

Another Edifying Pastoral Visit to Sweden (May 23-30, 2012 [Old Style])

The Grace of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit bountifully blessed our latest pastoral visit to Sweden, which centered around the Feast Day celebration of the Church of Sts. Constantine and Helen—which also serves as the Bishop’s residence—in Vårberg, southwest of Stockholm.

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A. With the blessing of our much-revered Elder, Metropolitan Cyprian, a group of ten people, headed by His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, Acting President of the Holy Synod, left Greece on Tuesday, May 23, 2012 (Old Style), for Stockholm, where they remained until Tuesday, May 30.

B. The program included:

- a Divine Liturgy at our parish Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Uppsala, where Father Anders Åkerström serves as Rector (Tuesday, May 24 [Old Style]);



- a Divine Liturgy at the Convent of St. Philothei in Villberga, near Grillby, where the Reverend Mother Philothei and Sisters Magdalene and Lydia are leading the monastic life (Wednesday, May 25);



- the Small Blessing of the Waters and the placing of the corner stone in the foundation of a chapel in honor of St. Joseph the Betrothed—the chapel being built on the property of two of our parishioners in the region of Järbo, some 270 kilometers north of Stockholm (Friday, May 26);



- a consultation with Father Anders at the Bishop’s Residence (Saturday, May 27), where many and various matters relating to our mission were discussed (the conversation was resumed on the following Monday);
- Resurrectional Vespers for the Patronal Feast of the Cathedral of Sts. Constantine and Helen, followed by Small Compline (Saturday afternoon);
- Orthros and the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of Sts. Constantine and Helen (Sunday morning), during which Deacon Father Stefan Jaerpenberg was ordained a Priest;
- a parish gathering (*Synaxis*) at the Cathedral, during which several texts from our Holy Tradition (relating to the Theotokos, the



Saints, the Precious Cross, and memorial services)—which is rejected by Protestantism—were read and discussed.

C. We would like to make special reference to the following matters:

- the Ordination of the kindly and genial Father Stefan, whose ministry will contribute to a more regular and concentrated program of services at the Cathedral;
- the translation of liturgical texts (the text for Vespers in a bilingual, Greek-Swedish edition is already in use);
- the publication of the following in Swedish: the periodical, *Orthodoxt Kyrkoliv*; the calendar, “Kyrklig Kalendar 2012”; and the prayer book, *Liten Bonbok för Ortodoxt Kristna*;
- the warm hospitality of our faithful in Sweden, who spared no effort or expense on behalf of our group from Greece;



- Father Anders' concern for his pastoral ministry, canonical order, and solutions to various serious matters pertaining to our mission in this Lutheran country of such outstanding natural beauty.

This was indeed yet another edifying pastoral visit which gave fresh impetus to our Orthodox witness. Our faithful in Sweden were comforted, gladdened, and strengthened. Various problems were resolved. Our bonds of love in Christ became ever stronger and more profound. Glory to God for all things!

