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# The Ecumenical Patriarch becomes the first Honorary Doctor of St Andrew’s Theological College in Sydney




On Saturday 5th October, the chant “Axios” (He is worthy) echoed through the packed central auditorium of the University of Sydney in honour of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by St Andrew’s Theological College, part of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. Present at the grand award ceremony were His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia and members of the Holy Eparchial Synod, Deputy Minister of Culture of Greece Mr Iason Fotilas, representing the Greek Government, hierarchs, clergy, monks and nuns, professors and students of the Theological School, among others.

The ceremony's opening was particularly impressive as the Ecumenical Patriarch, following his formal entrance into the auditorium, was welcomed with cheers and songs by young members of the Greek diaspora and greeted with drum rolls and the sounds of a Scottish bagpipe played by members of the historic "Sydney Thistle Highland Pipe Band". Equally impressive and moving was the musical-theatrical performance titled "Echoes of Romiosini" presented by young men and women of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society of Sydney, which concluded the ceremony.

In the main part of the event, His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew delivered a speech on "The necessity of a synodal mindset," in which he began by reminding everyone that "our holy Church, archetypically, on the day of its revelation to the world, is gathered in council, that is, assembled 'in one place' in the Holy Spirit." At another point in his address, he clarified that Synodality in the Orthodox Church "is not to be understood as a system akin to representative democracy, where the Churches are seen and treated as Federal States, characterised primarily by numerical representation and leveling logic, as is the case in some Orthodox Churches today." He further explained that the Synodal mindset of the Church is authentically expressed under two essential and unalterable conditions: "The first condition: the office, or rather the gift and responsibility, of the First. […] The second condition: Synodality can in no way exist outside the terms and boundaries established by the Holy Ecumenical Councils."




Concluding his theological discourse on the synodal mindset, the Ecumenical Patriarch referred to the new Constitution of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, which provides for the creation of a Synod of Bishops, and congratulated

Archbishop Makarios for his initiative. Additionally, he thanked the Archbishop, as Dean of the Theological College, and its teaching staff for the honour bestowed upon him. Lastly, he addressed the youth present with paternal affection, urging them to remain close to the Church and Christ, “Who will never disappoint you”.

For his part, Archbishop Makarios delivering the closing speech of the ceremony, initially thanked His All-Holiness for accepting the proposal to become the first of the doctors of the sacred science of Theology, at the first Orthodox Theological College established in the southern hemisphere. He then recounted the efforts made to found St Andrew’s Theological College and spoke at length about the Ecumenical Patriarch’s character, describing him as a “model theologian,” who offers the theological voice of the Mother Church “with great courage and wisdom.” He concluded with emphasis: “This is the theology of the Great Church of Christ and our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: the theology of the truth of the faith, Venerable today.”




This traditional demotic song honours the many sea battles that took place during the 1821 Greek War of Independence. Today this song and dance is preserved in the region of Ierissos in Chalkidiki and is celebrated each year on the third day after Easter. All the people from the town, holding hand and themselves down the steep hill to the chapel of St Paul and then continue to the harbour. A memorial service for all who died at sea during the Revolution is conducted, followed by this song and dance.
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