

## **Reference to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Opening of the Swedish Parliament**



With great solemnity, the opening of the new session of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Sweden was celebrated this year as well, on the afternoon of Tuesday, September 9, 2025.

The proceedings began with a festive service held at Storkyrkan Cathedral of the Lutheran Church in Stockholm.

This service forms an integral part of the official ceremony marking the beginning of the Swedish Parliament's work and serves as the spiritual prelude to the 2025/26 Parliamentary Session.

On this occasion, Members of Parliament, distinguished Representatives of the Royal Court, and the entire Swedish Royal Family gather together in prayer, before the opening of Parliamentary business.

The Dean (Domprost) of Storkyrkan Cathedral, Rev. Jonas Eek, emphasized the

importance of beginning Sweden's public life with Christian reflection and prayer. The keynote address of the day was delivered by the Lutheran Bishop of Stockholm, Andreas Holmberg. He began his speech with a moving reference to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew:

"Precisely at the spot where I now stand (the pulpit), only two weeks ago stood the highest Leader of the Orthodox Christian world, Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, the representative of 300 million Orthodox Christians.

Together with many other Church Leaders from around the globe, we celebrated the centenary of the Ecumenical Meeting for Peace, as we heard in the introduction. The Patriarch stressed that true peace concerns both the inner transformation of each individual's life and the transformation of society as a whole.

Even today, representatives of the worldwide Church are here to share with us the words of Holy Scripture about peace.

At the beginning of one of the most important texts in world literature, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus also speaks of peace and says: 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' Peace does not simply fall from heaven, nor does it appear on its own. It is created; it requires work. That is why our calling is to be peacemakers.

Honorable Members of Parliament, in this working year that now begins: create peace, work for peace! And may we all, together with you, be peacemakers! Blessed are the peacemakers."

The service also formed part of the commemorations of the 100th anniversary of the 1925 Stockholm Ecumenical Conference and the Ecumenical Year 2025 (Ekumeniska året 2025), themed: "A Time for God's Peace."

Scripture readings were offered by Ms. Maria Valorna from Ukraine (Isaiah 2:4), Ms. Boel Hössjer Sundman from the Lutheran Church of Sweden (Galatians 3:27-28), H.E. Cardinal Anders Arborelius (Psalm 85:11-14), and Rev. Rathinamn Mariyadoss from the Evangelical Church of South India (Mark 16:15).

The music for the service was provided by the Stockholm Cathedral Choir (Stockholms domkyrkokör), under the direction of musicologist Mr. Johan Hammarström, and the Royal Guard's Dragoon Band (Livgardets dragonmusikkår), conducted by Maestro Mr. Joakim Unander, who performed sacred marches.

Among those present were His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia, along with 2,000 distinguished figures from Sweden's ecclesiastical and civic life.

This year's service carried particular symbolism, as it was linked to the centenary of the 1925 Stockholm Ecumenical Conference—a landmark event in the modern Ecumenical Movement.

The service began shortly after noon (12:10 p.m.) and concluded in time for the formal procession to Parliament.

At 2:00 p.m., the Parliamentary session officially opened, with His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden declaring its commencement at the request of the Speaker of Parliament.

Following this, the Prime Minister of Sweden, H.E. Ulf Kristersson, presented the 2025 Government Policy Statement and his Address, focusing on combating organized crime, migration, the economy and welfare, education and family, climate and energy, foreign policy and security, as well as freedom, democracy, and culture.

The Prime Minister concluded his speech with the following message:

“Sweden has enormous potential. We have clean energy, world-class innovation, and a highly skilled workforce.

The goal of the government is to transform Sweden: from dangerous to safe, from stagnation to success, from political instability to long-term growth. A better tomorrow awaits us.”

The program also included musical performances, the singing of the Swedish National Anthem, and the official arrival and departure of dignitaries.

This ceremony continues to remind us of the strong bond between the Lutheran Church of Sweden and the Swedish State. It symbolizes the need for spiritual grounding before decisions are made that affect the Nation.

The tradition of collective prayer and unity before the opening of the parliamentary session, centuries old, offers spiritual guidance to the leadership of the Swedish State.

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