



## Pastoral Visit to the Holy Land of Georgia

November 19- 22, 2022 (Old Style)



**U**nder the Protection of the *Panagia Portaitissa* and of St. Nina, the Enlightener of Iberia, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle made a pastoral visit to the sanctified land of Georgia for the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple, in his capacity as *Locum Tenens* of the Holy Diocese of Gldani and with the blessing of His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos and of our Holy Synod.

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**On Friday**, November 19 (Old Style), Metropolitan Cyprian and a small group of travelling companions arrived around 4:30 a.m. at the Tbilisi airport, where they were greeted by the diocesan clergy – the Reverend Fathers Basili Mkalavishvili and Vakhtang Mariani, Father Giorgi Achelashvili, Hieromonks Grigol (Kobahidze) and Aleksii (Aratsemia), and Deacon Father Andria – nuns, and laypeople.

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

That afternoon, the visitors from Greece drove to the *Hesychnasterion* of the Prophetess Anna, located in Teleti. At 9:30 p.m., they began the All-Night Vigil for the Forefeast of Entrance of the Theotokos, celebrated in the convent's newly-built

*Katholikon* (main Church) in Georgian and Greek, in an atmosphere of compunction and spiritual joy.

His Eminence presided, assisted by Father Aleksii and Protopresbyter Sergej Begashov (from our Sister Church, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad under Metropolitan Agafangel).

The latter has temporarily taken refuge with his family in Tbilisi owing to the wartime conditions prevailing in the region from which he hails (Berdyansk, Ukraine, some 80 kilometers west of Mariupol).

The Sisterhood under the Reverend Mother Nina, in keeping with the warmth of Georgian hospitality, offered an *agape* meal to all present, who in turn expressed their fervent best wishes to the Reverend Abbess on the occasion of the anniversary of her Tonsure to the Great Schema (November 21, 2021), that she might continue her God-pleasing guidance of her sisterhood and support to the faithful.

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On Saturday afternoon, and again on Sunday, November 21 (Old Style), the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos, Metropolitan Cyprian presided at Great Vespers, Orthros, and the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral, assisted by the diocesan clergy.

At the conclusion of this spiritual banquet, His Eminence delivered a homily for the edification of the faithful. He spoke about the two sides of our struggle to remain faithful to the Tradition of our Church: our steadfastness in **Orthodoxy**—that is, the dogmas and precepts of the Holy Fathers (with special reference to our adherence to the Church Calendar)—and **Orthopraxy**, that is, our endeavor to live in accordance with the ethos of the Church. In this struggle, we have our Most Holy Mother as our protectress and succor.

During the *agape* meal that followed, Metropolitan Cyprian expressed his joy at this experience of unity in Christ, and exhorted those present to strive to “fit”





everyone in their hearts, like a certain monk who wept when he perceived that one of his fellow monastics was absent from his heart. Our Georgian brethren expressed to His Eminence their profound gratitude for his self-sacrificial love and care.

After midnight, Metropolitan Cyprian and his travelling companions departed for the Tbilisi airport, accompanied by the clergy, nuns, and several of the faithful. They arrived safely back in Greece on Monday morning, with feelings of doxology and gratitude to the Theotokos, St. Nina, and all the Saints of Georgia, through whose intercessions this brief pastoral visit proved to be very fruitful in Christ, for the strengthening of our Georgian brothers and sisters.

