



HOLY DIOCESE OF STOCKHOLM SWEDEN

■ On the occasion of the Patronal Feast of the Church of Sts. Constantine and Helen in Stockholm (May 21, 2015)

St. Constantine, Equal to the Apostles His Vision and Our Responsibility

† *Metropolitan Cyprian of
Oropos and Phyle*

*Your Grace, Bishop Johannes of Makarioupolis;
Venerable Fathers, Mothers, Brothers and Sisters;
Beloved Children in the Lord:*



Christ is in our midst! May our All-Holy Mother and *Theotokos* and our elder Brothers, the Choirs of the Holy Angels and the Saints of the Church, ever be our guides, patrons, and comforters on our journey to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The great Feast of the Holy and Glorious God-crowned Monarchs Constantine and Helen, Equals to the Apostles, has gathered us yet again this year in this historic missionary Church dedicated to them, in order that we might render them honor and thanksgiving, to the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

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It is truly edifying and salutary to render honor to the Royal Saints Constantine and Helen; moreover, it is an exceptional blessing to do so

here, at the northern extremity of Western Europe: Europe, which has never been favorably disposed towards St. Constantine the Great; Europe, which not only has denied his glory in Heaven, but even turned against him—and continues to do so—with impassioned prejudice, sullyng this crowning figure of the Orthodox Church and of worldwide civilization.



Our much-revered Bishop Johannes, the pioneer of our Orthodox mission here in Western Europe, was truly enlightened by God in his decision to dedicate the Church he built to St. Constantine, thereby turning away, with discernment and wisdom, from western rationalism, which, under the cloak of science, has contributed to the emergence of a new barbarity, a moral degeneration without precedent.

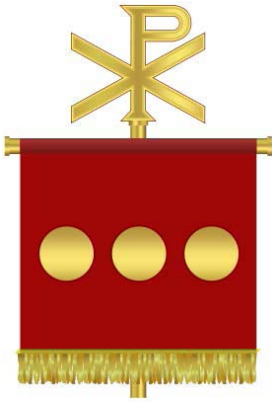
Yes, St. Constantine the Great is the great historic, spiritual, and ecclesiastical figure that constitutes a *response* to the atheistic, amoral, Marxist, Papist, and Protestant scholarship of Europe; he was and is a *response*, not simply as the first Christian Emperor of a vast Empire, but also as the one who, in the fourth century, with consistency of word and deed, combining action and vision (*praxis* and *theoria*), radically overturned the pagan foundation and perspective of the social landscape, and reformed, in like manner to the Apostles, the entire institutional network of public life, aspiring to imbue it with an ecclesiastical ethos, having the *Cross and Christ at its center*.

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The Cathedral of the Holy Diocese of Stockholm, in which we honor today the Holy Equals to the Apostles, constitutes a luminous *podium* of Orthodoxy, that is, of True Evangelical Faith, but also of the vision of St. Constantine the Great for the Christianization of the Empire and the creation of a Christian civilization in Europe.

Europe tries to trivialize, literally to demolish, the importance of the Holy Equal to the Apostles. It has aptly been said that “no other



The labarum of St. Constantine the Great

leader in the West has been subject to harsher and graver accusations than St. Constantine the Great.”

The West long ago rejected two fundamental elements of the great figure of St. Constantine: first, the “foolishness” of the Cross and the *ethos of the Cross*; second, the *Truth of the Faith*, and in particular the Divinity of Christ our Savior.

- With regard to the **first** element, it has been incontrovertibly and historically documented that the Precious Cross was revealed to St. Constantine the Great along with the Divine exhortation: “By this sign shalt thou conquer.” This sign from

God constituted a turning-point in his life, yet also, when instantiated as the “ethos of the Cross,” permeated his entire life, as a mindset, as vision (*theoria*), and as action (*praxis*). His humble attitude, his humble speech, and his humble and merciful manners astonished the Christians of his day, who until that time had suffered the consequences of the tyranny of previous emperors.

Directly bound up with the ethos of the Cross, which the degenerate West rejects, are austerity and modesty of morals: the truly farseeing St. Constantine, understanding that powerful nations and states are not brought down by external enemies but rather by internal degeneration and moral decay, worked to adapt the laws of the Empire to the principles of the Gospel; in particular, he outlawed concubinage, took measures to strengthen the institution of the family, ordained the death penalty for a man who committed the offense of adultery with a married woman, called for extremely harsh punishments for the crimes of abducting children and virgins and for sexual offenses.

- With regard to the **second** element—the Truth of the Faith—the contribution of St. Constantine the Great to the struggle of the Church to safeguard dogmatic faith in the Divinity of the Word is well known and indisputable. Just as at the First Œcumenical Synod (325), so until his repose (337), he remained faithful to the dogma of the Consubstantiality of Christ our Savior with God the Father and was unambiguously anti-Arian.





His adherence to the Truth of the Faith underscored with exceptional emphasis that the Gospel has substantial meaning and serves as “glad tidings” only when it is proclaimed and put into practice with our Crucified God, the Son and Word of God who was Incarnate, Crucified, and Resurrected and is consubstantial with the Father, at its center.

Western theology and philosophy in our days wants a Christ without Divinity and without the Cross. The West has surpassed even the impiety of Arios, in that it wishes to invest with Christian authority every kind of perversity and degeneration. The West passes over in silence the Mystery of the Deification and Christification of man in the Cross and by means of the Cross and Resurrection, which is the ethos of the Church. Europe adheres to a secular humanism that is becoming ever more colorless, contrary to the Gospel and the Cross, and, ultimately, anti-human.

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My beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This Cathedral of ours, named in honor of the Saints who were crowned by God, calls us today, on its Patronal Feast, to examine our duty in greater depth: We, its parishioners, ought to show forth our Church as a living vessel and an ever-flowing wellspring of the perpetually new, ageless civilization envisioned by St. Constantine the Great.

Yes, Europe today needs to be re-evangelized, with the help of the Orthodox communities of the Genuine Church of Christ, which communities will manifest and bear witness to Orthodox Truth.

Our responsibility is very great to our brothers in the West, of whom the well-disposed yearn for the authenticity of Orthodox Truth and the Orthodox ethos.

When we venerate the Holy Icon of the Holy Equals to the Apostles, we also kiss the Precious Cross in between the two Saints. This is something that should rouse us and instill in us the essence of the Orthodox ethos; that is, that the Cross is the center of our lives and only when we are crucified is it possible for us to give witness to the Truth and Life, “that the world might believe.”

Kissing the Holy Icon with such an insight will allow us to chant the *Apolytikion* of our Saints with understanding:



**Thou wast first to be a Divine
bastion among emperors, hav-
ing received the gift of the
True Faith from Heaven;
wherefore, thou didst
make manifest the Cross
of Christ and didst spread
the Orthodox Faith. O Con-
stantine, Equal to the Apos-
tles, together with thy mother
Helen, intercede on behalf of our souls.**

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May the prayers of our Elder and Father, Metropolitan Cyprian of blessed memory († 17.5.2013) sustain us in Orthodox piety, and may the Power of the Precious Cross strengthen us and give us unswerving steadfastness in Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy.

Let us not forget that the word “Constantine” is of Latin origin (Constantinus) and means “constancy” or “standing firm” (*constantia*). In other words, the name of the Saint serves for all of the faithful as a constant reminder that we must have a *regal mindset*, a *steadfast mindset*, which means that we should stand firm, well and profoundly entrenched and founded on our Crucified Christ, to Whom are due glory, honor, and worship, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages. Amen!

May 7, 2015 (Old Style)
†Appearance of the Precious Cross
in Jerusalem in 346
†Apodosis of Pascha

✙
**TO GOD BE
GLORY AND THANKSGIVING**