



## Winter Pastoral Visit to the Holy Land of Georgia

November 20-23, 2021 (Old Style)



**U**nder the Protection of the *Panagia Portaitissa* and of St. Nina, the Enlightener of Iberia, despite the difficult prevailing circumstances, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle made yet another pastoral visit, in his capacity as *Locum Tenens* of the Holy Diocese of Gldani, to the sanctified land of Georgia, this time for the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple.

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**On Friday**, November 20, 2021 (Old Style), Metropolitan Cyprian and several travelling companions arrived at 4:30 a.m. at the Tbilisi airport, where the local clergy—the Reverend Father Basili Mkalavishvili, Father Vakhtang Mariani, Hieromonks Grigol (Kobahidze) and Alexei (Aratsemia), and Deacon Father Giorgi Achelashvili—welcomed their Greek brethren.

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.

That afternoon, the small group went to the *Hesychnasterion* of the Prophetess Anna, in Teleti, where His Eminence performed the *Thyranoixia* (“Opening of the Doors”) of the newly built Church dedicated to St. Anna the Prophetess, assisted by the convent’s serving Priest, Hieromonk Father Alexei, Deacon Fa-

ther Giorgi, and Subdeacon Christos Katsoudas from Greece.

Around 9 o'clock that evening, the All-Night Vigil for the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos began in the same Church, served and chanted in Georgian and in Greek. At this time, Metropolitan Cyprian tonsured the Reverend Mother Nina a Schema-nun, in an atmosphere of compunction and spiritual joy. The majority of those in attendance communed of the Immaculate Mysteries.



The humble Sisterhood, in keeping with the unparalleled tradition of Georgian hospitality, served a meal to everyone present, who in turn extended their heartfelt best wishes to the Most Reverend Abbess, who is distinguished by her peaceable spirit, ecclesiastical mindset, and discrete missionary work.

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**On Saturday afternoon,** November 21 and Sunday, November 22 (Old Style), Metropolitan Cyprian served Great Vespers and Orthros, followed by a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral dedicated to the *Panagia Portaitissa*, assisted by Fathers Basili and Vakhtang (the Church Rectors), and Hieromonk Alexei, Deacon Father George, and several Subdeacons.

The women's choir once again invited the nuns from Greece to contribute some Byzantine hymns to the Georgian liturgical tradition, so as to emphasize our inter-Orthodox unity.

At the end of this spiritual banquet, Metropolitan Cyprian awarded Father Basili, as a token of appreciation, a commemorative medallion from the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, which celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of its foundation this year. He spoke about Father Basili's relationship with our ever-memorable Elder, Metropolitan Cyprian of blessed memory

(† 17.5.2013), and also about the wonderful pastoral work Father Basili has undertaken over the past thirty or so years, amidst various trials and tribulations.

His Eminence then addressed some words of edification to the faithful on the Gospel reading of



the day concerning the parable of the rich fool:

The message of the Gospel is very clear: earthly goods are ephemeral, and striving to accumulate them is foolishness. We should thus endeavor to acquire the wealth that is incorruptible and eternal: spiritual wealth, the wealth of sanctity. Referring to two contemporary examples of lay women (one of them, in fact, very young), he emphasized the great sanctifying power of patience in involuntary afflictions.



At the *agape* meal, Metropolitan Cyprian combined catechesis with psalmody, speaking about the venerable person of our Most Holy Mother, whose Protection we must always seek in every circumstance with complete trust and hope.

After midnight, His Eminence and his travelling companions left for the Tbilisi airport, accompanied by the Fathers and several of the faithful. Our Georgian brethren once again expressed their profound gratitude to His Eminence for his self-sacrificial love and care, amidst the difficult conditions occasioned by the pandemic.

The pilgrims returned safely to Greece on Monday, with feelings of glorification and thanksgiving to the Theotokos, St. Nina, and all the Saints of Georgia, who protected the small group and bestowed their Grace on this pastoral visit, for the consolidation of our Georgian Brothers and sisters struggling on behalf of the True Orthodox Faith.

