



■ For the strengthening of our Small Flock

Pastoral Visit to the Holy Land of Georgia

August 12-19, 2021 (Old Style)



Under the Protection of the *Panagia Portaitissa* and of St. Nina, the Enlightener of Iberia (Georgia), and despite the particularly difficult situation occasioned by the pandemic, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, in his capacity as *Locum Tenens* of the Holy Diocese of Gldani, made yet another pastoral visit to the sanctified country of Georgia, so as to celebrate the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos with the flock of our Church in that country.

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On Wednesday, August 12, 2021 (Old Style), Metropolitan Cyprian and a small group of travelling companions arrived at the airport of Tbilisi around 4:30 a.m., where they were greeted by the diocesan clergy: the Reverend Fathers Basili Mkalavishvili and Vakhtang Mariani, and Hieromonks Grigol (Kobahidze) and Alexei (Aratsemia).

Everyone then went to the Cathedral Church of the *Panagia Portaitissa* in Gldani, a suburb of Tbilisi, where His Eminence conveyed to the faithful the best wishes of His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos and the Hierarchs of our Holy Synod.

The iconography of the Church, executed in traditional Georgian style, has now been completed, thanks to the tireless efforts of the faithful.



That afternoon, the pilgrims went to the Holy Cross Church of Jvari, in order to receive the blessing of St. Nina, the Equal to the Apostles, and of the first Christian Monarchs of Iberia, Sts. Mirian and Nana.

Metropolitan Cyprian's program included daily Divine Liturgies, homilies, edifying discussions with our clergy and ecclesiastical communities (the parish of the Church of the Resurrection of Christ, the *Hesychnasterion* of the Holy Prophetess Anna, and the Brotherhood of the *Panagia Portaitissa* and the Precious Cross, in Zedanzeni), and confessions, culminating in the Great Feast of the Theotokos at the Church of the *Panagia Portaitissa*—a Feast which is one of the country's national holidays, celebrated with three days of festivities.

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On Thursday, August 13 (Old Style), the delegation from Greece went to the *Hesychnasterion* of the Prophetess Anna, which is under the direction of the Reverend Mother Nina and served by Father Alexei. Before the Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Cyprian tonsured the Novice Manana a Rasophore Nun with the name Justina. After the service, Mother Nina gave His Eminence a tour of the Church of St. Anna that is under construction, as well as of the new monastic cells, and then treated everyone to a hearty meal.



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On Friday, August 14 (Old Style), the Forefeast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, Metropolitan Cyprian and those with him went to the private chapel of Father Alexei, which is dedicated to All Saints of Georgia.

That afternoon, at the Church of the *Panagia Portaitissa*, the Vigil of Vespers and Matins were served, according to the Slavic *typikon*.

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On Saturday, August 15 (Old Style), the Great Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, Metropolitan Cyprian concelebrated with the Reverend Fathers Basili and Vakhtang (Rectors of



the Church) and Hieromonks Father Grigol and Father Alexei, assisted by a number of Subdeacons.

At the chanters stand, the women's choir invited the nuns from Greece to contribute some Byzantine hymnody to the Georgian liturgical tradition.

Before the Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Cyprian tonsured Giorgi Achelashvili, the grandson of Father Basili, a Reader and then ordained him a Subdeacon. During the chanting of *Axion Estin* ("It is Truly Meet"), His Eminence ordained him a Deacon.

Multitudes of faithful of all ages communed of the Immaculate Mysteries. The customary procession around the Church then took place, with stops for petitions, readings from the Gospel, and springing of Holy Water, in accordance with local tradition.

At the *agape* meal that followed, Georgian and Greek hymns were sung, and best wishes extended to our Hierarchs, the newly-ordained Deacon, and the Georgian Fathers.

● Deacon Father Giorgi is 25 years old, married to the charming Diakonissa Nina, and father of a young son. Since his childhood he has adhered to the life of the Church and served Father Basili, assisting him both in his liturgical needs and with the construction of the truly marvelous Church of the *Panagia Portaitissa*. He has gained the love and respect of all of the faithful, and is henceforth called upon as a clergyman to support Fathers Basili and Vakhtang, who are weighed down by hardships and illness.

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On Sunday, August 16 (Old Style, commemoration of the Translation of the Holy *Mandelion*), His Eminence once again celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the *Panagia Portaitissa* together with all of the diocesan clergy.

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On Monday, August 17 (Old Style), Metropolitan Cyprian went with his companions to the Zedazeni mountain so as to liturgize at the Community of the Precious Cross. His Eminence presided at the Divine Liturgy, assisted by Father Alexei, while Father Basili confessed





the members of the community, who communed together with the Greeks.

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On Tuesday, August 18 (Old Style) the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Church of the Resurrection of our Lord, where Father Grigol is the serving Priest.

That evening, the visitors from Greece returned to Gldani, where, after a final stop at the Church of the *Panagia Portaitissa*, they partook one last time of the sacrificial love and hospitality of our Georgian brethren.

They left for the Tbilisi airport after midnight, accompanied by the Fathers and some of the faithful.

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Throughout the entire pastoral visit, our Georgian brothers and sisters expressed to His Eminence their profound gratitude for his sacrificial love and care in these difficult times.

Metropolitan Cyprian called the faithful to watchfulness, repentance, humility, and unity, so as to protect themselves from the spirit of delusion, so widespread these days, and exhorted everyone to turn in prayer to the Protection of our Most Holy Mother with simplicity of heart, awareness of their sinfulness, and with trust in the tender intercessions of the Most Blessed Lady the Theotokos.

On Wednesday, August 19 (Old Style), the pilgrims arrived safely back in Greece with feelings of glorification and gratitude to the Theotokos, St. Nina, and all the Saints of Georgia, who yet again bestowed their blessing upon this pastoral visit, for the edification, consolidation, and spiritual consolation of our Georgian brothers and sisters in their struggles on behalf of True Orthodoxy.

