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Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden Speaks at the University of Athens on Missionary Work in Scandinavia



The eighth anniversary of His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and Scandinavia's enthronement as the Archpastor of the Holy Metropolis of Sweden (June 14, 2014) coincided with an invitation to speak at the Department of Social Theology and the Study of Religion at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, extended by its faculty member Dr. Evangelia Voulgaraki.

Metropolitan Cleopas, who accepted the aforementioned invitation, attended the final graduate level class of the semester on the subject of Philosophy of Religion and Missionary Work. After thanking Prof. Voulgaraki for her gracious invitation, Metropolitan Cleopas spoke with students from the department and delivered a presentation on the missionary work being undertaken by the Holy Metropolis of

Sweden over the past eight years.

He spoke about the two visits made by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to his eparchy – the first to Iceland in 2017 and the second to Sweden in 2019 –, the establishment of ten new parishes, the increase in the number of clergy, from just one serving in 2014 to twelve, the welcoming of over 160 converts to the Orthodox Christian faith, the acquisition and complete renovation of the St. Nicholas Heritage in Rättvik, Sweden, and the complete restoration of the Metropolis Cathedral in Stockholm and Metropolitan Church in Oslo.

In response to a question about the relationship between his eparchy and other Christian denominations, Metropolitan Cleopas mentioned the granting of three churches by the Lutheran Church of Sweden to the Metropolis to facilitate worship services for his three parishes, as well as the gifting of the Church of St. George of Ioannina in Roskilde, Denmark to the Holy Metropolis of Sweden.

He highlighted the element of activity in missionary work, noting that he draws his inspiration from the words of St. John Chrysostom “we stand not, for we are moving forward.” The Metropolitan also pointed out that “missionary work is a continuous journey, a constant opening, an embrace welcoming people coming from every direction and all creation.” He also spoke about the importance of prayer in missionary work, which holds together, inspires, and materializes the vision of the local Church.
Metropolitan Cleopas informed the students of the arrival of a Ukrainian priest to Stockholm to provide spiritual support to our brethren fleeing war-torn Ukraine, stating that this is yet another challenge to which the Church is called to immediately respond.

After the conclusion of a pleasant two-hour discussion and exchange of opinions, the students offered sweets and refreshments, and wished the Metropolitan every success in his ministry, while also thanking him for his visit.

Metropolitan Cleopas offered Prof. Voulgaraki three books published by the Church of Greece’s publishing house Apostoliki Diakonia on behalf of the Holy Metropolis of Sweden, while the professor presented the guest speaker with copies of her studies and articles on missionary work.

Metropolisofsweden