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## Metropolitan of Sweden Welcomes Metropolitan Hilarion of Rivne



STOCKHOLM – On Friday, May 26, 2023, His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion of Rivne and Ostroh of the Autocephalous Church of Ukraine visited His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia at the see of his Metropolis in Stockholm, accompanied by Ukrainian Parliament Member the Hon. Mr. Oleksandr Kovalchuk, who also acted as translator.

Metropolitan Hilarion traveled to Sweden to attend an art exhibition held that afternoon at the Swedish Army Museum in Stockholm.

Metropolitan Cleopas welcomed Metropolitan Hilarion to the St. George Cathedral of Stockholm, where he briefed him on the history of the Cathedral and the recent large-scale restoration projects that were undertaken.

Afterwards, the two prelates sat down for a two-hour discussion at the Museum of Hellenic Christian Heritage, during which Metropolitan Hilarion spoke about the

existing state of affairs in Ukraine, while Metropolitan Cleopas assured him that both the local Church and he himself would continue to stand by the Orthodox faithful from Ukraine who have sought refuge in Scandinavia.

Later that afternoon, Metropolitan Cleopas delivered a greeting at the aforementioned Armémuseum, conveying the paternal wishes and blessings of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, while also receiving a tour of the exhibition, as well as the other museum galleries.

In his speech, Metropolitan Cleopas noted that “this morning, I had the honor of welcoming His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion of Rivne and Ostrih to the see of the Holy Metropolis of Sweden and All Scandinavia in Stockholm for the first time. He was accompanied by the Honorable Mr. Oleksandr Kovalchuk, a member of the Ukrainian Parliament. Our meeting lasted approximately two hours and our talks focused on how our local Church will continue to provide its pastoral support for the benefit of our Ukrainian brethren in need all throughout Scandinavia.

I invited His Eminence to visit Stockholm again and concelebrate with me at the St. George Cathedral, where in addition to Greek and Swedish, the Lord’s Prayer and the Nicene Creed are recited in Ukrainian every Sunday.

I reiterate my pledge to our Ukrainian brethren that all the parishes of the Holy Metropolis of Sweden are at their disposal for their religious and cultural gatherings. As Orthodox Christians, we are all united under our spiritual Mother, the Church of Constantinople – the Ecumenical Patriarchate – and the Spiritual Leader of the world’s some 300 million Orthodox faithful worldwide, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

We are gathered here tonight at the Swedish Army Museum to attend an exhibition of 12 original works of art painted on bulletproof vests and tank armor, which saved soldiers’ lives.

I congratulate the organizers of this unique exhibition, which sends a message of hope and optimism in every direction, because they remind us of the reason of the creation of the world by the Trinitarian God and the perpetuation of the human race during times of peace, not war.

The words of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew continue to ring true: ‘a war that is waged in the name of religion is a war against religion.’

We pray for an immediate end to hostilities in the wider region, a cease fire, and justice for a people who are fighting with bravery and self-sacrifice to protect their territorial integrity.”

Following the exhibition, Metropolitan Cleopas hosted a dinner in honor of his esteemed guests, while the two prelates exchanged gifts.













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