

## **The Ecumenical Patriarch honours the memory of the victims of the Tempe tragedy**



On the day of his birthday, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, honoured the memory of the victims of the Tempe railway tragedy. On Thursday morning, 29 February, after the Divine Liturgy at the venerable Patriarchal Church of Saint George, which was celebrated by the Grand Protosyncellus Archimandrite Gregorios, His All-Holiness conducted a Trisagion Memorial Service for the repose of the souls of our 57 fellow human beings who lost their lives a year ago in Tempe, Greece.

The Divine Liturgy was attended by Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Throne, Clergy, Monastics, Archons of the Great Church of Christ, Ambassador His Excellency Konstantinos Koutras, Consul General of Greece in Constantinople, Community leaders, faithful from Constantinople and many pilgrims from overseas.

At the end, and on the occasion of his birthday, His All-Holiness expressed his heartfelt gratitude to God for all that He had offered him during his 84 years of life.

Among other things he noted:

“The present eucharistic gathering is for us, apart from a time of glorification of the mighty God, and a time of remembrance. We therefore remember all those to whom we owe, after God, “to live and to live well”. We gratefully remember the name of the blessed Elder and my benefactor Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon, an emblematic personality of the Holy Great Church of Christ and the Christian world.

We do not forget the brave cyrenian brothers, the dear friends, the comrades in our church ministry, the most beloved members of the Greek Community in the city of Constantinople, where the achievements of the Saints and Martyrs “are trumpeted most brilliantly”.



Our long course in life has taught us to think highly and optimistically about man, as the “beloved of God”, the one endowed with the gift of freedom, and the one “entirely given to God”, according to Gregory the Theologian, the Predecessor in the Saints of my humble self. Wherever there is love, light, forgiveness and reconciliation, a spirit of dialogue and solidarity in the world, where people strive for peace and justice, God is present, the eternal “one who makes great and wondrous things, glorious and exquisite” , there the divine grace inspires freedom and promotes human cooperation”.

Afterwards, the Patriarch distributed the antidoron and accepted birthday wishes









Photographs: Nikos Papachristou

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