

## The Consecration of Bishop Silouan of Luni (Italy)

The Holy Synod in Resistance of the Church of Greece, under the Presidency of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, in its twenty-ninth session on February 7, 2004 (Old Style), at the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, in Fili, Attika, decided to establish a new diocese in Italy, in order to promote the missionary work being carried out in that country by the Very Reverend Archimandrite Silouan, Abbot of the Holy Monastery of St. Seraphim of Sarov and Synodal Exarch in Italy. This missionary activity, which is experiencing a hopeful blossoming, includes at present two monasteries, several parishes and communities, several ecclesiastical institutions, and five Priests and five Deacons; it shows very good prospects for further development and growth.

Thus, by Synodal Decree No. 7/7.2.2004, the Diocese of Luni, in Central Italy, was founded. With headquarters in the city of Pistoia, it encompasses the region of Tuscany. The name of the diocese dates back to an ancient Apostolic See in this area.

Following a petition by the clergy of the Italian Exarchate of the Holy Synod in Resistance, Archimandrite Silouan (Livi) was unanimously elected first Hierarchy of this newly-established diocese. It was also decided that the new Bishop would continue to be the Exarch of the Holy Synod in Italy, except for the island of Sardinia.

The Great *Menyma* (the Order of Electing the Candidate) of the newly-elected Bishop Silouan took place on the same day in the small *Katholikon* of the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina.

- The Consecration of Bishop Silouan of Luni was celebrated on the



Sunday of Cheesefare, February 9, 2004 (Old Style), in the great *Katholikon* of the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina by Metropolitan Cyprian

of Oropos and Fili, President of the Holy Synod, assisted by Their Graces, Bishop Chrysostomos of Christianoupolis and Bishop Ambrose of Methone, with the agreement of all of the members of the Holy Synod. Also taking part were other of our clergy, among whom was a delegation from the clergy of our Italian Exarchate, including Hieromonk Felice (Donganjuk), Presbyters Father Vitale Stelyan and Father Nicola d'Amico, and Hierodeacons Paolo and Silvano.

Among the large crowd of Faithful in prayerful attendance at this joyous



and historic event were pious lay people from our Italian Exarchate.

- Bishop Silouan (Livi) of Luni was born in 1947, in Pistoia, Italy, into a distinguished and pious Roman Catholic family. He received a classical education, graduating from the University of Florence, where he received a degree in philosophy (in which he wrote his thesis). In 1975, he entered the ranks of the Roman Catholic clergy. In 1985, he received a diploma in theology *summa cum laude* from the Gregorian University in Rome for a dissertation which he submitted on the eschatology of the Orthodox Church. He also studied theology at the St. Sergius Institute in Paris, and in 1992, he completed a professional certificate in psychoanalysis in Florence, having already converted to Orthodoxy in 1985.

Being familiar with ancient Greek, and also because he was an assiduous student of the Church Fathers, he came to an awareness of the True Church of Christ and of the heresies of Papism. But his attempt to approach the Patriarchate of Constantinople in order to be received into Orthodoxy proved rather distressing, since he met with discouragement on the part of the Patriarchate's representatives in Italy at that time. He therefore turned to the Moscow Patriarchate.

However, Father Silouan very quickly realized that his membership

in that Church was a mere formality, devoid of any essential spiritual relationship with his ecclesiastical superiors, and his missionary zeal to attract his Roman Catholic countrymen to Orthodoxy was evidently not to their liking.

In despair over this situation, Father Silouan was urged, in 1993, by the well-known Abbot of an Athonite monastery to turn to the Serbian Church, which he did. However, in the Serbian Patriarchate, too, he soon encountered the same cold indifference to the prospect of a dynamic Orthodox presence in Italy. His Bishop, Metropolitan Jovan of Zagreb, took part without any hesitation in ecumenical ceremonies and joint prayers with Roman Catholics!

In this way, he became conscious of the painful reality that the heresy of ecumenism had eroded the ecclesiastical leadership of the local Churches, with truly tragic results, especially for the Orthodox mission in the heterodox West.

Father Silouan thus turned to the anti-innovationist Orthodox of Greece; after much study and prayer, he aligned himself, at the beginning of the autumn of 1999, with the Holy Synod in Resistance, expressing his agreement with its ecclesiological principles and its overall anti-ecumenist witness and stand.

Since then, in a miraculous way, his missionary work in Italy has received new impetus and Divine blessing. At the same time that he joined the Holy Synod in Resistance, he was tonsured a Great Schema monk by Metropolitan Cyprian, and the dignity of Archimandrite was conferred on him.



The new Bishop founded the Holy Monastery of St. Seraphim of Sarov in Pistoia, Italy, of which he is the Abbot. He has also established, and directs, a youth center, as well as the St. Gregory the Great Free Orthodox Faculty of Theology, the diploma from which is recognized by the Italian government. He has written books, two of which constitute very good introductions to the Orthodox Faith and way of life for Italian-speaking people,

as well as many articles on theology, philosophy, and psychology. He also teaches philosophy and history at an educational institute in Pistoia.



His Grace is distinguished for his piety, simplicity, and affability, and he enjoys the respect and love of his spiritual children, both clerical and lay, and also, in general, the respect and love of the people of his native city and of the academic community in which he lives and works.

- His Eminence, Bishop Silouan of Luni, delivered a short but heartfelt address on the occasion of his Consecration, in which he mentioned the necessity of a moderate witness, by Orthodox in resistance, as the chosen “royal path” of our day, at such a difficult and critical time for the Orthodox Church, in the face of the “extreme” options of ecumenism, on the one hand, and of fanaticism, on the other hand. In the very onerous task awaiting him, he will, as he stated, have Metropolitan Cyprian and, moreover, the Bishops and the Brotherhood of the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina as an example of the correct teaching of the word of truth with discernment.

Finally, in expressing thanks to the delegation of clergy and laity from Italy who attended his Consecration, he promised that he would shepherd his reason-endowed flock in a God-pleasing manner and asked for the prayerful help and support of all.

“To Silouan, the Most Reverend Bishop of Luni and Exarch in Italy, ‘Many Years!’”