



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

## Autumn Pastoral Visit to Sweden

September 13-20, 2023 (Old Style)

**B**y the Grace of the Venerable Cross, and with the blessing of His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos and of the Holy Synod, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle made his customary autumn visit, in his capacity as *Locum Tenens*, to the Small Flock of our Church in Sweden.



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**On Tuesday, September 13 (Old Style)**, His Eminence was received at the Cathedral Church of Sts. Constantine and Helen, in Vårberg, Stockholm.

In his brief greetings to those assembled, Metropolitan Cyprian conveyed the best wishes of the Hierarchs in Greece, and expressed the hope that the following days together would be ones of mutual spiritual edification. Father Anders Åkerström thanked our Most Reverend Shepherd for the sacrificial care with which he visits the small flock of Sweden.



Everyone then went to the grave of the ever-memorable Bishop Johannes, located behind the Church, where Metropolitan Cyprian served a *Trisagion* for the repose of this dearly beloved spiritual Father of our brethren in Sweden.

That evening, His Eminence presided at the All-Night Vigil for the Universal Exaltation of the Venerable Cross, with the participation of the clergy of our Holy Diocese.



During the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, following the consecration of the Holy Gifts, Metropolitan Cyprian **ordained Subdeacon Alexander Hahr to the Diaconate.** Father Alexander is married, the father of three children, and a dearly beloved member of our community in Sweden.



He is also a student (participating in classes remotely) at the St. Photios Orthodox Theological Seminary in Etna, California, and is their first student to be ordained a clergyman. For this reason, His Eminence, Bishop Auxentios of Etna and Portland, the Rector of the Seminary, sent two representatives to Sweden: Schemanun Kypriane—a native Swede, who is assistant to the Reverend



Mother Elizabeth, Abbess of the Convent of St. Elizabeth the Grand Duchess of Russia (in Etna, CA), and serves as Director of Student Services and an Instructor at the Seminary—and Reader Timothy Schenone, the Seminary's Content Marketing Specialist. Both Mother Kypriane and Reader Timothy took part in all of



the Divine Liturgies celebrated by our Most Reverend Metropolitan.

It should be noted that until recently, international students like Father Alexander have only been allowed to participate in classes at the Seminary remotely because of federal government restrictions. However, with the Seminary now certified to have international students attend classes in person, Father Alexander Hahr plans to go to Etna as a student next term.

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**On Thursday, September 15 (Old Style),** a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was served in the chapel dedicated to St. Nicholas at the Convent of St. Philothei, in Villberga, Grillby, with the participation of our clergy and a number of the faithful.



At the ensuing *agape* meal, Metropolitan Cyprian spoke about the need for dogmatic catechesis of our faithful. He remarked that St. Gregory Palamas, as Archbishop of Thessalonica, was wont to deliver very lengthy homilies, replete with hesychastic and dogmatic theology.

His Eminence also emphasized the need for shepherds to strive towards perfection in Christ, beyond mere academic education, through prayer, ascesis, and participation in the Mysteries of the Church, as well as the need for humility: “One thing I know, that I know nothing” («ὅτι οὐδὲν οἶδα»).



Everyone then walked through the surrounding forest to the nearby cemetery, where Metropolitan

Cyprian served *Trisagias* at the graves of several of our faithful.

That afternoon, at the request of His Eminence, Bishop Auxentios, Timothy Schenone interviewed our Most Reverend Metropolitan for “Tea Time at the Seminary,” on the topic “Living as an Orthodox Christian in a Secular World.” The episode will be published on the [Seminary's YouTube channel](#) with English subtitles.



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**On Saturday, September 17 (Old Style)**, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos, in the university town of Uppsala.

At the agape meal served by Father Anders and Presbytera Birgitta, Father Anders spoke about the life of St. Unni, Archbishop of Hamburg and Bremen († **September 17, 936**), revered as the third Apostle of the North. Metropolitan Cyprian then discussed the traditional criteria by which the Church proclaims the sanctity of some of her members.

That afternoon, Resurrectional Vespers was served at the Church of Sts. Constantine and Helen, followed by Small Compline and the service of Prayers before Holy Communion.

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**On the Sunday after the Elevation of the Cross, September 18 (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, Hierodeacon Father Theochares, and Deacon Father Alexander.

During the Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Cyprian ordained Father Alexander to the Priesthood. Father Alexander will fill a very great need for more Priests in our Diocese in Sweden.



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*In his festal homily, Metropolitan Cyprian noted that the Church has dedicated a relatively long period of time for the celebration of the Elevation of the Venerable Cross—from the Saturday before the Elevation to the Sunday after the Elevation—with the reading of pertinent Gospel passages.*

*Just as on Wednesdays and Fridays and other Feast Days, the purpose of the Church is to bring us to remembrance, through beautiful hymns, of the Mystery of the Cross and the eternal Mystery of the Love of God for mankind, whereby the Son was sacrificed on behalf of man, that man might be united again with the Holy Trinity.*

*The Cross is not merely a symbol or an amulet. It is a tool, by which all temporal and eternal realities are evaluated. Hence, history and the present situation are evaluated by means of the Cross; that is, with other criteria than those of the world. Christ calls us to be crucified so as to be resurrected. The world does not want the Cross.*



*In following Christ, we adopt a crucified way of life: “Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” When our “old man” is put to death, that is, our egotism, then the “new man” is resurrected and tastes of genuine freedom.*

*Without the Cross, man is dominated by self-love, egotism, and his passions in general. Yielding to love of pleasure, glory, and money constitute spiritual adultery, as the Lord said: “An evil and adulterous generation...” Yes, adulterous is the soul that is not faithful to God, since through baptism we were betrothed to Christ. Let us continuously crucify ourselves, not out of fear of Hell, but out of love for Him.*



*In order to experience the Mystery of the Cross in our lives, it is necessary to fast, pray, keep vigil, and patiently endure the tribulations that befall us: “For behold, through the Cross, joy hath come to all the world.” Life on the Cross is the reversal of the mentality of the world.*

*Let us not, then, restrict ourselves to hanging a Cross on the wall of our house or making the sign of the Cross over our body; the Cross is not*

merely a symbol, an outward Cross, but rather a way of life that gives it meaning.

*It first seals our hearts and minds with the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christians need not fear various symbols and other external things, insofar as we preserve and renew—by means of a crucified way of life, confession, repentance, and participation in the Immaculate Mysteries—the seal we received at Holy Baptism: “Sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Then a person becomes unassailable and can say, together with the Bride in the Song of Songs: “Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death...” (Song of Songs 8:6)*



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**At** the ensuing *agape* meal, Metropolitan Cyprian expressed best wishes to the newly-ordained Father Alexander and presented him with an Icon of the Holy Trinity from Georgia. Mother Kypriane Hagielisavetissa then read congratulatory remarks written by His Eminence, Bishop Auxentios of Etna and Portland, the Rector of the Seminary, and gave him an Icon of St. Photios, the Seminary's Patron Saint.

**T**hat evening, a parish Synaxis was held, during which Metropolitan Cyprian announced the upcoming Synodal Proclamation of the Sanctity of St. Hieronymos of Parnethos (in May 2024). He then invited those in attendance to read two short texts together, on the basis of which he spoke about the relationship between a Christian and his Guardian Angel.

*Our kinship with our Guardian Angel, which is given to each of us at Holy Baptism, strengthens us in our striving to fulfill our calling to sanctification, that is, our union with our Lord Jesus Christ, so that, purified and hallowed, we might radiate in our surroundings the light and peace of Divine Grace.*

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**On Monday, September 19 (Old Style),** Metropolitan Cyprian met with the clergy, who informed him about recent developments and on-going projects the parish. His Eminence discussed with them various ecclesiastical matters.



That afternoon, the customary visit was made to the Orthodox section of the Skogskyrkogården cemetery, where Metropolitan Cyprian served *Trisagia* at the graves of the ever-memorable Mother Parthenia and other faithful

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**On Tuesday, September 20 (Old Style),** the clergy and monastics saw Metropolitan Cyprian off at the airport, where they once again expressed their gratitude for his pastoral visit. His Eminence returned to his flock in Greece with thanksgiving to our Lord for this fruitful pastoral Ministry.

