



■ Visit to the Holy Diocese of Stockholm

## Autumn Pastoral Visit to Sweden September 15-22, 2022 (Old Style)



**F**ollowing the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, and on the occasion of the Synaxis of All Saints of Scandinavia, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian, with the blessing of His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos and of the Holy Synod, made his customary autumn pastoral visit to the small flock of our Church in Sweden.

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**On Wednesday, September 15 (Old Style)** Metropolitan Cyprian was received at the Cathedral Church of Sts. Constantine and Helena, in Vårberg, Stockholm by the Reverend Father Anders Åkerström, Hierodeacon Father Theochares, and a number of the faithful.

His Eminence conveyed to them greetings from the Hierarchs in Greece, and expressed the wish that the following days together be ones of mutual spiritual edification.

Father Anders thanked the Metropolitan for his pastoral love and the sacrificial care he shows by visiting the small flock in the North three times a year.

Everyone then went to the grave of the ever-memorable Bishop Johannes, located behind the Church, where Metropoli-

tan Cyprian served a *Trisagion* for the repose of this dearly beloved spiritual Father of our brethren in Sweden. A fasting meal was then served to all present.

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**On Thursday, September 16 (Old Style)** the customary visit was made to the Orthodox section of the Skogskyrkogården cemetery in Stockholm, where Metropolitan Cyprian served *Trisagia* at the grave of Mother Parthenia of blessed memory,



as well as those of several other of our faithful.

That afternoon, Metropolitan Cyprian had a very constructive meeting with the clergy, during which he was given an overview of recent developments in the parish and various ongoing projects. He asked the Fathers to draw up a list of pastoral activities that they could undertake in the upcoming years.

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**On Friday, September 17 (Old Style),** a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Convent of St. Philothei in Villberga, with the participation of the clergy and a number of the faithful. The Liturgy took place in the convent's chapel dedicated to St. Nicholas. A *Trisagion* was then chanted at the grave of the convent's founder, Mother Philothei of blessed memory.

At the end of the service, the sisters treated everyone to an *agape* meal. Father Anders spoke about St. Unni, Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, whose feast day it was. St. Unni came to Birka, Sweden in 935 to preach the Gospel, but found no trace of the parish founded there by St. Ansgar. The year of the Saint's death (936) is the first known date recording an event that took place on Swedish territory.



**M**etropolitan Cyprian spoke about the necessity and therapeutic power of gratitude towards God for the multitude of His gifts to us, and in particular the Divine Liturgy and the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

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**On Saturday, September 18 (Old Style)**, the Divine Liturgy scheduled to be celebrated at the house chapel dedicated to St. Ignatios in Norrköping had to be canceled, owing to illness. Instead, a small pilgrimage was carried out in the footsteps of St. Botvid, a Swedish missionary and wonderworker of the early 11th century who had been converted to Christianity during a visit to England.

That afternoon, Great Vespers and the Small Compline were served at the Church of Sts. Constantine and Helen.

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**On the Sunday after the Exaltation of the Cross, September 19 (Old Style)**, the Midnight Office, Orthros, and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were celebrated at the Church in Stockholm. Metropolitan Cyprian presided, assisted by Father Anders Åkerström, Father Stefanos Jarpenberg, and Hierodeacon Father Theochaes.

The Synaxis of All Saints of Scandinavia was festively celebrated for the first time on this occasion with a newly composed Apolytikion and the installa-

tion of an Icon of All Saints of the Nordic Lands, the first of its kind, which was commissioned from the Icon Studio of the Convent of the Holy Angels in Greece.

Before the Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Cyprian ordained, through *Cheirothesia*, parishioner Alexander Hahr a Subdeacon. The new Subdeacon is married with three young children and is a second-year student, via online courses, at the St. Photios Orthodox Theological Seminary (Etna, California).



In his homily, Metropolitan Cyprian spoke about the miracle of the Appearance of the Precious Cross over Athens in 1925 as a heavenly gift for the strengthening and consolation of faithful Orthodox Christians, and also about the Saints of Scandinavia.

In reference to the Gospel passage of the day, he emphasized the necessity of bearing our personal cross by means of struggling against our passions, and in particular those of ambition, avarice, and love of pleasure. As Christians, we are called to live an ascetic life, not one of comforts, indulgence, and abundance. Rather, we should content ourselves with what is necessary for our survival and give what is left over to our brothers and sisters in need. Such a struggle is not an easy one, but the Grace of God strengthens the well-intentioned believer and leads us to union with Christ.



That evening, a Synaxis was held in the parish hall, during which Metropolitan Cyprian discussed several contemporary miracles of the Precious Cross and what it means in practical terms to bear our cross in our everyday lives. He encouraged the faithful to make the sign of the Cross with care and attention, so as to receive its protective and illuminating Grace.



In the way of the Cross, we encounter many unforeseen temptations, which we are called to confront with patience and humility. To do so necessitates watchfulness and prayerful preparedness, invoking the aid of the Mother of God. The Metropolitan read several texts in order to illustrate these points more vividly and understandably.

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**On Monday, September 20 (Old Style),** Metropolitan Cyprian had the opportunity to meet privately with several of the faithful for spiritual counsel and confession.

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**On Tuesday, September 21 (Old Style),** the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Church of the Dormition, located in the Old Cemetery of Uppsala. Taking advantage of the beautiful autumn weather, the Metropolitan and parishioners then walked to the apartment of Father Anders, where he and Presbytera Birgitta served everyone an *agape* meal.

At the end of the meal, Father Anders spoke about the youth of



St. Ansgar (February 3, †865) and Metropolitan Cyprian discussed the differences between Orthodox Hesychasm and Eastern philosophies, as well as the importance of having a spiritual Father and guide.

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**On Wednesday, September 22 (Old Style),** Metropolitan Cyprian and his travelling companions returned to Greece with feelings of thanksgiving to our Lord for this fruitful pastoral visit.

