



The Picturesque Chapel of St. Joseph the Betrothed in Northern Sweden and its Moving Story

by Marjo Marthin

Our revered and beloved Bishop in Sweden, His Grace, Bishop Johannes, as a young student of sixteen or seventeen had a very special experience in the city of Hertogenbosch in Holland. The young Johannes went to this city to study. For several days he tried, without success, to find accommodation. Then a man appeared to the young student and told him the exact address to go to find a place to stay.

Several months later the young man saw an icon; surprised, but with certainty, he recognized the man he had met. With awe, he realized it was the Saint himself, St. Joseph the Betrothed, who had appeared bodily before his eyes to help the homeless youngster.

Bishop Johannes has confided to me all of the details of this fantastic episode, as well as other experiences of his encounters with and greetings from St. Joseph, something which I will reveal another time.

In the year 2006 I had the wonderful privilege of accompanying His Grace, Bishop Johannes to Holland, to this very city and to the exact place where he had his first encounter with St. Joseph. I later asked His Grace if he had ever built a chapel to venerate and thank St. Joseph for all his help. But Bishop Johannes had not had the possibility to do that. "Then my husband and I will do it," I said.



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At first, my husband and I had plans to build a simple outdoor shrine in the garden of our previous home, but we never got around to it. Then, after a couple of years during which I experienced a wide variety of symptoms, we realized that I had developed hypersensitivity to the radiation of all wireless means



of communication: transmitters, cellphones, Wi-Fi, etc. So, personally I no longer "fit" in our modern society. I had to "flee" to the wilderness. My loving husband was willing to change his whole life and accompany me in changing to a much simpler lifestyle. After the first period of shock and unwillingness to accept this uncommon diagnosis, I finally, by the Grace of God, wholeheartedly accepted this as my path, and the means for our Heavenly Father to present me a way of "withdrawing from the world."

We travelled over 30.000 square kilometers looking for a small farm in good radio shadow.

Of course we prayed to Our Lord Jesus Christ to help us. We also prayed to St. Joseph to guide us in finding the right place. He, who himself led our Most Holy Theotokos to a shelter in unknown surroundings, as in Bethlehem, and later to a place in Egypt where she and the Child could survive. He, who had also helped our own Bishop in Sweden. We believe that St Joseph knows a lot about "finding the right place" for those he protects. So we prayed to be allowed to be included in that group of persons under his protection.

Finally, we found a farm with its beautiful little valley, about 140 kilometers north of Uppsala. In the end of April 2010 we moved there. We wanted to start building as soon as possible the tiny chapel to venerate and thank St. Joseph for his guidance and for his protection of our Most





Holy Theotokos the child Jesus, for giving detailed and perfect guidance to His Grace, Bishop Johannes, and now for having given it to us. For, in finding this beautiful place to live, he helped me to get better instead of deteriorating with pain and several other bodily problems caused by life in “civilization.”

We of course asked our beloved Bishop Johannes for his blessing for the building project. He gladly gave his blessing, but unfortunately he already was too weak by then to be able to come and visit the place and bless it on the spot.

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In the summer of 2011, we were abundantly blessed by the visit of a group of faithful from Greece led by His Grace, Bishop Cyprian. His Grace then promised that if we let him know about the plans and start raising the chapel the following year, he would come back and bless the foundation and the process of the construction.

Oh, how happy we were to hear that! We immediately started to make new plans. During the winter, we sent drawings and answered some questions about various things that His Grace wanted to know.

And finally the longed-for day arrived in June 2012, when His Grace, Bishop Cyprian returned to us, again with a group of faithful from Greece.



In addition to the overflowing joy we felt at the blessing of their visit, Bishop Cyprian brought gifts of inestimable value. During a beautiful ceremony, he inserted four stones in the foundation of the future chapel. And what stones! To the east, under the future altar, he placed a small stone from Golgotha; to the south, a tiny pebble from the shore of Lake Tiberias; to the west, where the entrance door was to be mounted, a small piece of rock from Mount Sinai, striped by the Burning Bush! And to the north, in the foundation of

the chapel, he inserted a small piece of stone coming from the Mount of Temptation.

Oh, those stones... what gifts! Unbelievable blessings! The same day that His Grace and his travelling companions left, we started the construction work....

