

## **Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden Represents His All-Holiness at the SONE Concert**



His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia attended the benefit concert “When Hope Becomes Music” as the representative of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The concert was held on Tuesday, July 7, 2026, in the courtyard of Thessaloniki City Hall.

The concert was organized by the M.A.Z.I. Association—“With Solidarity We Live Equally”—with the participation of the Youth Symphony Orchestra of Greece (SONE), to benefit the Pediatric Oncology Department of AHEPA University General Hospital.

The overwhelming public response resulted in every available seat being filled, affirming that when culture and social outreach come together, they can mobilize the broader community and transform compassion and solidarity into tangible support for children facing illness and for their families.

In his remarks, His Eminence conveyed to the organizers, musicians, performers, and all those in attendance the Ecumenical Patriarch's paternal love, warm congratulations, heartfelt wishes, and blessings.

He emphasized that the Mother Church's presence at this charitable initiative reflects its steadfast concern for every endeavor that serves humanity, especially children enduring hardship and families facing anguish.

Referring to the event's title, the Metropolitan of Sweden observed that hope is not a vague wish or an easy consolation, but "a force born of love, strengthened through solidarity, and transformed into light whenever one stands beside a fellow human being who is suffering."

He further stressed that the evening's music was not intended merely to move the audience, but also to convey a profound message to the children, their parents, the physicians, the nurses, and all those who selflessly carry out the work of care: "You are not alone. Our love and prayers are with you."

The thoughts and prayers of all were directed especially toward the young patients of AHEPA's Pediatric Oncology Department, whom His Eminence described as young heroes confronting the pain, anxiety, and hardships of illness with quiet yet profound courage.

He also prayed that God would grant them strength and healing, sustain their parents, and enlighten the medical and nursing staff.

He made special mention of the young musicians and ten-year-old pianist Emmanouil Koutsakis, a member of SONE, who performed the demanding piano part in the orchestra's program.

His Eminence described the young pianist's presence as a living symbol, noting that a child is not only a recipient of care but also a creator and a bearer of talent, hope, and renewal.

He offered warm congratulations to the M.A.Z.I. Association, its president, Dr. Alexandra Gogousi, and the members of its Board of Directors for their meaningful charitable initiative and social contribution.

He also congratulated the Youth Symphony Orchestra of Greece; its Artistic Director and Conductor, Mr. Evangelos Arabatzis; Conductor Mr. Georgios Samaras; the Big Band of Moudania; the performers, musicians, technicians, and volunteers; and everyone who contributed to the success of the event.

The concert was attended by representatives of the Church, the government, local authorities, Parliament, the academic and hospital communities, the Armed Forces, law enforcement agencies, the diplomatic corps, and social and business organizations.

Among those present were Their Eminences Metropolitan Panteleimon of Veria, Naoussa, and Kampania and Metropolitan Panteleimon of Vryoula; the Holy Metropolis of Thessaloniki Chancellor, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Iakovos Athanasiou, representing the Metropolitan; the Very Reverend Archimandrite Damaskinos Petikas, Dean of the Saint Demetrios Shrine of Thessaloniki; the Very Reverend Archimandrite Panteleimon Papaemmanouil, Abbot of the Shrine of Panagia Soumela of Vermio; His Excellency Mr. Konstantinos Gioulekas, Deputy Minister of the Interior responsible for Macedonia and Thrace; the Honorable Ms. Athina Aidona, Regional Governor of Central Macedonia; representatives of the Municipality of Thessaloniki; members of Parliament; representatives of diplomatic missions; and the administration and staff of AHEPA University General Hospital.

As part of the event, a symbolic animal-welfare initiative was also held to promote the responsible adoption of stray animals and respect for every form of life.

The musical evening concluded in an atmosphere of deep emotion with a performance of the iconic work "Sun of Justice," reminding all present that music, when placed in the service of a noble cause, becomes an act of love, generosity, and social responsibility.

Metropolitan Cleopas summarized the event's message with the words: "When love becomes action, hope finds its voice; and when hope becomes music, the human heart finds its path toward God and toward our neighbor."

After concluding his remarks, His Eminence presented Dr. Alexandra Gogousi and Evangelos Arabatzis with copies of his scholarly works and an icon for each of them, as a blessing and an expression of gratitude for their hospitality and service.

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