



**06-05-2025 Visit to Kalamata and awards ceremony for winning students in the national student competition 'Orthodoxy and Hellenism in Cyprus – 50 years since the Turkish Invasion'"**

On April 28-30, the award-winning students of the national student short film competition on the theme "Orthodoxy and Hellenism in Cyprus – 50 Years Since the Turkish Invasion," organized by the General Secretariat for Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, and Sports in cooperation with the Special Synodical Committee on Cultural Identity of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, participated in an educational visit to Kalamata, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, which led to the occupation of 37% of the island.

On Monday, April 28, the students, accompanied by their teachers, visited the Archdiocese of Athens, where they were welcomed by His Beatitude Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and all Greece and received his blessings. Present at the meeting were the Most Reverend Archimandrite Theoklitos Mentis, Secretary of the Special Synodical Committee on Cultural Identity, and representatives of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports. The Archbishop's blessing marked the official start of the educational visit to Kalamata.

During the visit, the students and their teachers, accompanied by the First Secretary of the Holy Synod, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Damaskinos Petrakos, the Secretary of the Special Synodical Committee on Cultural Identity, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Theoklitos Mentis, and the representative of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, Ms. Georgia Iliopoulou, visited the Metropolitan Church of Ypapanti, where they were welcomed by the Protosyngelos of the Holy Metropolis of Messinia, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Philippos Chamargias, and the Youth Project coordinators, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Alexios Aronis and the Reverend Protopresbyter Sotirios Tzailleas. They also visited the Holy Monastery of the Nuns, the Historic Church of the Holy Apostles, and the Archaeological Museum of Kalamata.

On Tuesday, April 29, the group toured Maniaki and the site of the sacrifice of Papaflessas and the heroes, followed by a visit to Pylos and the Holy Shrine of Zoodochos Pigi Sgrappa. In the evening, the award ceremony for the students took place in the presence of the Protosyngelos of the Holy Metropolis of Messinia, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Philippos Chamargias, the First Secretary of the Holy Synod, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Damaskinos Petrakos, the Secretary of the Special Synodical Committee on Cultural Identity, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Theoklitos Mentis, and the representative of the General Secretariat for Religious Affairs, Ms. Georgia Iliopoulou.

Students of the 2nd and 3rd grades of Middle School created videos inspired by one of the following historical figures, who were either born, raised, or played a significant role in Cyprus: Apostolos Varnavas, National Martyr Archbishop Kyprianos, Evagoras Pallikarides, and Eleni Foka.

Five (5) Awards and four (4) Honorary Mentions were presented, as follows:

**Awards to students from the following schools:**

- 2nd Day Middle School of Elliniko,
- Middle School of Maroussi “Elliniki Paideia”,
- 4th Middle School of Corinth (2 teams) and
- Private Middle School I. Tsiamoulis.

**Honorary Mentions to students from the following schools:**

- Private Middle School I. Tsiamoulis,
- Model Ecclesiastical Middle School–Model Ecclesiastical High School of Xanthi “Holy Five New Martyrs of Samothrace”,
- 65th Middle School of Athens and
- Middle School of Sikinos

The General Secretariat for Religious Affairs warmly thanks all participating students and congratulates the winners, the teachers who effectively supported the entire effort, and especially the students’ parents.

Special thanks are extended to the Special Synodical Committee on Cultural Identity of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece for their cooperation in organizing the competition.







