

A visit to the Holy Mountain of Athos

Simonos Petras Monastery

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From the little town of Ouranoupoli, two and a half hours by bus from Thessaloniki, they took a boat to the tiny port of Dafni and from there they went to the administrative center of the Athonite peninsula, Karies, where they made a quick visit to the recently renovated church of the Protaton, the Koutloumoussiou monastery, the Holy Trinity *kellion*, and the Bourazeri *kellion*. They then proceeded to the large Vatopedi monastery, where they spent the night and had a chance to meet the igumen, fr Efrem, together with other monks. The next day, going south, they visited the Pantokratoros, Stavronikita, and Iviron monasteries and spent the night at the little *kathisma* of Mylopotamos, a dependency of the Great Lavra, a little oasis, where they were received by fr Epifanios and fr Ioachim, who makes excellent wine. The same day, accompanied by fr Ioachim, they visited the Philotheou and Karakaliou monasteries. The following day, going by boat from the little port of Iviron, they came to the Great Lavra and after a rapid visit of the oldest and largest monastery on Athos, stayed for the night at the Romanian Prodomou skete; they also visited the hermitages on the southeastern tip of the peninsula. At dawn on Thursday they took the panoramic path that circles the mountain massif of Athos, arriving at the Mikra Aghia Anna skete in time for dinner. Here they were welcomed fraternally in the Gherasimeï *kellion* by fr Nikiforos and other fathers. A worthy crowning of their pilgrimage was the two-day stay at the Simonos Petras monastery, where the three brothers of Bose were welcomed with particular affection by the members of the community and the igumen, fr Elisseos, who twice met with them personally. After a quick visit of Thessaloniki, on the afternoon of 20 September they returned to Bose.