

20/10/2023

Dinner with Local and Ecclesiastical Authorities Kefalonia, Greece



Your Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrios of Kefallonia,

Honorable local officials,

Reverend fathers and distinguished guests of this banquet,

The joy and the elation we feel is evident, as we sit alongside of you at this table, in this banquet of your love. On this table, we see reflected the other table, the heavenly Table of the Supper of the eternal Kingdom, in which the extreme charity of the Most-merciful God is manifested.

We thank the Holy God, who led our steps to the island of Kefallonia, one of the most beautiful corners of our homeland where the beauty of the Greek island meets the beauty of the souls of its hospitable people. The rich history of the island – known to everyone – is reflected in our eyes on every street, monument, church and monastery, making us partakers of its long history. In the midst of the beautiful landscapes, one can witness the very miracle of God's creation, Who endowed the place with rich gifts.

You, my dear brothers, protect and enrich this history and this heritage with your

works. I am sure that all of you have a deep love for your island and a full awareness of the responsibility that accompanies the honor and duty entrusted to you by its inhabitants.

Let us not forget that through Kefallonian's long history, from antiquity with the Persian wars to the Frankish and Venetian rule and the Byzantine period, and from that to the period of the Turkish rule, the British rule and the Second World War, brave people lived on the island who succeeded to preserve its cultural identity despite the adversities.

This blessed island gave birth to great poets, painters, musicians, sculptors – people who actively contributed to the development of arts and letters and left their mark on the cultural heritage of Greece. All of you, their genuine descendants, are now working incessantly with great fervor to become genuine continuers and protectors of the legacy they bequeathed to you.

We have come here, dear brothers and sisters, on this official peaceful visit to you, in order to strengthen and further promote the strong and unbreakable bonds of brotherly love and friendship, which are based on our common faith in the life-giving God.

At this moment, we give glory and honor to the divine Builder of the Church, because He has granted us the blessing and the rich experience of friendly association and communication with you.

Please accept our warm thanks for your invitation and kind hospitality.

With feelings of sincere love and highest honor, we raise the glass, with our soul and heart, praying to Saint Gerasimos, the spiritual protector and guardian, to intercede to the Lord, to strengthen the local Church in every way and to grant unshakable health and fruitful ministry to your Eminence for the spiritual protection of all the people of this island. We also pray to him to protect every good thing of this beautiful place of our country and to give abundant strength to each one of you working for the development and progress of this blessed island.

To many blessed years!

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