

## Mount Athos: The Feast of Panagia Hodegetria at the Monastery of Xenophontos



The Holy and Venerable Belt of the Theotokos, the only surviving and most precious relic from the earthly life of our Lady, the Most Holy Theotokos, was received with exceptional solemnity at the Holy Monastery of Xenophontos on Saturday, 18 October 2025, the eve of the annual Feast of the Panagia Hodegetria.

With banners, incense, sacred hymns, and the ringing of bells, the venerable Abbot of the Holy Monastery, Archimandrite Elder Alexios, accompanied by a multitude of hieromonks, monks, and numerous pilgrims, received at the monastery's gate from the Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Vatopedi, Archimandrite Elder Ephraim, the sacred and wonderworking relic, the Holy Belt, and, in procession, carried it into the Katholikon.

After the prayer service, in the presence of His Eminence Metropolitan Theoliptos of Iconium, His Grace Bishop Damaskinos of Haapsalu (of the Church of Estonia), and the Civil Administrator of Mount Athos, Mr. Alkiviadis Stefanis, Elder Alexios

addressed Elder Ephraim of Vatopedi with heartfelt words of gratitude, invoking the grace of the Theotokos and noting that this year's feast of the Panagia Hodegetria marks the fiftieth (50th) anniversary since the arrival and establishment of the brotherhood at Xenophontos on the eve of the feast in October 1976. Elder Ephraim responded with an appropriate address.

A festal meal followed, and at 7:00 p.m. began the all-night vigil of the feast, presided over by His Eminence Metropolitan Theoliptos. On the right choir chanted the fathers of Vatopedi, as they do each year, while on the left sang the chanters' choir of Mr. Konstantinos Marinopoulos from Katerini.



On the morning of Sunday, 19 October 2025, the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated with due grandeur, presided over by His Eminence Metropolitan Theoliptos of Iconium, concelebrated by His Grace Bishop Damaskinos, the venerable Abbots Elder Ephraim of Vatopedi, Elder Alexios of Xenophontos, and Elder Gabriel of Pantokratoros, together with a host of hieromonks and deacons.

At the centre of the Katholikon, the revered icon of the Panagia Hodegetria and the precious Holy Belt radiated the grace of our Most Holy Theotokos into the hearts of the faithful who celebrated and invoked her with devotion.

Photographs: Kostas Tzivanidis











