

The Enthronement of Bishop Silouan of Luni in Pistoia, Italy

Ordination of a Presbyter

On the Second Sunday of Great Lent, the Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas, February 23, 2004 (Old Style), two significant events took place in the Church of the Holy Martyrs and Confessors of the Twentieth Century, in Pistoia, Italy.

Specifically, His Grace, Bishop Ambrose of Methone, with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, President of the Holy Synod in Resistance, traveled to Pistoia as Synodal representative in order to Enthroner His Eminence, Bishop Silouan of Luni, and to Ordain a Greek-speaking Italian Presbyter.

Thus, at the festal Divine Liturgy on this day, Bishop Ambrose celebrated with five Priests and two Deacons of the Holy Synod's Italian Exarchate (others being prevented by bad weather from participating) and Ordained to the Priesthood Deacon Father Stefano Dell' Isola, who is already working to establish a mission parish in Rome.



At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Ambrose, in the name of Metropolitan Cyprian, performed the historic rite of the Enthronement of the new Diocesan Hierarch, His Eminence, Bishop Silouan of Luni, Synodal

Exarch in Italy, and read the customary Synodal Encyclical, which is printed below.

A large crowd of Orthodox was present, and a prayerful atmosphere of



spiritual joy and gladness prevailed.

In the afternoon of the same day, the two Bishops, together with members of our Exarchate in Italy, assembled in a body for a meeting with the Exarchate's officially-recognized legal representative to settle certain current issues and to discuss new prospects that are opening up for missionary activity and expansion in Italy.

By the Grace of God, after this recent advancement in its pastoral situation, there is every expectation that our Exarchate will be better organized and will make more progress, so that the presence and witness of Orthodox resistance in this heterodox country may acquire strong foundations, by the intercessions of the *Theotokos*, St. Gregory Palamas, and all the Saints.

Synodal Encyclical

To the Reverend Clergy
and the Christian Congregation
of the Holy Diocese of Luni, Italy

Reverend Priests and all the other blessed Orthodox Christians in the Diocese of Luni, Grace be with you from God the Lord, the Ruler of all.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who in His infinite love for mankind became

incarnate for our salvation, established the Holy Church for the purpose of imparting salvation to each one of the Faithful through his *sanctification, instruction, and guidance* by the Holy Apostles and their successors, its Pastors. These He appointed to continue His work of Redemption: “As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you”; “He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me”; “He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me” (St. John 20:21; St. Luke 10:16; St. Matthew 10:40).

Just as the Church was founded to be eternal, so also the work which the Apostles undertook was eternal, being transmitted through the Holy Spirit in the Mystery of the Priesthood to their successors. The Church is inconceivable without them. For as the Apostolic Father, St. Ignatios the God-bearer, wrote: “Without these [the Pastors], the Church is not called the Church.” Just as a believer is not saved if he remains outside the Orthodox Church, so also he receives no benefit by remaining in it without the stewards of the Divine Mysteries, that is, its Pastors and Teachers. Therefore, the supreme importance of the Episcopal office in the Orthodox Christian Church and its necessity are very evident.

Hence, our Holy Synod in Resistance of the Orthodox Church of Greece, in its maternal concern and love for the Orthodox flock in Central Italy, at its twenty-ninth session, on the seventh day of the month of February, in the year of salvation 2004 (Old Style), at the Holy and Venerable Monastery of the Holy Martyrs Cyprian and Justina, Fili, Attika, Greece, founded the Holy Diocese of Luni, with headquarters in Pistoia and the region of Tuscany as its territory, and subsequently elected by canonical vote and appointed as Bishop of this newly-established Diocese, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Silouan (Livi), a pious clergyman, Orthodox in faith and capable of shepherding the people of God.

Thus, His Eminence, Bishop Silouan, has been designated, by the Grace of the All-Holy and Perfecting Spirit, the genuine, canonical, and lawful Archpastor and spiritual guardian of the Most Holy Diocese of Luni, possessing the right to bless and sanctify all of the Orthodox Christians as befits a Hierarchy and to perform all of his Hierarchical duties, when he has been installed as Bishop, and to adjudicate and examine every matter of ecclesiastical business in accordance with the Divine and Sacred Canons and the precepts of the Gospel, as the Holy and God-bearing Fathers have interpreted, elucidated, and handed them down to us.

In announcing these things to all of you, the Holy Synod in Resistance urges and exhorts you to receive His Eminence, Bishop Silouan of Luni, as your canonical and lawful Hierarchy, and readily and wholeheartedly to obey and submit yourselves to him in his God-pleasing commandments, in accordance with the Scriptural injunction: “Obey those who rule over you and

submit yourselves; for they keep watch over your souls, as ones who must give account” (Hebrews 13:17). Clergy, commemorate his name in all sacred services and supplications in accordance with ecclesiastical order; and all of you, render to him, as your spiritual Father, due honor, reverence, love, and trust.

The Ruler of all and our only God, Who is worshipped in Trinity of Hypostases and Unity of Essence, blessing will bless you and multiplying will multiply you, in His love for mankind shepherding you together with your Pastor and grazing you in the life-giving pastures and at the water of spiritual rest and Orthodox Confession.

The Grace of our Savior, the Chief Shepherd, and His boundless mercy be with you all.

For the Holy Synod
Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili, President