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The Holy Synaxis of the Hierarchy of the Ecumenical Throne has concluded



At the invitation and under the chairmanship of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the 10th Synaxis of the Venerable Hierarchy of the Ecumenical Throne, with the participation of the Hierarchs of the Autonomous Churches of Finland and Estonia under his canonical protection, was convened in Constantinople from September 1 to 3, 2024.

The Synaxis began with the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Indiction at the Patriarchal Church of Saint George the Great Martyr, with the participation of the Patriarch and the Metropolitans, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Throne.

The Synaxis, which opened with the introductory address of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the response of Elder Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon, included the following five thematic sessions, dedicated to the study of issues related to the life and witness of the Great Church of Christ in the contemporary world, with a pan-Orthodox and pan-Christian scope:

a) “Orthodox and Inter-Christian Relations”, which discussed the impact of the ongoing war in Ukraine on ecclesiastical affairs in that country and the Baltic States, as well as the “Orthodox Diaspora” in Western Europe. This was followed by presentations on the progress of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches and the contribution of the Church of Constantinople to the Conference of European Churches and the Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue Forum in Europe.

b) “Canonical and Liturgical Issues”, where issues related to deviations from the canon and liturgical tradition of the Great Church of Christ, as well as cases of intervention by the media, were discussed.

c) “The Mother Church in the Contemporary World,” with presentations on the timely issue of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in general and concerning the Church, as well as its concern for the challenges and spiritual inquiries of today’s youth.

d) “Church and Geopolitical Issues,” with a presentation on the origins, development, and application of the so-called “Russian World” theory. The Hierarchy explicitly condemned this ideology and the transformation of the Church into a secular institution, as well as its use to promote state interests and the ongoing war in Ukraine following the unprovoked invasion of a sovereign state by the Russian Federation.

The assembled hierarchs turned their thoughts and prayers to the millions of our suffering brethren in Ukraine and prayed to the Lord of Peace for an immediate end to the war and for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in war-torn Ukraine, as well as in the Middle East, especially in the Holy Land where the Patriarchate of Jerusalem is located. The members of the Assembly also prayed for peace in Syria and Lebanon and expressed their solidarity with the Patriarchate of Antioch.

At the end of this session, the letter from the Pope and Patriarch Theodore II of Alexandria and All Africa was read, informing the esteemed Hierarchy of the canonical encroachment of the Moscow Patriarchate on the canonical territory of the Church of Alexandria and the resulting schism and scandal among the People

of God in Africa.

The Assembly unanimously and wholeheartedly condemned these non-canonical actions of the Russian Church and expressed its unwavering support for the Patriarchate of Alexandria and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

e) “Orthodox Monasticism and Mission”, with reference to Orthodox missionary work in the Antipodes and Orthodox monasticism in the 21st century, as well as the relationship between the Mother Church of Constantinople and Mount Athos.

The participants praised the excellent organisation of the Synaxis, the relevance of the topics discussed, and the fact that it highlighted the ecumenical dimension and responsibility of the Great Church. The Assembly functioned as a forum for dialogue and an opportunity for wide-ranging discussions, fostered by the timeliness of the issues and the high quality of the presentations.

In his concluding address, the Ecumenical Patriarch reminded the esteemed Hierarchs that within the next ecclesiastical year, at the end of May 2025, an official celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the convocation of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, Bithynia, will take place with the participation of Pope Francis.

The present Synaxis of the Hierarchy of the Throne is dedicated to this historical anniversary, a fact which was expressed by the choice as the central theme of the Synaxis from the Hymnological verse from the Vespers of the Holy and God-bearing Fathers who gathered in Nicaea for the first Ecumenical Synod, those who, among other issues, also dealt with the issue of setting the date of the Paschal celebration: “And now we, who follow their divine teachings, firmly believe and worship the Father and the Son and the all-holy Spirit, one God, the consubstantial Trinity.” In this spirit, the wish is unanimously expressed that the common celebration of Pascha during the next year by both Eastern and Western Christianity will not be a simple coincidence, but the beginning of the establishment of communion through the annual celebration of the Feast Day of Pascha according to the Paschalion of the Orthodox Church.

Following this, His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Didymoteicho, Orestiada, and Soufli spoke, and the proceedings of the Synaxis concluded with the traditional closing prayer service.

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