

## ❖ METROPOLIS OF OROPOS AND FILI

✠ Italian Exarchate

### Pastoral Visit to Italy

**AT THE** beginning of July, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili made a pilgrimage to Italy, accompanied by His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methoni and a number of his spiritual children.

The first stop was the Monastery of the Holy Protomartyr Stephen in Abbiategrasso, a suburb of Milan, which recently placed itself under the jurisdiction of the Holy Synod in Resistance. There, His Eminence received a courtesy visit from the Mayor of Abbiategrasso, with whom he conversed informally and exchanged greetings and gifts.



On Friday, 5 July 2003 (Old Style), the pilgrims from Greece were given a tour of the ancient Christian monuments of the historic city of Mediolanum, as modern Milan was known in olden times,

and had the blessing of venerating the sacred Relics of the renowned Father of the Church, St. Ambrose, and of other Saints.

On Saturday, 6 July 2003 (Old Style), Metropolitan Cyprian celebrated

the Divine Liturgy in the Church of the Holy Great Martyr George the Trophy-bearer at a Gypsy encampment in Trezzo, near Milan, where some remarkable missionary work is being undertaken by one of our clergy, Father Nicola d'Amico, assisted by Hierodeacon Paolo. An adult woman was Baptized during the Liturgy.



After the Liturgy and the ensuing *agape* meal, His Eminence and those accompanying him went by road to Pistoia, in order to visit the Monastery of St. Seraphim of Sarov, whose Abbot, Archimandrite Silvano (Livi), a



high school teacher, is in charge of the Italian Exarchate of the Synod in Resistance.

On Sunday, 7 July 2003 (Old Style), a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Church of the Holy Martyrs and Confessors of the Orthodox Faith in the Twentieth Century, in the city of Pistoia.

Metropolitan Cyprian celebrated the Divine Liturgy, together with Bishop Ambrose and the clergy of the Italian Exarchate: Archimandrite Silvano, Hieromonk Felice, Father Vitale Stelyan, Father Nicola d'Amico, Father Hailè Kahsay (who had recently returned to Orthodoxy from the Monophysite Church of Ethiopia), and Father Aurel Spinu (who was canonically received the day before into the clergy of the Exarchate from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church–Moscow Patriarchate), and two Deacons, Father Daniele and Father Paolo.

The Liturgy was attended by a multi-ethnic flock, consisting of Italian converts and Romanian, Serbian, Ukrainian, Ethiopian, and other immigrants living in the area. The spiritual enthusiasm and joy of all were very evident and abundant.

The Metropolitan's program included meetings and edifying discussions with the clergy and the Faithful, veneration of the Grace-filled head of the Holy Great Martyr Barbara in Montecotini and also of a thorn from Our Lord's crown of thorns, which is kept in a church in Colle, Florence.

The prospects of a better and more effective Orthodox missionary presence and witness in Italy are truly hopeful. The pastoral visit of Metropolitan Cyprian, President of the Holy Synod in Resistance, contributed substantially, with God's help, towards this goal.