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Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew officiates at the celebrating Church of Saint Haralambos, Vevekion



On Sunday, 11 February 2024, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew officiated at the Divine Liturgy which took place at the Church of Saint Haralambos in the Community of Vevekion, where the previous day they celebrated the feast day of their patron saint.

“We all possess unique gifts bestowed upon us by God. These talents, as described in today’s Gospel passage, are not to be left uncultivated and unutilised; rather, we are called to diligently nurture and utilise them for our own growth and for the betterment of society. It is our responsibility to utilise these God-given endowments for the greater good, serving our brothers and sisters with humility and dedication. Even the seemingly modest gifts, coupled with sincere effort, hold the power to profoundly impact the lives of others. Recognising our gifts as a divine calling and sacred duty, we are called to fulfill our mission with unwavering commitment,”

stated the Ecumenical Patriarch in his address following the Divine Liturgy, and added:

“With these reflections in mind, we gather today in this venerable Church to offer prayers for humanity. For every human being. For the each and every unique human being before God. Because every person is in the eyes of God a person with a special and unrepeatable value, bestowed with intellect and free will by the divine Creator, “respected freedom”, according to Saint John Chrysostom. It is up to each of us how we will use these gifts offered to us by our Creator.

Indeed, we are all transient inhabitants on this earth, for ‘here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.’ When we believe in this eternal truth, we become, already from this transient life, partakers in His holiness. With fervent conviction, we profess our faith: ‘I believe, Lord, that you are the Son of God, and all things are yours, even our very lives.’ This is proven by the existence of the holy Churches, sacred springs and pilgrimages of our fathers. These show us the innate tendency and drive of human kind towards the Divine, from whom we always receives strength and courage, so that we can defeat all threatening visible and invisible adversities.

For our sake, the incarnate Word of God was crucified. For the God who became man, we too are crucified. We are crucified in order that we may life with Christ, through our total devotion to Him, through our commitment to the faithful and sacred tenets of our faith, the honourable legacy of the Mother Church of Constantinople”.

His All-Holiness expressed his Patriarchal satisfaction for the work being carried out, “under the inspired guidance and solid leadership of our dear and esteemed Brother, Metropolitan Athenagoras of Kydonia”, and congratulated him and his coworkers. Expressing once again his special love for the Community of Vevekion, he said that he specifically asked of Saint Charalambos to take care of this cherished corner of the Bosphorus and Constantinople and “to intercede on behalf of our entire Greek community, but also for peace in the world, especially in the harshly tested Ukraine and Middle East, and for the stability of the Holy Churches of God and the preservation of their unity”.

Previously, the Ecumenical Patriarch was warmly welcomed by His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of Kydonia, Supervisor of the Bosphorus Region, while on behalf of the Ecclesiastical Committee of the Community of Vevekion, the Secretary, Mr. Andreas Robopoulos, delivered an address.

Photographs: Nikos Papachristou / Ecumenical Patriarchate

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