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Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: “Hellenic Education is Christ and the Greek Language”



On Monday, September 16, 2024, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided over the Sanctification Service (Agiasmos) on the occasion for the commencement of the new school year. The Agiasmos took place in the adjacent Byzantine Church of the Dormition of the Panagia Mouchliotissa, in the presence of the Principal, the teachers, and students of the Patriarchal Great School of the Nation.

In his speech immediately after the service, the Ecumenical Patriarch, among other things, offered paternal advice and counsel to the students.

“You, the students of this blessed institution, hold the extraordinary privilege of carrying the blessing and protection of the Great Church, a privilege reflected even in your very name. You are the Patriarchal Great School of the Nation—both the present and the promising future of this esteemed legacy. Yet, in Romiosyne, every glory comes with its Cross. Every privilege brings with it a responsibility. Every lofty hill and every eloquent word bears the scent of Golgotha. Your responsibility,

therefore, is to continually become “Light”—the light of our Hellenic education. And what is Hellenic education? It is Christ and the Greek language! Christ and education, inseparable from virtue! It is Christ and the Nation!

I do not recommend that you spend these or any of your school or university years memorising dry, sterile knowledge! Instead, I encourage you, as a father, to be formed by both sacred and secular knowledge and to shape Christ within you, giving form to Christ in your life. For, my children, we understand this in every way: as a Nation and as humanity, we do not have the luxury of living even a single minute away from our Christ! Christ is Love. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! He is the Light! Christ is everything to us! But, which Christ? Not a vague, good Teacher or a remarkable Man, but the God-Man Lord, as presented to us crucified and resurrected by our Orthodox Church!



Therefore, along with your learning, what your spiritual father urges you most strongly is that you become better Christians with each passing moment, loving our Church, through our Church, through its Sacraments, with humility, modesty, courage, thoughtfulness, and the vision that “tomorrow” belongs to you. And not only “tomorrow”, but as long as we belong to Christ, eternity belongs to us as well. But do not forget that no one reaches “tomorrow” successfully without first drawing from the lessons of the past and constantly working in the present. The better Christians you become, the more you will love your fellow human beings without discrimination, becoming examples of life and conduct, and transforming into the

“salt of the earth”.

The Ecumenical Patriarch continued: “Today, from this Church of Our Lady, from the Byzantine Church of Mouchliotissa, we all send together the message of renewal and vitality that we, the elders, see in your lively and full-of-life faces. Go forth, my children, into the wonderful time of learning that which is good! Seize the opportunity that education provides to constantly cultivate yourselves, with obedience to your hardworking Principal and your excellent Teachers, and certainly in harmony with your beloved classmates from the other blessed schools of our Archdiocese: the Zografeion, under the protection of the Holy Theotokos, where I also studied, and the neighboring Zappeion School of the Holy Trinity.

My children, your father loves you deeply! I love you very much! I think of you often! I rejoice and take pride in your successes, and I understand and share in your fears and anxieties about the future. But I am here, beside you, with you, praying earnestly, very earnestly for you, and blessing you wholeheartedly in the Name of our Triune God.”



Present at the event were His Grace Bishop Adrianos of Halicarnassus, Mr. Panteleimon Panagiotidis, President of the Board of Trustees of the Patriarchal Great School of the Nation, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Mrs. Dimitra Vourdoglou, Education Coordinator at the General Consulate of Greece in Constantinople, and staff of the School.

Afterward, the Ecumenical Patriarch blessed the School’s dining hall and had lunch





















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