

## Celebration of Epiphany and Cutting of the Vasilopita in Iceland



STOCKHOLM – With temperatures hovering around negative 15 degrees Celsius, His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia, accompanied by the Very. Rev. Archimandrite Alexandros Loukatos, Presiding Priest of the Metropolitan Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Oslo, made his seventh pastoral visit to Reykjavik, Iceland on the weekend of January 14-15, 2023 to see the flock of the Mother Church of Constantinople who live and work in Reykjavik and personally exchange holiday wishes with them for the new year. According to the most recent statistics, the number of faithful is now approaching 600 persons.

The two clergymen arrived in Reykjavik on Sat. January 14th, where they were met at the airport by the Honorary Consul of Greece in Iceland Hon. Mr. Rafn Alexander Sigurdsson. That evening, the Metropolitan and Fr. Alexandros attended a dinner at a local restaurant kindly offered by their hosts Mr. Sigurdsson and his wife Mrs. Anna Juliana Sveinsdottir.

The next day, Sun. January 15th, Metropolitan Cleopas celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Rev. Friðrik Friðriksson chapel, assisted by Fr. Alexandros.

In his sermon, the Metropolitan spoke about the day's Gospel reading, noting the ungratefulness of the nine lepers and the gratitude of the tenth, who returned to praise and thank God for the great gift He offered him. He reminded the faithful that "glorifying God occupies one of the central positions in our liturgical tradition, which is why the angels, apostles, martyrs, and all the saints praise and glorify God

ceaselessly and always call on every faithful to join them in this doxological outlook and relationship during every moment of their lives.”

Afterward, Metropolitan Cleopas celebrated the service of the blessing of the water for Epiphany, cut the parish’s vasilopita, and churched two newborn babies, Olga and Athanasios, who are children of families living in Reykjavik. He also extended his paternal wishes for the new year and expressed his joy for the opportunity to communicate and interact with the growing flock of the St. Bartholomew the Apostle Parish in Reykjavik.

He especially expressed his gratitude to Mr. Sigurdsson for his unwavering support in organizing the pastoral visits to Reykjavik, to Fr. Alexandros and the Metropolitan Church in Oslo for their touching contribution to the ministry of the Holy Metropolis and the Metropolitan’s missionary visits, as well as to Mrs. Vaso Katsarou, a council member of the aforementioned parish, for offering the vasilopita and the reception that followed for all the faithful in attendance.

Aside from the aforementioned persons, Mr. Evangelos Demetropoulos, President of the Hellenic Society of Iceland, parish members, and newly arrived brethren from Greece also attended the liturgical gathering.

That afternoon, Metropolitan Cleopas and Fr. Alexandros met with parish council members and parish members, with the president of the Hellenic Society of Iceland also participating in the meeting.

On Monday morning, January 16th, Metropolitan Cleopas returned to the see of his eparchy in Stockholm, while Fr. Alexandros returned to Oslo.





Photo credit: Fr. Alexandros Loukatos and Mr. Elias Bravos.

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