



## Pastoral Visit to the Holy Diocese of Stockholm, Sweden

May 27 - June 3, 2017 (Old Style)



**B**y the **Grace** of the All-Holy Spirit and the intercessions of the Holy God-crowned Monarchs Constantine and Helen, Equals to the Apostles, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle once again visited, in his capacity as *Locum Tenens*, the lovely northern land of Sweden, in order to take part in the annual Patronal Feast of the Cathedral Church of our Holy Diocese.

His Eminence was accompanied by a group of thirteen clergy, monastics, and laypeople.

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**On Friday** after Pentecost, May 27, 2017 (Old Style), following the customary reception of the Hierarchy at the Episcopal residence in Vårberg, Stockholm, with the participation of the Reverend Fathers Anders Åkerström, Stefanos Jaerpenberg, and Angelos Mourlas (the latter from Greece), Hierodeacon Father Theochares, and a small group of faithful from the parish, all of the visitors from Greece visited His Grace, Bishop Johannes of Makarioupolis, the founder of our mission in Sweden, at his bedside. Metropol-





itan Cyprian conveyed to him the best wishes of the Hierarchs of our Holy Synod and of the faithful of our Metropolis in Greece, and asked for his prayers that his week-long pastoral visit might be a profitable one.

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**The next day, Saturday, May 28 (Old Style),** Metropolitan Cyprian celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Convent of St. Philothei of Athens, located in Villberga, Grillby, where Mother Magdalene and Sister Lydia reside in the stillness and refreshing beauty of the Swedish woods.

After the Liturgy and the *Trisagion* celebrated at the grave of the founder of the convent, Mother Philothei of blessed memory, the sisters treated everyone to an outdoor *agape* meal, at which all were also spiritually nourished with a discussion relating to the Feast of Pentecost and the palpable presence and protection of St. Philothei at the convent dedicated to her.

**That** afternoon, Resurrectional Vespers for the Feast of All Saints and of Sts. Constantine and Helen was celebrated, in Greek and Swedish, at the Diocese's Cathedral Church, followed by the Small Compline and the Akathist Hymn to the Saints being honored, concluding with the prayers before Holy Communion.



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**On Sunday** of All Saints, **May 29 (Old Style)**, Metropolitan Cyprian presided at the Patronal Feast of the Church of Sts. Constantine and Helen, with the participation of the Reverend Fathers Anders, Stefanos, and

Angelos, Hierodeacon Father Theochares, Subdeacon Monk Antonios, and several alter servers. A large multi-ethnic flock was in attendance, many of whom communed of the Immaculate Mysteries.

For the first time, His Grace, Bishop Johannes' health did not allow him to be present at the festal Liturgy, and he partook of Holy Communion in his adjacent cell.



Following the procession with the Holy Icon of the Saints being honored and the Blessing of the Five Loaves, those in attendance sat down together for an *agape* meal, where the parishioners expressed their joy at the presence and participation of their Greek brothers and sisters in the joy of their congregation.

On Sunday evening, from 7-10 p.m., there took place the customary parish *Synaxis*, during the first part of which Metropolitan Cyprian enumerated eleven reasons why St. Constantine rightly bears the title "the Great," referring to the charisms and contribu-



tions of the Saint, as well as to the "dividing line" that his edicts marked in the history of the Church and of humankind in general. The audience listened with great interest and took a lively part in the discussion about the Patron Saint of our mission in Sweden.



In the second part of the *Synaxis*, a striking narrative from *The Spiritual Meadow* was read and discussed, which stirringly emphasized the virtues of compassion and almsgiving.

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**On Monday, May 30 (Old Style)**, a small group led the Greek visitors on a tour of Skansen, the world's first open-air museum, which recreates the way of life in different parts of Sweden before the industrial era with 150 houses, workshops, stores and farm buildings.

Back at the Episcopal residence, His Eminence met with various people, encouraging, consoling, and offering guidance to his spiritual flock in the north.

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**On Tuesday, May 31 (Old Style)**, the visitors from Greece drove to the small town of Järbo, two hours north of Uppsala.

Thus they had the wonderful gift of traversing magnificent landscapes of forests, lakes, and fields, where nature enraptured them with its spring-like freshness and the endless hues of green and blue, under the nearly unsetting sun of early summer.

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**On Wednesday, June 1 (Old Style)** Metropolitan Cyprian celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Chapel dedicated to St. Joseph



the Betrothed, located on the property of our brother and sister in Christ, Laurence and Marjo.

At the *agape* meal which followed, Metropolitan Cyprian spoke about the vision of creation from a Patristic perspective, and our hostess described practical ways of protecting and respecting the environment within the framework of Orthodox spirituality.

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**On Thursday, June 2 (Old Style),** His Eminence liturgized at the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos, in the university town of Uppsala.

He once again gave thanks to God for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, stressing the great importance of the presence of an Orthodox parish in the city of Uppsala, which is one of the world centers of ecumenism.

Then Presbytera Birgitta then hospitably opened her house to the visitors from Greece for an *agape* meal, during which Father Anders recounted the life of the Holy Hieromartyr Stenfinn, Enlightener of the Swedes, whose grave still exists and is honored even by Lutherans today.

The group was then given a tour of the historic site of Gamla Uppsala ("Old Uppsala"), where they were able to visit the medieval Church and the royal burial mounds from Viking times.

Upon returning to the Episcopal residence, His Eminence once again met with the faithful.

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**On Friday, June 3 (Old Style)** several of the faithful from Stockholm went with Metropolitan Cyprian and the Greek visitors to the immense, verdant, and well ordered Skogskyrkogården cemetery, in the Orthodox section of which

they served *Trisagia* at the graves of Mother Parthenia and another of our faithful.

**D**uring lunch, Metropolitan Cyprian asked Father Anders to recount the extremely moving life story of His Grace, Bishop Johannes, and how the latter founded the parish of Sts. Constantine and Helen.



**E**veryone then went to His Grace's cell to receive his blessing, singing hymns around his bedside. They then departed for their homeland, giving thanks to our Lord for His gifts and the mutual edification with our brothers and sisters in this lovely northern land.

**M**ay our All-Good God confirm and strengthen our Small Flock in Sweden in their good struggles for their sanctification and witness to the Faith, for the glory of God and the salvation of many souls.

