

Metropolitan Philotheos of Thessaloniki offers Agiasmos at Cleveland's Greek Cultural Garden



Under bright sun and a blue sky, this afternoon Cleveland's Greek Cultural Garden came alive with prayer, history, and appreciation for an Agiasmos Service.

The Agiasmos was led by Patriarchal Representative His Eminence Metropolitan Philotheos of Thessaloniki, joined by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, host Metropolitan His Eminence Savas of Pittsburgh, Patriarchal Representatives His Eminence Metropolitan Arsenios of Austria and Grand Archimandrite Iakovos (Krochak), members of the Holy Eparchial Synod, hierarchs, clergy, and devoted faithful.

In his remarks, Archbishop Elpidophoros highlighted the Garden as a symbol of "The Gift of Greece to Civilization," describing it as a multi-dimensional expression reflected in both its architecture and natural beauty. Referencing the theme of this week's Clergy-Laity Congress in Cleveland, "Rise and Build," he emphasized that the Garden stands as a collaborative achievement of Cleveland's Greek-American community, one that both honors Hellenic heritage and shares its contributions with the wider society.

Following the Presentation of Colors and Greek and American National Anthems, Honorable Major James P. Trakas, OHMR (Ret.), offered historical remarks, underscoring the significance of the Garden, the dedication of its founders, and the enduring support that has sustained it across generations.

Ohio State Representative Steven J. Demetriou also addressed attendees, reflecting on the Garden as a living testament to the perseverance and faith of those who brought it into being. He noted that gathering in the space honors the sacrifices made by earlier generations and affirms their lasting legacy.

Archbishop Elpidophoros also offered special recognition to Lou and Ann Frangos as well as Lee and Ageleke Zapis, Co-Chairs of the Cleveland 2020 Clergy-Laity Congress which was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Finally!” Archbishop Elpidophoros said. “We are together in your amazing City of Cleveland, and in such lush, beautiful surroundings, in order to recognize you for your faithfulness to this endeavor, and your many contributions to the life of our Church and community.”

The gathering included children dressed in traditional Greek dress, a visible reminder of the generations who continue to cherish and preserve the Garden. Additional remarks were offered by Metropolitan Savas and Pascalios Papouras, Executive Director of the Greek Garden Association of Cleveland.

With the moving Agiasmos service concluded, the Greek Cultural Garden once again affirmed its place not only as a cultural landmark, but as a space where faith, history, and community converge—an enduring legacy for years to come.

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