

Bishop Auxentios Participates in Eparchial Synod Meeting

From June 11-14, 2015 (New Style), His Grace, Bishop Auxentios, Ruling Hierarch of the Diocese of Etna and Portland, was in New York for a meeting of the Bishops of the Eparchial Synod of the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece in America, which was held at the Monastery of the Holy Ascension in Bearsville (Woodstock), NY. Arriving at the monastery on the evening of June 11, he enjoyed the hospitality of the brotherhood of some sixteen monks and their Elder, His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrios, President of the Eparchial Synod in America. The Bishops met formally on Friday, June 12, discussing administrative matters, pastoral concerns, and current issues in the American Eparchy of our Church. See, below (*left to right*), on the beautiful grounds of the monastery, the gathered Bishops: His Grace, Bishop Christodoulos of Theoupolis, His Eminence, Metropolitan Moses of Toronto, His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrios of America, His Grace, Bishop Auxentios of Etna and Portland, and Archimandrite Savvas, Secretary of the Eparchial Synod.



During his stay at the Holy Ascension Monastery, which is still under construction, His Grace reported being deeply impressed by the good order in the community, the contrite psalmody of the monks, the precision with which their services were conducted, and the ascetic but joyful spirit of the monks and their Elder.



On Saturday June 13, His Grace drove to New York City, where he visited the beautiful convent of St. Synkletike, in Farmingdale, NY. The revered Abbess, Mother Synkletike (*seated in a wheelchair, at left*), visited our monastic communities in Etna, CA, some years ago, together with their spiritual Father, the late Metropolitan Petros of Astoria, and his grand-nephew, Archimandrite Pavlos, now Metropolitan *Emeritus* of Astoria. His Grace has known Mother Synkletike since his student days at Princeton University in the early 1970s, when, during his last year at university, he was a novice under the late Metropolitan (at the time, Bishop) Petros.

He then travelled to the Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church in Astoria, NY, a parish of our Sister Church, the Rus-

sian Orthodox Church Abroad, where he was the overnight guest of Archpriest Vsevolod and Matushka Irene Dutikow, very close friends of our monastic and lay communities in Etna. He attended the Vigil Service (Vespers and Matins) at their beautiful hundred-year-old parish on Saturday evening, the Eve of the Feast of the Saints of Mt. Athos. (*See a photograph of the parish entrance below.*) On Sunday morning, sadly bidding Father and Matushka farewell, His Grace left to rejoin his fellow Hierarchs at Metropolitan Demetrios' nearby Cathedral of St. Markella, where they concelebrated the Divine Liturgy, joined by the retired Metropolitan Pavlos, who was incapacitated several years ago by a severe stroke. Following the services, they were treated at the *Agape* meal to a very nice seafood lunch, after which His Grace departed by air for California, moved by his visit to these vibrant True Orthodox communities in Bearsville, Farmingdale, and Astoria, NY.

