

## **Commencement Ceremonies of the Patriarchal Toronto Orthodox Theological Academy**



Every year in the month of May, a gala marking the Commencement Ceremonies of the Patriarchal Toronto Orthodox Theological Academy (PTOTA) takes place. This year, due to extenuating circumstances, it took place instead on Friday, October 18th.

Over four hundred (400) people attended the gala, which took place at the Cultural Centre of the Holy Archdiocese. The Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Mr. Nikolaos Sirmalis, a past graduate of the Academy. The gala was organized exceptionally by: Mrs. Anastasia Sotiropoulos, President of the St. Nicholas Community and the Cultural Centre; Fr. Fanourios Pappas, Parish Priest; and their great team. Congratulations and many thanks to all.

This year, PTOTA had the following graduates:

Fr. Theodore Alamanos

Deacon Konstantinos Tsialtas

Mr. Evangelos Athanassoulas

The Deacon. K. Tsialtas and Mr. E. Athanassoulas spoke that evening. Their topic was about the theme of the year of the Holy Archdiocese, "Know the Truth and the Truth will set you free." They theologically expounded on the theme, both in Greek and English. After their remarks, they were given a round of applause by all those in attendance.

The dignitaries attending the evening's festivities included: His Grace Bishop Mitrophan, Serbian Orthodox Church; His Grace Bishop Andriy, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada; Archon Spyros Volonakis, Director of Greek Orthodox Education of the Holy Archdiocese of Canada, together with his wife, Justice Eleftheria Tzimas-Volonakis, Superior Court of Justice of Ontario; Mrs. Maria Lychnaki, Educational Attaché of the Greek Consulate in Toronto; Mrs. Zoe Veroutis, President of the Archdiocesan Philoptochos of Canada; Mr. Frank Topos, Archon Maestor; Fr. Peter Avgeropoulos, President of the Presbyters Council; and the Hon. Victor Maligoudis, Consul General of Greece in Toronto.

During the gala, there was a beautiful musical interlude. Led by Archimandrite Alexandros Salmas, Dean of our Theological Academy, the students and clergy chanted and sang wonderfully.

After an introduction by His Eminence Archbishop Sotirios, saying "We will start with our Motherland Greece," the degrees to the graduates were given by: the Hon. Consul General Victor Maligoudis to Fr. T. Alamanos; His Grace Bishop Mitrophan to Deacon K. Tsialtas; and Justice Eleftheria Tzimas-Volonakis to Mr. E. Athanassoulas.

The keynote speaker was Archbishop Sotirios, who connected the theme of our Archdiocese, "Know the Truth and the Truth will set you free," with the theme of harmony. He referred to the harmony of the Holy Trinity, the harmony of the universe, and the harmony of the human body. He asked from the graduates, students, and from the clergy, to live in perfect harmony with themselves and in the lives of their communities they serve.

The gala finished with ecclesiastical hymns, prayer and the Polychronion of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew who, acknowledging the amazing work of the Theological Academy during the past 20 years, named it the Patriarchal Toronto Orthodox Theological Academy.

In the twenty years that the PTOTA has been in operation, many students have studied there. Fifty-one (51) students have graduated. Twenty-nine (29) have been ordained. Therefore, about one-third (1/3) of the clergy of the Holy Archdiocese of

Canada are graduates of our Theological Academy. This number speaks highly of the work and effect the Theological Academy has had, along with the insight and boldness Archbishop Sotirios had to found this Orthodox Theological Academy.

- Source: [gometropolis.org](http://gometropolis.org)