

Monastery of Panagia Exakousti in Malles

The Monastery of Panagia Exakousti is located in the beautiful green location Malles, near Ierapetra. Today it serves as a female convent. The nuns operate a workshop with textiles, a tailor and needlework shop and other souvenirs.

The history of the monastery is linked with a charismatic figure who lived here, the abbot Hatzi Ananias. Ananias is said that as an infant did not suckle on Wednesdays and Fridays and refused to touch the breast of his mother. He never ate meat, fish and cheese. He was barefoot and dressed like an animal, while he used an animal leather as a cover and a stone as a pillow. At the age of 14 years he moved to Kapsas Monastery, where he was influenced by the monk Gerontoyannis and in 1877 he returned to Males. In the ruins of the monastery of Exakousti there was a cave where he found the icon of the Virgin Mary (Panagia) and then decided to rebuild the monastery. After his death he was declared a saint and during his life he is said to have worked wonders, while pilgrims flocked to Exakousti to get his blessing or cure. Today, the tomb of the monk is found in the monastery.

The church of the monastery is a single-aisled vaulted basilica dedicated to Virgin Mary's Birthday (celebrates on September 8). The icons on the iconostasis are newer, but there are two old icons of Panagia and John the Baptist. The iconostasis is a work of brothers Makrakis and Farsaris, who were very famous wood carvers in the religious circles of Crete. In the monastery there is also the small cave with a chapel dedicated to the transfiguration of Christ, where Ananias found the icon of Virgin Mary. Moreover, in the northeastern corner of the monastery, the nuns have built a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Fathers and Mothers.

