16/09/2024

The Feast of the Elevation of the Precious and Live-giving Cross at the Ecumenical Patriarchate



In an atmosphere of due reverence, the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Live-giving Cross was celebrated at the Holy Centre of Orthodoxy.

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew officiated from the throne during the Divine Liturgy which took place on Saturday, 14 September, and was joined by Their Eminences, Metropolitan Irinaios of Myriophytos and Peristasis, Metropolitan Theoliptos of Iconium, Metropolitan Andreas of Forty Churches and Metropolitan Theodoros of Seleucia.

The Divine Liturgy was conducted by, according to the order of the Patriarchal Church, the Chief Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod, Archimandrite Bosporios, with the Undersecretary Patriarchal Deacon Oikoumenios.

After the service of the elevation of the Holy Cross, His All-Holiness, in accordance with tradition, handed out flowers and basil to the Hierarchs, the clergy of the Patriarchal Court and to the Archons of the Great Church of Christ who came

forward to venerate the Holy Cross, as well as, at the end of the service, to the many faithful believers.

Also present for the Divine Liturgy were His Grace Bishop Ambrosios of Evdokiada, His Excellency Ambassador, Mr. Konstantinos Koutras, Consul General of Greece in Constantinople, Archons of the Great Church of Christ, a multi-member Delegation of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy lead by its Secretary General, Mr. Maximos Harakopoulos, member of the Greek Parliament, and the new President of its General Assembly, Mr. Ioan Vulpescu, member of the Romanian Parliament, and many faithful from Constantinople and abroad.

On the eve of the Feast Day, His All-Holiness, according to custom, officiated at the Great Vespers which took place at the Church of Saint Nicholas, Topkapi.

The holy sermon was preached by Patriarchal Deacon Father Evlogios Tsatas, who is the Codifier of the Patriarchate.

Immediately after, in the Community Hall, His All-Holiness was addressed by His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria, Supervisor of the Hypsomatheia District.



In his reply, the Patriarch, pointing out the central importance of the cross in the life of Christians, referred, among other things, to the recent heinous act of shooting an icon of the Virgin Mary, which happened in Switzerland, categorically

condemning this offensive action.

“Our life is always full of all kinds of crosses. Bearing these crosses, always referring to the Unique Cross of our Saviour and Redeemer, on our shoulders, we are not discouraged from the disorder of the times, because we know well that “Christ is all things and in all things”!

We must always remember that the Cross is an eternal and indestructible symbol of sacrifice and offering. Especially today, in the era of the desecration, even insulting, of religious symbols in the name of an ill-conceived freedom, which is in reality an abuse of freedom, as demonstrated by the recent abominable practice of multiple shootings of a copy of a well-known icon of the Italian painter Tommaso del Mazza of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ-child, which was used as a shooting point, for the sake of, or rather, “discharge”, for the sake of blasphemy, of a local symbol of the city of Zurich.

We take the opportunity to strongly and unreservedly condemn as the Ecumenical Patriarchate this disrespectful act, which not only deeply offends the faith of millions of Christians all over the world, but also causes a heavy blow to modern European civilization. This is not a form of freedom of expression, but an overt act of sacrilege and vandalism. And we wholeheartedly congratulate the Holy Metropolis of Switzerland, a God-saving Eparchy of our venerable Ecumenical Throne, and its worthy Shepherd, our Brother Metropolitan Maximos, for the measured announcement of condemnation that he immediately issued on the matter.

This sad incident recalls to our memory the wise words of our ever-remembered Elder, the Late Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon, who prophetically emphasised that, from the beginning of the world, the various philosophical and ideological systems, the various political and social theories, as well as the wondrous scientific achievements and impressive technological developments, towards only one thing did they envisioned and aim, either consciously or subconsciously: “toward the restoration or rather the recovery of the lost Paradise, even through the creation of a Platonic State, a utopia on earth. That which Saint Paul says, that the Greeks ask for wisdom and the Jews ask for a sign, are not requests of a certain era and a certain category of people… They are biotheories and worldviews that experiment with the conquest of the Supreme Good outside of God and without the Crucified Redeemer Christ”.



But the unwavering answer of the Great Holy Church of Christ, the Church of the Crucified Christ, the Crucified Church, was and remains this: “we proclaim Christ crucified” (1 Cor.1: 23). This is the crucifixion-resurrection tradition of the Great Church and we are all its successors. In spite of many, we continue according to the words of the poet: “simple and humble, meek and yet unyielding. So go your way even if you are burdened with your cross. You will find insults, mockery, beatings… yes, maybe… But do not bend over, do not kneel in the mud, do not lay your cross down!”.

Concluding his address, His All-Holiness expressed his Patriarchal satisfaction to His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria, “for the order and decency that we see prevailing in all the communities under his responsibility, as well as for the example of faithful and dedicated ministry that he has been offering for decades as the Hierarch of the Ecumenical Throne”. The Patriarch also congratulated its Parish Priest Father Konstantinos and all the members of the Ecclesiastical Committee for the blessed work taking place in the Community.

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