30/12/2025

Open House – Open Hearts : The Thyateira House



On Sunday, 21 December, the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain opened the doors for its annual Christmas Open House. This year, more than ever, it lived up to its name – open house, open hearts.

Clergy, Archons, parish leaders, families, pupils and friends gathered from across the country, with many travelling from Birmingham, Ipswich, Southampton and Exeter, to greet Archbishop Nikitas and one another and to share time together as one Archdiocesan family in anticipation of the Great Feast of the Nativity.

The strong presence of clergy gave the gathering a distinctly pan-Archdiocesan character, while the participation of children and young people brought warmth, movement and unmistakable Christmas cheer.

Music shaped the rhythm of the afternoon. Choirs from the Archdiocesan schools and the schools of the Greek Embassy filled the house with carols, joined by the Archdiocesan Byzantine Choir, led by the Revd Protopresbyter Joseph Paliouras who sang traditional Christmas carols alongside the other choirs. A Romanian choir from

the St Lazarus Parish in East London added their own joyful voice which was warmly received by all present. The choir of the Ukrainian Parish of the Holy Protection, led by Rev. Presbyter Myroslav Pushkaruk, also sang traditional Christmas carols, further enriching the afternoon and this demonstrated the diversity and the unity of the Archdiocese – one in Christ. The choir from the Parish of Christ the Saviour in Woolwich was also present, together with the clergy of the parish, Thomas Koutroukis and Charalampos Clark, further reflecting the breadth of participation from across the Archdiocese.

Throughout the afternoon, guests greeted the Archbishop personally, and lingered in conversation; clergy with clergy, parishioners with parishioners, familiar faces reunited and new encounters quietly taking shape. The recently renovated Chapel of the Transfiguration once again offered a quieter space for prayer and reflection amid the joyful bustle of the house.

Food and drink were shared informally, conversations unfolding naturally across rooms, staircases and doorways – less a reception, more a living house, animated by presence and hospitality.

The Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain warmly thanks all who travelled, sang, supported and helped make the afternoon possible, and wishes everyone a blessed and joyful Christmas, illumined by the peace and hope of the Lord’s Nativity.

Photo credit: Alexios Gennaris

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