

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: “Ignoring the cries of both people and the earth is no longer an option”



On Thursday, 22 February 2024, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew responded to the kind invitation of the President of the Marmara Grubu Vakfi Foundation Dr. Akkan Suver, and delivered a speech at the “27th Eurasian Economic Summit”, held in Constantinople.

The Ecumenical Patriarch, addressing the audience in English, acknowledged the stark realities of our contemporary world, marred by wars, conflicts, and pervasive violence. He expressed deep disappointment at the prevailing indifference towards the suffering, insecurity, and forced displacement endured by countless individuals. Additionally, he lamented the widespread poverty and misery that afflict so many lives. “For reasons we can only attribute to greed or apathy, we seem to remain solely focused and obsessed with our own concerns and interests. And this, of course, is far from a world of stability, cooperation and inclusion,” he stressed.

And the Patriarch then said:

“These vital principles—of collaboration and inclusion, or perhaps we could speak of collaboration and integration—are at the heart of our discussion here today.

Precisely because they are the fundamental values, by which we can measure and guarantee stability and security. However, as the title and subtitle of this summit suggest, we must also underline the importance of 'building'. And building means to work—sometimes even hard work. Building involves labouring — sometimes even hard labour. Building involves struggle - sometimes even uncomfortable struggle.



However, above all, building includes another key concept, without which we cannot achieve cooperation and inclusion. Indeed, without this essential element, we cannot hope to secure stability for ourselves, our people and our planet. I am referring to the concept of will or determination. Without work and without will, we cannot aspire to achieve stability.

After all, trying to build a better world and a better future often means confronting the habits of the past. It often requires us to go against the currents or fashions of our time. Sometimes it even requires that we go against our own desires and preferences - in other words, to escape from our comfort and complacency - so that other people can enjoy the sacred resources of life that are meant to be shared: the right to clean air and clean water, the right to adequate food and good healthcare and the right to a peaceful and prosperous life'.



His All-Holiness pointed out that we are all called to respond to the modern challenges facing our world in new and unprecedented ways, and reminded us that the recent Corona-virus pandemic taught us that “no one is saved unless everyone is saved”.

At another point in his speech he emphasised:

“Having a look at the world around us today—the military conflicts happening in the Middle East and Ukraine, the environmental devastation caused by floods and droughts, the growing ethnic divisions in Africa and Asia, the unresolved migrant and refugee crisis around the globe — all of this is enough to remind us that we need to look for new ways to move from crisis to stability and through cooperation to inclusion. Only then can we advance our common dream of building a new world.



We can no longer ignore the cry of the people or the cry of the earth. The only way we can move away from conflict is through the fostering of solidarity and acquiring a sensitivity to cooperation and compassion.”

At noon, His All-Holiness attended a lunch that was served as part of the Conference.

Photographs: Nikos Papachristou / Ecumenical Patriarchate

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