

## Thyranoixia of the Sts. Demetrios and Nestor Parish in Örebro, Sweden



STOCKHOLM – On Saturday 26 October 2024, His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the newly established Parish of Sts. Demetrios and Nestor in Örebro, Sweden, assisted by the Very Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Bartholomew Iatridis, Parish Priest of the St. George Cathedral in Stockholm, the Rev. Presbyter Fr. Vasilios Halil, a clergyman of the Vicariate of the Patriarchate of Antioch in Sweden, and the Rev. Presbyter Fr. George Arvanitidis. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the thyranoixia ("opening of the doors") ceremony was celebrated, marking the official dedication of the parish.

That same day, prior to the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, which was attended by a large congregation of Orthodox Christian faithful from Sweden and Norway, the Metropolitan bestowed the office of Ekonomos upon Fr. George Arvanitidis, in recognition of his dedicated service to the newly established parish. Rev. Arvanitidis is a married father of three daughters who served as a deacon for over

nine years before being ordained a presbyter. The faithful responded enthusiastically to Metropolitan Cleopas' gesture, crying out "axios" (worthy!) to congratulate the new Ekonomos of the Church.

During his sermon, the Metropolitan remarked that "during this joyous day of celebration honoring the memory and feast of the glorious great-martyr Demetrios the Myrrh-Gusher, our local Church has yet another cause to celebrate - the dedication of our new parish here in the city of Örebro, on the very feast day of its patron saint.

It is a particular blessing for our Metropolis to have the glorious great-martyr Saint Demetrios as a protector, patron, and intercessory to the Lord, along with the patron saint of our Cathedral, St. George the Trophy-Bearer.

Today's occasion was made possible primarily due to the fact that the city of Örebro offered its native son - Fr. George Arvanitidis - to the Church. After nine years of service in the Lord's vineyard as a deacon, he was ordained as a presbyter this year on Palm Sunday, while over the summer, he spent about two months preparing himself in the city of Chania, Crete, thanks to the permission and paternal love of His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Kydonia and Apokoronos, whom I feel the need to publicly thank, along with the parish priests of the St. Nectarios Parish in Chania and their exceptional coworkers, who shared their liturgical experience and knowledge with a true spirit of sacrifice to help train Fr. George and help him complete his preparations to assume his duties in this parish as a celebrant of the Holy Sacraments - on a volunteer basis, I might add.

As the Shepherd of this Holy Metropolis, I believe that other Greek parishes ought to emulate Fr. George's examples and not hesitate to offer their children to the Church or encourage people who love the Church to become full-time clergymen or volunteer clergymen while maintaining their job, like Fr. George, who works as an educator. In this way, they can contribute to the spiritual progress and edification of this Eparchy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

My brothers and sisters, St. Demetrios, along with his disciple St. Nestor, whose memory this parish shall henceforth be dedicated to, are known not only in Thessaloniki and throughout Greece, but, as in the case of every saint, they are universal saints. In other words, they transport our prayers and supplications to heaven and protect us from all attacks by visible and invisible enemies.

The life, martyrdom, and miracles of St. Demetrios are well known, however, I would like to note that the opening of a new parish essentially constitutes the opening of yet another door to heaven, because all of us who participate in the

Divine Liturgy partake in Divine Grace, receive strength and mercy from God, and having received the Body and Blood of our Lord, we can continue our daily struggle, while at the same time bear witness to our faith.

I would also like to congratulate the Very Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Sosipatros Stefanoudis, who served the liturgical and spiritual needs of this newly established parish until now, along with Fr. Bartholomew Iatridis, who was kind enough to accompany me from Stockholm.

I also extend congratulations to the members of the parish council, who most readily agreed to take on administrative responsibilities together with Fr. George and contribute to the operation of our parish, along with all the volunteers in the parish for the warm hospitality they offered us from the moment we arrived in your city yesterday.

I offer my heartfelt thanks to a beloved brother, the Very Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Damaskinos Petikas, Presiding Priest of the St. Demetrios Shrine Church in Thessaloniki, for being kind enough to send us myrrh, crosses, and icons of St. Demetrios to be distributed to the faithful as a blessing.

In recognition of his diakonia up until today, I bestowed the office of Ekonomos upon Fr. George, offering him an epigonation to accompany his vestments that denotes his office and depicts St. Demetrios, so that through the intercessions of the saint, he may have the strength and drive to celebrate the holy sacraments of salvation.”

Afterwards, the Metropolitan welcomed the honored guests in attendance, beginning with his co-celebrant the Rev. Fr. Vasilios Halil, the Rev. Johan of the Lutheran Church and his wife Mrs. Anna-Maria Armö, who serves in the parish that has made its chapel available for the liturgical needs of the Greek Orthodox parish in Örebro, another Lutheran clergyman Rev. Andreas and his wife Mrs. Liv Stenlund, as well as the representative of the Syrian Aramaic Community Rev. Jacob Kasselia and his son Mr. Paul Kasselia.

Metropolitan Cleopas spoke about the support offered by all the aforementioned, along with their respective Archbishops in cultivating inter-Christian relations with the Orthodox Church in Scandinavia.

He also thanked the members of the Youth Byzantine Choir of the St. George Cathedral in Stockholm, who offered the hymns of the day under the direction of Ms. Iliana Antoniou.

The Metropolitan subsequently offered a memorial prayer for the repose of the

ever-memorable Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios, the ever-memorable Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America, and other clergymen who bear the name Demetrios, together with other laypersons.

A luncheon was held in the adjacent hall organized by the parish priest and members of the parish council.

The celebrations for the day were capped off with the welcoming of two new members into the parish's spiritual family – with one entering into the faith through the sacrament of Chrismation and the other being baptized and given the name Demetrios.

Finally, Metropolitan Cleopas called upon the grace of the Holy Spirit and intercessions of the patrons saints of the parish for the health and well-being of all the families and members of the parish and left for Oslo, where the next day he celebrated the Divine Liturgy and doxology for the Greek national holiday of October 28th at the Metropolitan Church of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary located there.

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