



■ [Visit to the Holy Diocese of Stockholm](#)

Winter Pastoral Ministry in Sweden

February 3-8, 2023 (Old Style)



On the threshold of Great Lent, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle made his customary winter pastoral visit to the small flock of our Church in Sweden, in his capacity as *Locum Tenens* of the Diocese of Stockholm and with the blessing of our

Holy Synod. The main purpose of his visit was to participate in the Patronal Feast of the Convent of St. Philothei († February 19), the celebration of which was transferred to Saturday, February 5, so that His Eminence could return to Greece in time for the outset of Great Lent.

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On Thursday, February 3 (Old Style), Metropolitan Cyprian arrived with his travelling companions at noon in this beautiful northern land.

Following the reception of the Hierarch at the Church of Sts. Constantine and Helen in Vårberg, Stockholm, His Eminence conveyed to the faithful the greetings of the Bishops in Greece and prayed that the following days of fellowship be spiritually edifying for all involved.

Father Anders Åkerström thanked His Eminence for his pastoral love and self-sacrificial care in coming to visit the small flock in the North three times a year.



Everyone then went to the grave of Bishop Johannes of blessed memory († July 5, 2020), located behind the sanctuary of the Church, where Metropolitan Cyprian served a *Trisagion* for the repose of this dearly beloved spiritual Father of our brethren in Sweden and founder of our Mission there. A meal was then served to all present.

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On Friday, February 4 (Old Style), Metropolitan Cyprian made his customary visit to the Orthodox section of the **Skogskogården cemetery** in Stockholm, where he served *Trisagia* at the grave of the ever-memorable Mother Parthenia and of several other of our departed faithful. Ceramic icons of the Resurrection and lanterns have been placed at each grave as a witness to Orthodox spirituality.

• That afternoon, Metropolitan Cyprian met with his Episcopal Representative, Father Anders, who, at the former's request, had prepared a report of the progress of the Diocese of Stockholm over the course of the last decade, both at a practical and spiritual level. He then set forth proposals for the future, based on which His Eminence gave instructions and guidance for subsequent steps to be taken and visions for the future of our mission in Sweden.





On Saturday, February 5 (Old Style), Orthros and a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were celebrated in honor of St. Philothei of Athens (transferred to this day from February 19) at the Convent dedicated to her in Villberga, Grillby, with the participation of our clergy and a number of the faithful.



At the end of the Liturgy, the nuns served everyone an *agape* meal, during which Father Anders spoke about the lives of St. Ansgar, Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen and “Apostle of the North” (February 3) and of St. Nithard, protomartyr of Sweden (February 4).

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On the Sunday of the Last Judgment, February 6 (Old Style), the Midnight Office, Orthros, and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were celebrated at the Cathedral Church of Sts. Constantine and Helen. Metropolitan Cyprian presided, assisted by Father Anders Åkerström, Father Stefanos Jaerpenberg, Hierodeacon Father Theochares, and Subdeacons Alexander Hahr and Christos Katsoudas.

In his homily, Metropolitan Cyprian commented on the Gospel reading, according to which the sole criterion whereby we will be judged on the Day of Judgement is that of love:

Love in Christ is an all-embracing gift of the Holy Spirit, which is not limited to “good deeds,” but rather works in conjunction with the practice of all of the other evangelical injunctions. Love is, moreover, Christocentric, and thus indissolubly bound up with genuine faith in Christ our Savior.

This Gospel reading on the threshold of Great Lent reminds us that the work of repentance is not defined by a “dry” asceticism of mere fasting and prayer, but rather is expressed as an opening of our heart towards our neighbor, unto whom we minister with self-sacrifice, following the example of our Lord and God Jesus Christ, Who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”



That afternoon, a parish Synaxis was held, during which Metropolitan Cyprian returned to the theme of the approaching Great Fast. The gathering was very well attended.

He emphasized the sacredness of this period of time, during which we make a special effort to open our beings to the Grace of God. A precondition for this is that we must take care to restrict the influence of the “world” on us by guarding our senses, and in particular by limiting as far as possible the use of those tools by which the “world” enters into us, such as television, internet, etc.

His Eminence also discussed the means given to us by our Mother the Church to confront difficulties, tribulations, and various needs in our lives: fasting, prayer, participation in the Holy Mysteries, and so on.

The need for spiritual instruction for our children was also pointed out, since they are growing up in a society pervaded by the spirit of apostasy, especially in the realm of education.



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On Monday, February 7 (Old Style), Metropolitan Cyprian had meetings and heard confessions.

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On Tuesday, February 8 (Old Style), our Most Reverend Metropolitan returned to Greece, accompanied by the gratitude of our faithful and clergy in Sweden, and giving thanks to the Divine Founder of our Church for the progress of our humble missionary witness in that country.

