

Blessing of the Waters in San Francisco Bay



On Sunday, January 17, 2021 the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco in partnership with the United Hellenic American Societies of Northern California (UHAS) hosted an event at Aquatic Park Cove in San Francisco to honor the Feast of Epiphany, observing Christ's baptism in the Jordan. In his introductory remarks, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco remarked, "While we pray for the sanctification of the water, we also pray for the New Year which is upon us, for God's grace and mercy on our world, and we especially pray for the health and safekeeping of our community which has been ravaged by the pandemic, beseeching healing, peace and comfort."

During this service, the waters of the bay were blessed for the New Year, following which a cross was tossed in the water by Metropolitan Gerasimos. Konstantinos Sarrigeorgidis, Ph.D., who is originally from Athens and currently works in Silicon Valley, jumped into the water and retrieved the cross, bringing it back to Metropolitan Gerasimos where he received a special blessing and a commemorative cross as a remembrance of this event.

The Feast of Epiphany is also the manifestation of God to the world, because it was the beginning of our Lord's public ministry. At the baptism of Jesus, all three

Persons were made manifest together: the voice of God the Father, who calls Jesus his “Beloved Son,” we see Jesus Himself, and the Holy Spirit, “in the form of a dove,” descends and rests upon the Son. At the conclusion of the Blessing of the Waters at Aquatic Park Cove, doves were released into the sky, symbolizing the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan.

UHAS President Taso Zografos served as the organizer of the event, establishing this first-year event with the intention of making this an annual celebration that will be open to the public in future years. “It’s appropriate this year given all the challenges we’ve had last year to bless the waters in 2021, so that the entire community will heal from what’s going on today in our world and we welcome you here today for this celebration.”

Metropolis Gerasimos oversees the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco. As Archbishop of the western region, Metropolitan Gerasimos’ jurisdiction includes nearly 70 Greek Orthodox parishes and over 150,000 faithful in California, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Alaska and Hawaii.

The United Hellenic American Societies of Northern California (UHAS) represents the Greek-American community of Northern California. Its mission is to promote, preserve and protect the Hellenic culture, Hellenic heritage, as well as the principles and ideas of Hellenism. UHAS encourages strong community relations, and promotes and culture and educational activities.

Also assisting with the service were His Grace Bishop Ioannis of Phocaea – Metropolis of San Francisco Chancellor; Rev. Father Milutin Janjic, parish priest at Prophet Elias Greek Orthodox Church in Santa Cruz, CA. Mr. Christopher Hondros from the Resurrection Greek Orthodox Church in Castro Valley, CA served as the chanter for the service.

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