13/01/2022

Adelaide holds extended, doubly-historic Theophany Celebrations



2022 was a historic year for the annual Theophany celebrations in the “City of Churches” Adelaide.

Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th of January, 2022, marked the 42nd consecutive annual Glenelg Greek Festival. Hosted by the Inter-Communities Council of the Archdiocesan District of Adelaide at the city’s premier foreshore location, the Glenelg Greek Festival features the Blessing of the Waters as part of the Theophany celebrations.

Traditionally this festival had always been held on the Sunday after Theophany. In 2022, with the blessing and initiative of the Archepiscopal Vicar, His Grace Bishop Silouan of Sinope, a bold decision was made by the ICC to extend the festival over two days.

The crowd on Saturday was comprised largely of non-Greeks and thus presented a wonderful opportunity showcase the Orthodox Faith and Greek culinary and music culture to the wider community.

For the first year, this was an impressive start that will no doubt grow into something bigger and better in the years to come.

2022's festival was historic for another reason, as it marked the first time that the Archdiocese-wide celebration was joined by the Parish-Community of the Nativity of Christ, Port Adelaide. The Parish-Community of the Nativity of Christ, Port Adelaide has a 60-year tradition of celebrating the Blessing of the Waters at the nearby Port River.

This year, for the first time, the Community of the Nativity held this celebration on the day of Theophany itself (Thursday 6th of Jan), with the great blessing of having the full Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing of the Waters officiated by His Grace Bishop Silouan of Sinope in the Church. The clergy were then joined by priests from neighbouring parishes after their services had finished, to take part all together in the procession to the Port River for the outdoor blessing, where the Cross was retrieved by Mr John Kokolakis.

It was great to see this event take on a new and greater significance for the Community, and additionally it freed the Community – for the first time since the Glenelg Festival began – to participate alongside their fellow Orthodox brethren for the Archdiocese-wide event at Glenelg. The significance and historic nature of these firsts for the respective events will go down in history as great days for the history of the Orthodox Church in Adelaide.

The highlight of the Glenelg Greek Festival was of course the Blessing of the Waters ceremony itself on Sunday. Fifty swimmers participated in the race for the Cross, which was ultimately won by Mr Stylianos Zaharakis of the Parish-Community of Prophet Elias, Norwood. His Grace spoke about the importance of life and the tragedy when it is lost (especially prematurely), and the hope given to us by our Lord's life-giving act of condescension to be baptised by St John the Forerunner in the River Jordan.

In addition to His Grace Bishop Silouan and the clergy of our Archdiocese, the festival was also attended by representatives of the Premier and the Opposition Leader (who were both unable to attend in person due to COVID isolation requirements), and a number of State and Local government officials. The event was well-covered by Greek and mainstream media and was a great witness to our

Faith.

In spite of the COVID surge in SA this weekend, the event attendance (though down slightly on previous years) was still very good and there were what seemed like a record number of swimmers participating in the retrieval of the Cross. Feedback on







vema.com.au