

## The Archbishop of Cyprus at the Feast of Saint Mamas in Paphos



On Monday afternoon, 1 September 2025, the residents of Peristerona, a community in the Paphos district, extended a warm welcome to the Primate of the Church of Cyprus, His Beatitude Archbishop Georgios of New Justiniana and All Cyprus.

The clergy and faithful of the region, who had welcomed him in 1996 as the first Bishop of Arsinoe when the diocese was reestablished, received him once again, this time with visible joy, as Archbishop of the Church of Cyprus.

The Archbishop presided over the Great Festal Vespers at the Cathedral of Saint Mamas, which was filled with many faithful worshippers. He was assisted by priests of the Diocese of Arsinoe and the Metropolis of Paphos.

In his homily, the Archbishop spoke about the Great Martyr Saint Mamas, the hardships he faced as a young Christian during troubled times, and the timeless messages his martyrdom conveys to us.

Among other things, the Archbishop stressed the following: "Living according to the commandments of the Gospel is not easy. Christians struggle against the ruler of

this world, the devil. It requires effort and toil. Things were especially difficult in the early Christian era. There was no tradition of twenty centuries to rely on. Each person had to follow the beat of their own heart, walking a largely unknown path. This is what the young Mamas did; he chose to follow Christ.

The saint lived in particularly harsh times. He was born in prison because his parents were imprisoned Christians. From an early age, he experienced orphanhood and various deprivations, yet he remained dedicated to God.

Although he was Greek and therefore did not have the Prophets to prepare him for the coming of Christ, he did have another foundation: the Greek philosophers, who were in many respects akin to the prophets. Both Socrates and Aeschylus spoke of the one God and the Messiah.

The saint was martyred at a very young age, when he was only fifteen. Through his holy life and martyrdom, he set an example for us. Like him, we live in a difficult age filled with temptations. We often wonder how we will manage to remain steadfast in the Church and in virtue. In a far more difficult time, Saint Mamas endured and triumphed, receiving the rewards of Heaven. He shows us that we can succeed, too.

He also shows us that there are higher values in life. Life itself is a precious gift, but there is a hierarchy of values. Therefore, when higher values such as homeland, family, and faith are at risk, we are called to sacrifice our lives.

Finally, he emphasised that the martyred saint attained prelapsarian perfection and could converse with animals. "You were nourished by the milk of deer, dwelling in the mountains, O Martyr Mamas," our church chants. "He calls us, then, to live close to Christ to find true happiness, abandoning all else that holds no real meaning — whether wealth, positions, or honours," the Archbishop concluded.

Afterwards, the Archbishop elevated the parish priest, Father Theocharis Theocharous, to the rank of Oikonomos, thereby recognising his diligence, humility, and zeal in his ministry.

At the end of the service, following the Artoklasia, the sacred icon of the saint was carried in procession around the church.

On the feast day itself, the Archbishop presided over the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy at the same cathedral, concelebrating with His Grace Bishop Pangratios of Arsinoe.

In his festal homily, Archbishop Georgios once again referred to the example of

Saint Mamas, who shows us the path of our earthly journey through his life and martyrdom.

In particular, he remarked: “Saint Mamas lived a difficult life dedicated to God—a life filled with sorrows and suffering, culminating in martyrdom. He wishes to dispel the illusion that, in exchange for our faith in God, we will enjoy a comfortable life without sorrows. Yet, no matter how carefully we study Holy Scripture, we will never find a promise from Christ that we will be free from trials and hardships.” On the contrary, he warns us, ‘In the world you will have tribulation.’ We must pray that God grants us trials we can bear so that we do not lose heart but remain steadfast in faith. Our lives will always be journeys upon the waves. God tests us to shield us from greater evils. “Whom the Lord loves, He chastises.” God knows our future, which we ignore. Thus, He sometimes places obstacles before us, such as illness, the death of a loved one, or other difficulties, to prevent spiritual downfall and protect us from greater harm.

When we see holy people suffering and enduring martyrdom, like the saint we honor today, our faith is strengthened, and we are moved to repentance. Saint Mamas is an example for us all, showing that our journey on earth involves trials and tribulations. Yet, there is an end: the joy and reward of Heaven. When God visits us with trials, let us examine ourselves. If we are on the wrong path, let us repent and return to the right one. If we are already on the right path, let us glorify God for using us as examples for others. Finally, let us pray that He gives us the strength to endure these trials without losing heart,” the Archbishop concluded.







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