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Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: “This year commemorates anniversaries that shaped the course of peoples and places, to whom the loving care of the Mother Church was extended”



On Wednesday morning, 4 September 2024, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew visited the Holy Monastery of the Holy Trinity on Halki and participated in the Divine Liturgy, which was celebrated in the monastery’s Katholikon, having His Eminence Metropolitan Stephanos of Philippi, Neapolis, and Thasos presiding over the Divine Liturgy.

After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, the Metropolitan held a memorial service for the repose of the souls of his late predecessors, Metropolitans Chrysostomos and Alexandros of Philippi, as well as the departed graduates from Kavala of the Halki Theological School, the blessed priests Georgios Diamantopoulos, Dimitrios Kaprakis, Ioannis Vardavoulis, and Hippokrates Findanis.

Immediately afterward, in the Great Synod Hall of the School, the Ecumenical Patriarch inaugurated the proceedings of a symposium organised by the Metropolis of Philippi on the occasion of the centenary of its founding.

The Ecumenical Patriarch reminded those present that this year marks the commemoration of several anniversaries, “which have shaped the century-long journey of peoples and places to which the loving care and guidance of the Mother Church of Constantinople was extended and continues to extend.”

He specifically mentioned the following:

“Firstly, we honour the granting of autocephaly to the Holy Orthodox Church of Poland by the Ecumenical Throne, which alone has the canonical right to do so. Then, the establishment of several Holy Metropolises, including the nearby Metropolis of the Princes’ Islands, whose anniversary we duly celebrated last July 14th, and the Holy Archdiocese of Australia. We will personally lead and bless the upcoming celebratory events there in October. Likewise, the elevation of dioceses in the Holy Metropolis of Thessaloniki and other regions in northern Greece and the creation of new dioceses such as Soufli, Kavala and Nestos, Thasos, Zichni, Nigrita, Langadas, Goumenissa, Yannitsa, Metsovo, Filiates, Ikaria, Kardamyla, Oinousses, Psara, and Plomari.”

The Ecumenical Patriarch then spoke about the centennial of the Metropolis of Philippi, Neapolis, and Thasos:

“Among the Metropolises celebrating a century of ministry and service, the Holy Metropolis of Kavala and Nestos, later renamed Philippi, Neapolis, and Thasos, holds a prominent place, not only because of its geographical location in Macedonia but also because it was comprised mainly of refugee populations in need of ecclesiastical care and strong leadership. From almost nothing, it has grown into a flourishing province of the Ecumenical Throne, which ensured the election of its tested hierarch, Chrysostomos Chatzistavrou, who later served as Archbishop of Athens and who played a key role in helping this Metropolis thrive.”



He added, “We feel particularly fortunate, as the successor to the great Patriarch Gregory VII, to honour the initiatives of this significant figure, especially today, here at the Theological School of Halki, which has produced many sacred figures and whose first two Metropolitans came from this institution.”

The Ecumenical Patriarch continued by making extensive reference to the work and overall contribution of the late hierarchs of the Metropolis of the Throne, particularly Chrysostomos Chatzistavrou, who later became Archbishop of Athens, Alexandros Kantonis, and Prokopios Tsakoumakas, as well as the current Metropolitan Stephanos.

“With joy, we now greet you, dear brother Stephanos, the worthy successor of these blessed hierarchs, whose service to the Church and the Orthodox people of Greece is a source of pride. Since 2017, you have tirelessly served the people with dedication, ensuring their progress in the Orthodox faith through your hard work and care.”

He concluded by expressing his hopes for the continued flourishing of the Metropolis into its second century, wishing that it remain an ever-vibrant branch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with Metropolitan Stephanos leading by example in both word and deed.



Earlier, the Ecumenical Patriarch and the attendees were welcomed by the Abbot of the Monastery, His Grace Bishop Kassianos of Aravissos.

As part of the symposium, speeches were given by Metropolitan Meliton of Philadelphia, Archimandrite Meletios Stefanatos, and Dr. Sappho Angeloudi-Zarkada. Additionally, a special commemorative film was screened, and the symposium concluded with a speech by Metropolitan Stephanos.

The event was attended by several hierarchs, clergy, and prominent figures, including Greek Ambassador His Excellency Mr. Konstantinos Koutras and a group of pilgrims from Kavala.




































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