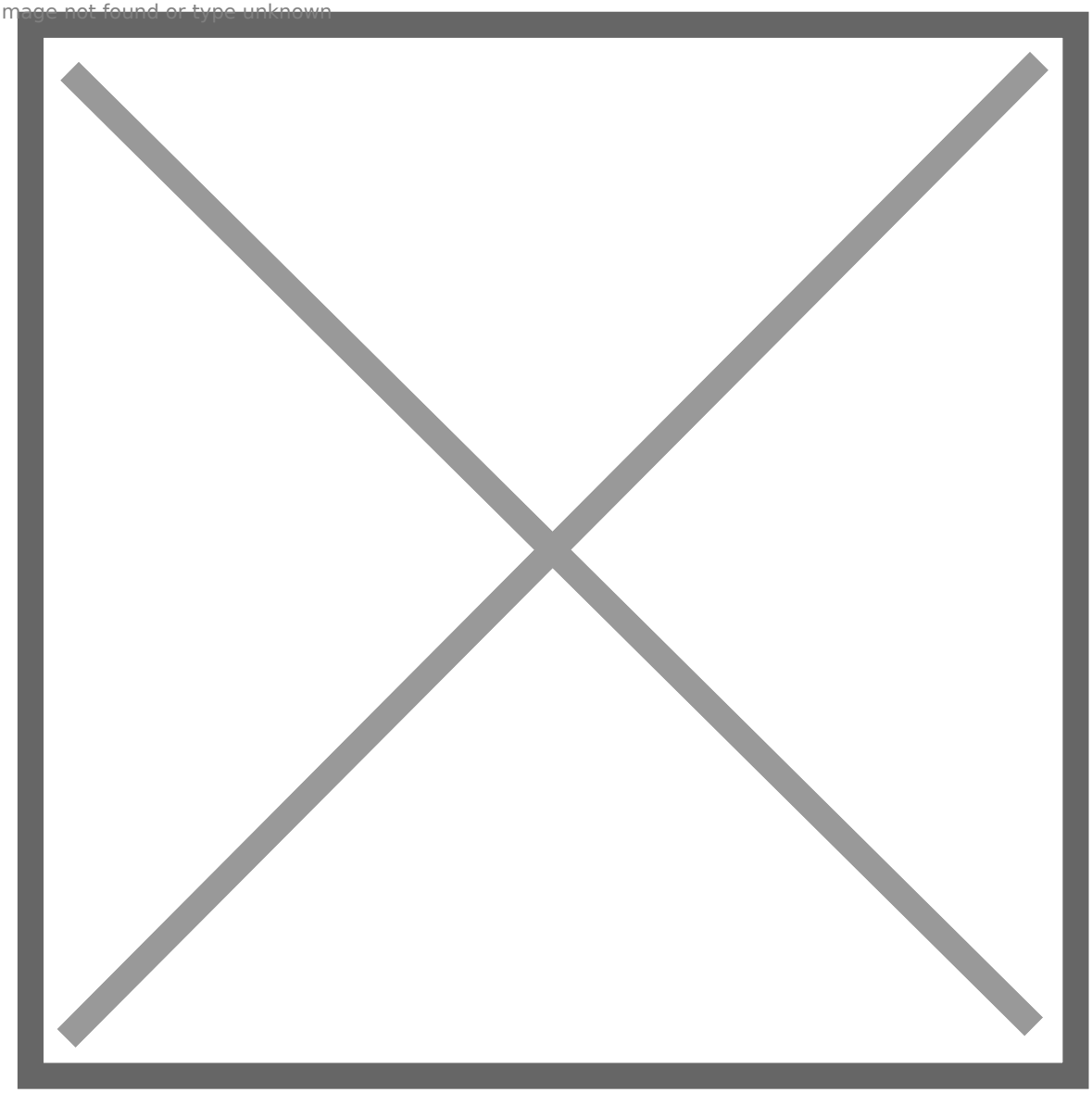
A truly holy ambiance of incense, soft lights emanating from the intricate stained glass, and painted clouds surrounding the “Platytera ton Ouranon” icon of the Virgin Mary greeted parishioners as they gathered in the beautiful Saint Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church in San Diego, California for a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy marking the beginning of the 2024 Clergy-Laity Congress.

Image not found or type unknown



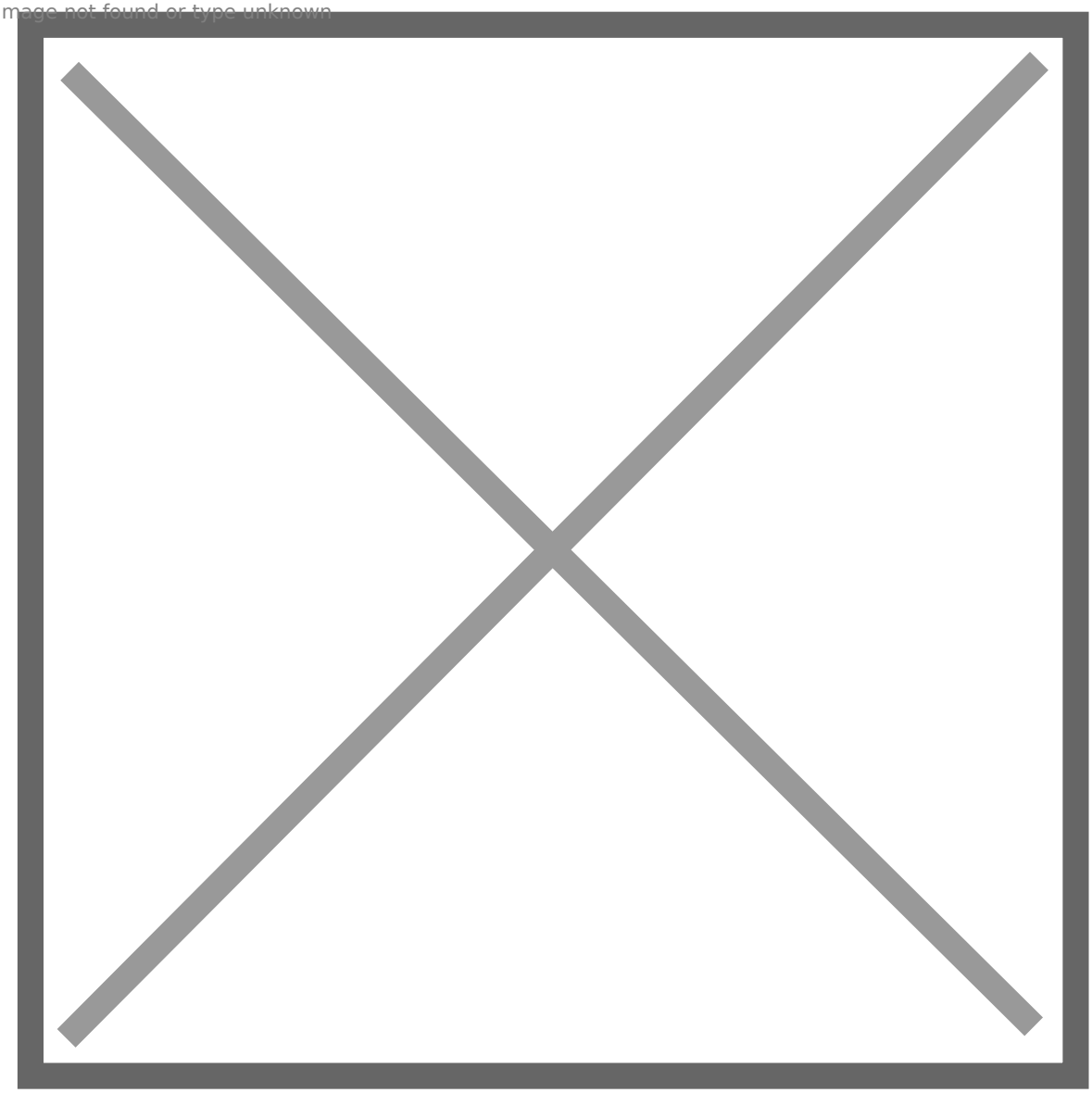
Traditionally the first event the biennial gathering of clergy and laypeople, this year’s service was a joyous celebration in the spirit of this year’s congress theme: “In Christ we are One!” Hundreds of faithful filled the space, joined by the voices of men and women cantors as well as of the National Forum of Church Musicians and the parish’s Youth Choir. The diversity of participation— exemplified in this fullness of sound—enriched an already inspiriting service.

Image not found or type unknown



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America concelebrated with Their Eminences Metropolitans Gerasimos of San Francisco, Apostolos of New Jersey, and Constantine of Denver; Their Graces Bishops Sebastian of Zela, Joachim of Amissos, Spyridon of Amastris, Timothy of Hexamilion, Ioannis of Phocaea, Athenagoras of Nazianzos, Nektarios of Diokelia, and Anthony of Synada. V. Rev. Archimandrite Bartholomew Mercado, Chaplain of Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Father Andrew Scordalakis, the parish's Proistamenos and the Vicar for the Southern California Metropolis District, and Deacon Michael Kallas served, as well.

Image not found or type unknown



Patriarchal Representatives to the Congress, Their Eminences Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain and Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia, as well as His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston also attended.

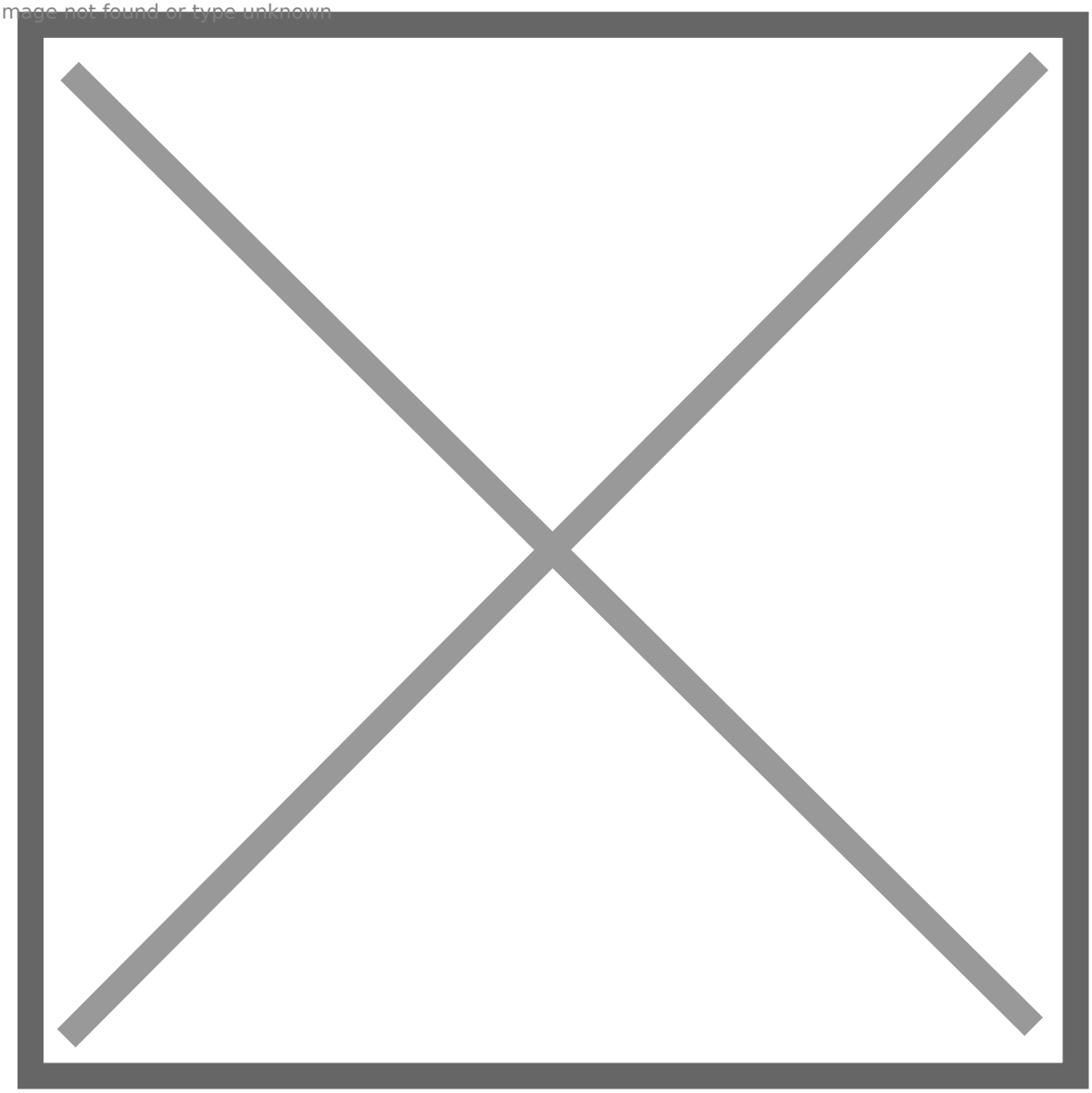


Following the service, Metropolitan Gerasimos welcomed the faithful to San Diego, and reflected on the congress theme, “in Christ we are one,” which “has been made manifest in this divine liturgy, and in the holy Eucharist: the fullness of the Church, the body of Christ, has been realized because wherever there is the Eucharist there is the Church.” His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros expressed gratitude to the Metropolitan, Fr. Andrew, and the community of St. Spyridon for their warm hospitality, noting the tireless contributions of the women of the National Philoptocos saying, “We cannot forget the ladies, the ladies that work for the church, the ladies in every parish and Church in our Archdiocese that arrive at the Church earlier than any man, the ladies that serve in every kind of ministry: to these I want to extend my gratitude.”



The official Joint Opening of the Congress and the National Philoptochos Society will be held tomorrow, July 1 at the Sheraton hotel and Marina in San Diego. Other organizations meeting this week include are the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians, Retired Clergy Association, Archdiocesan Monastic Synaxis, Military and Institutional Chaplains, and the National Sisterhood of Presbyteres.

Image not found or type unknown



For additional information click here: www.clergylaity.org

To sign up for the Congress newsletter click here: https://www.goarch.org/news/subscribe .

Photos: GOARCH/Brittainy Newman and Dimitrios Panagos.

goarch.org