



■ Under the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God

Pastoral Visit to Wintry Sweden

January 20-24, 2017 (Old Style)

Glory to God for all things!

With the blessing of His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos and of the Holy Synod, we were once again counted worthy to make yet another pastoral visit, in our capacity as *Locum Tenens*, to the Holy Diocese of Stockholm.



We visit this Diocese three times a year: in autumn (September), winter (January), and spring (May), in order to strengthen our multi-ethnic Small Flock, deal with practical issues, and help to consolidate ecclesiastical bonds in Christ with the Church of Genuine Orthodox Christians in Greece.

The September and January visits are of short duration and only the *Locum Tenens*, one Priest, and one Subdeacon from Greece participate.

The May visits, on the occasion of the Patronal Feast of the Cathedral dedicated to Sts. Constantine and Helen, take place with the participation of Greek clergy, monastics, and lay people, are of longer duration, and are very constructive from every viewpoint, by the Grace of God and to the glory of His Name.

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Beautiful Sweden welcomed us this time (January 24-27 [Old Style]) draped in her winter garb, with very low temperatures. The snowy white fields, dense forests of evergreens, fallen yellow leaves, frozen lakes, decreased daylight—so different from Greek urban centers—were greatly brightened by the love, genial smiles, and self-sacrificing hospitality of our brothers and sisters.



We received the blessing of the ailing Bishop Johannes of Makarioupolis (who recently turned 87), bedridden for a number of years; • concelebrated with the local clergy (two Priests and one Deacon) at the Cathedral (on the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee) and at the Convent of St. Philothei (on Friday); • performed *Trisagria*

at the graves of our Orthodox faithful in Stockholm's Woodland Cemetery; • held a very edifying parish Synaxis at the Episcopal Residence (Sunday evening), which had as its main theme the pharisaical mindset versus one of compassion. In response to questions posed by several of our faithful who are converts to the Faith, but also those of well-disposed Lutherans in attendance, a lengthy discussion developed—with the assistance of Swedish Father Anders and Czech Father Jirí—detailing specific differences between Eastern Patristic Christianity and Western Lutheranism, with special emphasis on the Christocentric mysticism of Orthodoxy. • On a separate occasion, we discussed various serious issues pertain-





ing to our Diocese and the necessary course of action to resolve them.

The joy in Christ of our brothers and sisters was manifest, and they yet again displayed their charitable disposition by their spontaneous and enthusiastic "collection" (cf. I Corinthians 16: 1-4) on behalf of the poor in Greece who are suffering owing to the protracted economic crisis.

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On Monday evening (January 24), we returned to our blessed homeland, via Munich.

The All-Hymned Theotokos granted us her protection and strengthening, as always, in this latest pastoral visit, and warmed the hearts of the Greek and Swedish Genuine Orthodox Christians by her Grace.

To God are due glory and thanksgiving, by the intercessions of the Most Blessed Mother of our Lord.



January 24, 2017 (Old Style)
† St. Xenia of Rome and
St. Xenia of St. Petersburg

† Metropolitan Cyprian
of Oropos and Phyle