31/10/2025

Doxology Service for October 28th, 1940, National Celebration in Stockholm



On Sunday, October 26, 2025, His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of Saint George in Stockholm, assisted by the Cathedral's Pastor, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Bartholomew Iatridis.

Following the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, a Doxology (Thanksgiving) Service was held, attended by Her Excellency Mrs. Aikaterini Fontoulaki, Ambassador of Greece to Sweden; the Presidents of the two Greek Schools of Stockholm, the Honorable Mr. Petros Anastasiadis and Mr. Fotis Panitsas; a large number of children; and a devout and enthusiastic congregation.

At the conclusion of the Doxology, Her Excellency the Ambassador read the message of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, responsible for Greeks

Abroad, His Excellency Mr. Ioannis Michail Loverdos.

Metropolitan Cleopas then delivered an address appropriate to the occasion, speaking about the multiple meanings of the day and of the National Holiday. He congratulated those present, and particularly the children, who through their participation and traditional costumes conveyed the spirit and message of the double celebration. He offered special thanks to Mrs. Alexandra Zorpidou, who consistently takes care of the traditional attire of both young and old, as well as to the Lyceum of Greek Women of Stockholm.

His Eminence stated the following in his homily:

“Your Excellency Ambassador of Greece Ms. Fountoulaki,
Very Reverend Father Bartholomeos,
Honored Chanters,
Dearly beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Our beloved children,

Today’s Gospel reading presents the moving account of the healing of the demon-possessed man of Gadarens. Christ meets a man tormented and broken, who had lost both reason and peace. He lived in isolation among the tombs, without communion with others.

Yet in the midst of his despair, Christ approaches him with love. With a single word, He casts out the demons, and the man stands forth ‘clothed and in his right mind.’
This miracle reveals the profound theology of freedom, that Christ came into the world to liberate the human person not only from physical slavery, but above all from spiritual captivity.

The greatest bondage is not only external oppression, but the enslavement of the soul to passions, fear, and hopelessness.
The delivered man wishes to follow Christ, but the Lord tells him: ‘Return to your home and proclaim all that God has done for you.’ Preach salvation through your life itself. Thus, he becomes a newly-called disciple — a new missionary!

Within this message of spiritual freedom, our Holy Church also celebrates today the Anniversary of October 28, 1940. Then too, our nation confronted the most ruthless form of bondage — dark and inhuman.

The powers of that age sought to enslave a small country, to strip away its freedom, dignity, and soul. Yet just as Christ dispelled the darkness from the Gadarene, so too He illumined the heart of the Greek people, and the sacred word

‘NO’ (‘OXI’) resounded: the ‘NO’ of faith and freedom.

With a prayer on their lips, the Cross on their chest, and the flag in their hands, the Greeks stood upright in the face of the threat of darkness. They fashioned immortality out of sacrifice, ignoring the reckless, the cynical and the toxic, as well as the opportunists of their time. Faith in Christ preserved the nation’s freedom.

Today, many still suffer slavery — not with chains, but with addictions, sins, fears, and despair. Our age has many ‘Gadarenes’ — people without peace, without direction, without God.

Yet, every time a Greek struggles for what is just, stands with dignity amid trials, because that flame lives again.

In every field, Greeks continue to write history: In diplomacy and the arts, in culture and education, in scientific research and in athletics.

From Olympic stadiums to laboratories, the Greek spirit shines — in the leaps of Miltos Tentoglou, in the gold medal of Myriokephalitaki, in Paralympic champion Nasos Gavelas, in the world-champion Alexandris sisters, in Stefanos Douskos and Manolos Karalis, in Milena Kontou & Valia Lykomitrou, in Maria-Louiza Gika, and in Yiannis Poubouridis, European boxing champion; in the National Basketball Team with its Eurobasket bronze medal; in the Nobel Prize in Physics awarded this year to Dr. John Martinis; in the scientists of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki who created the world’s fastest AI processor; and in the two 17-year-old Greek girls crowned champions in the Microsoft World Informatics Competition, Eleni Karakasidou and Argyro Petsa.

And for all who struggle passionately on the track of life, the Greek ideal of ‘noble striving’ lives and inspires.

Times may change, but one truth remains: Greece has never ceased to inspire. Small in size, yet immeasurable in the power of her soul.

Please allow me to conclude with the timely words spoken in this very Cathedral by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, on August 21, 1993:
“When you left your ancestral homeland and journeyed to foreign lands, you crossed the borders of Greece — but you did not cross the borders of Hellenism nor of Orthodoxy. The Greek State has borders. Hellenism does not, just as culture and freedom have no borders. And Orthodoxy has no borders, just as love and truth have no borders. For this reason, although you may be far from Greece, you nevertheless continue to be a living part of Hellenism and of Orthodoxy, under the

Ecumenical care of the centuries-old sacred institution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Those Greek emigrants of antiquity were the first to spread Greek civilization far beyond metropolitan Greece. Later, through the conquests of Alexander the Great, this civilization was extended deep into the East, as far as the heart of Asia, and southward into the lands of Africa.

Rome also came to conquer Greece; yet, in the end, it was conquered by Greek civilization and became the vehicle for its spread to the lands of Western Europe. In this way, Greek civilization became universal, and the Greek language became the global means of communication among peoples.

Upon these foundations the modern European civilization was built. And for this reason, we see that most of the fundamental concepts of contemporary culture are expressed in European languages with Greek words, such as theology, philosophy, poetry, politics, economy, physics, mathematics.

Even the Swedish word for church, ‘Kyrka,’ derives from the Greek ‘Kyriakon,’ meaning ‘the House of the Lord.’

And even the two opposing concepts that dominate modern reality at the end of the twentieth century are expressed with Greek words: ‘technology’ and ‘ecology.’
Rejoice in the Lord, and ‘if it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live in peace with all people’ (Romans 12:18): live in peace with your fellow Greeks, live in peace with the other Orthodox and Christians in this Land, live in peace with all. And may our Patriarchal blessing and the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ be with you all, brethren and children.”
(Vasileios Th. Stavridis, Professor of the Holy Theological School of Halki, “The Patriarch in Sweden (August 20-24, 1993), History of the Church of Sweden, Ecumenical Patriarchate – Church of Sweden, Holy Metropolis of Sweden,” Epektasis Publications, pp. 59–65.)

Today, therefore, as we honor October 28th, the Holy Protection of the Theotokos, and Saint Demetrios the Myrrh-Bearer, let us bow our heads with reverence to the memory of those who sacrificed themselves — and let us look forward to a future that calls us to prove ourselves worthy of them.

Let us say our own ‘NO’ in our own time: No to indifference, No to violence, No to injustice. And let us say our own ‘YES’: Yes to knowledge, Yes to creativity, Yes to humanity.

For Hellenism is not only a history we read — it is a flame we carry in our hands.

Long live October 28th!

Long live our Nation!

Long live our Greek Diaspora in Scandinavia!

Congratulations to our children in their traditional costumes! May they always be blessed!”

After the service, the dignitaries and many parishioners gathered in the Cathedral’s adjoining Fellowship Hall, where coffee and refreshments were offered by the Cathedral’s Philoptochos Ladies Society.

During the fellowship hour, a conversation took place between His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas and the Presidents of the two Greek Schools of Stockholm. His Eminence announced that within the week he would formally invite them to attend an upcoming Sunday Divine Liturgy, to address the congregation and present the history and work of their schools; thus expressing the unwavering support of our local Church for the Greek-educated youth of our Omogeneia/Greek Community at large, in Scandinavia, and our shared commitment to the preservation and promotion of our Greek-Orthodox heritage, culture and history.

Metropolisofsweden