

Metropolitan Seraphim of Kythera and Antikythera in Australia

A formal reception was held at Kythera House at Rockdale on 20 October 2012 to welcome Metropolitan Seraphim (Stergioulas) of Kythera and Antikythera on his first visit to Australia. His Eminence is accompanied by Father Petros Maniatis and the Mayor of Kythera, Theodore Koukoulis.



His Eminence was born on December 27, 1950 in Vragkiana, Karditsa in western Thessaly, Greece. He was made a deacon in 1971 and received the name Seraphim. He studied theology from 1972 to 1976 at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and then continued with postgraduate studies from 1976 to 1978 at the University's Department of Systematic Theology.



Between 1971 and 1974 he also served as editor of the magazine *Seraphim, the Hieromartyr of Phanarion*, inspired by the Hieromonk Seraphim, Bishop of the Phanar, who bravely refused to accept Islam and was beaten and impaled by the Ottoman Turks in 1601.

His Eminence was ordained a priest in 1981 and then elevated to *archimandrite*. From 1979 to 2005, Father Seraphim served as a preacher with the Metropolis of Hydra, Spetses and Aegina.

In 1981, Father Seraphim spent three years on sabbatical leave at Mount Athos to undertake research on various issues, particularly the Neptic aspects of Orthodox monasticism which are characterised by sober-minded vigilance, watchfulness and purity of thought. His work was published in a three-volume *Anthology of Philokalia*.

On 2 July 2005 Seraphim was consecrated a bishop in a service conducted by then Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Athens. He was then enthroned as *Metropolititi* (a title equivalent to archbishop of an ecclesiastical province or metropolis) of Kythera and Antikythera on 30 July 2005.



On the occasion of His Eminence's first visit to Australia, the President of the Kytherian Association, Victor Kepreotis, welcomed the Metropolitan as well as Father Petros and Mayor Koukoulis, to the Kytherian Association's new "spiritual centre" in Sydney, a cultural resource facility and meeting place that now houses arguably one of Sydney's finest community Hellenic

libraries. With more than eighty members, friends and guests in attendance, including Mayor Nickolas Varvaris and Councillor Nicholas Aroney of Kogarah Council and ex-Wollahra Mayor John Comino, Dr Kepreotis praised the work of the Metropolitan and wished him an enjoyable time in Australia.

Metropolitan Seraphim expressed delight at the opportunity afforded to him to visit Australia and to meet the Kytherians of the *diaspora*. His Eminence also thanked the well-known benefactor, George Hatziplis, for arranging the visit and indicated that he plans to visit Brisbane, Canberra and Gosford as part of his reaching out to Kytherians downunder.

Mayor Koukoulis also thanked those who attended the reception and commented that it is a truism that the Kytherians in the *diaspora* love their island even more than the locals.

After the formal speeches, His Eminence and the other guests and members enjoyed the small delicacies and sweets that were laid out by the Association and were able to mingle amongst the crowd and even renew some old acquaintances.

The Kytherian Association welcomes the arrival of the island's spiritual leader to Australia.



George Vardas

Cultural Officer, Kytherian Association of Australia