16/05/2024

Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden Celebrant at the Metropolitan Church of Oslo



OSLO, Norway – On Saturday morning May 11, 2024, His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia visited Oslo to celebrate a baptism at the Metropolitan Church of the Annunciation, where he was assisted by the parish priest, the Rev. Economos Dr. Maxime Lesage.

Afterward, he presided over a meeting of the parish council during which a variety of issues related to the progress of the parish were discussed, in addition to the complete renovation of the church hall.

That afternoon, Metropolitan Cleopas attended a dinner offered by longtime parishioner Mrs. Angeliki Kruse Jensen, accompanied by members of the parish council.
On Sunday morning May 12th, the Metropolitan celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Metropolitan Church in Oslo, assisted by the parish priest Rev. Lesage and the Rev. Deacon Dr. Volodymyr Pozhydayev, which was also streamed live on the parish's Facebook page.

In his sermon, Metropolitan Cleopas spoke about the Gospel reading for the Sunday of St. Thomas, noting "today's Gospel reading transports us to the house in Jerusalem, in the "upper room" where Jesus offered the Last Supper to the twelve Disciples. This same space served as a safehouse for the terrified and despondent

disciples “for the fear of the Jews.”

A week had already passed from the moment of Jesus’ Resurrection. The Disciples looked on in amazement as they became eyewitnesses to the Risen Lord and the image of His divine presence remained vividly ingrained in their minds and hearts. It was this presence that removed sorrow from their souls and replaced it with joy.
However, Thomas was not on hand for this experience and did not have an opportunity to share in this spiritual banquet. The stance he adopted regarding the testimony of the Lord’s ten Disciples is not different than the stance of all those countless generation who stand in doubt before the Lord, who “is set for the fall and rising of many…and for a sign that is spoken against” (Luke 2:34).

Thomas belongs to the majority of people, who seek observable proof, which is why the Lord blesses all those who do not base their faith on the experiences provided by our physical senses, but rather, on the “spiritual” information provided by those testifying to Christ’s Resurrection, which is verified as authentic by their confession, which is signed by their blood.
Let us not forget that all that we know about the divine truths is a result of divine condescension. These truths “are not intended to be investigated,” as the hymnographer of the Church notes, but rather, presuppose the acceptance of truth, which is handed down to us through the continuous living tradition of the witnesses of the Resurrection.”
The Metropolitan subsequently sat down in fellowship with those in attendance at a reception offered by the Metropolitan Church in its atrium.
The Hon. Konstantinos Danassis, Chargé d’affaires of the Greek Embassy in Norway and Mr. Nikolaos Gavrielides, the new President of the Greek School in Oslo, were in attendance at the Divine Liturgy and subsequent reception, along with representatives from the local Greek Association of Norway and many faithful.
The celebrants, together with the head chanter of the parish Mr. Panagiotis Katsivalis and his assistant Mr. Kosmas Plakou, chanted the hymns in Greek, Norwegian, Ukraine, Slavonic, Swedish, English, and French.

Afterward, Metropolitan Cleopas once again met with all the parish council members and the contractors who have undertaken the renovation projects in the church hall, and was briefed on their progress.

The Metropolitan subsequently visited the home of parish council member Mrs. Anne-Maj Baeckman-Maisi for a luncheon, accompanied by Mrs. Kyriaki Papadopoulou Samuelsen, parish council Vice-President, and Mr. Michael Bikoulis, past President and current member of the parish council.
That same afternoon Metropolitan Cleopas returned to his see in Stockholm and

pledged to make his next archpastoral visit (the 26th) to Oslo on the weekend of June 1-2.

Photo credit: Mr. Michael Bikoulis

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