

## **Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: We pray for the Lord to bring lasting peace to the Middle East**



On Tuesday afternoon, 22 October 2024, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided over the Vespers of the Thronal Feast of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem at the Church of St. George in Neochori Bosphorus, a Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre. The service commemorated the memory of the Holy Apostle James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem.

In his homily, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew expressed his deep emotion for visiting the sacred site of the Jerusalem Metochion, saying, "Our memory goes back to those holy places where the Lord lived and performed His salvific work for the sake of the world's life and salvation, but also with evident anxiety and cohesion of heart for the war and the dramatic developments that the entire region of the Middle East is experiencing today."

Referring to the tragic events currently unfolding in the Holy Land, the Patriarch continued:

“Unfortunately, even after twenty centuries, the preaching of peace from the Gospel has not yet fully taken root in the hearts of all people. This sorrowful realisation makes us all—without exception—responsible, especially those of us who serve as deacons and ministers of the Most High God. That is why tonight we pray especially for the Lord of Peace to bring lasting peace to this region of the globe, so that from there—from its very source—the message of true and genuine peace, which the world so desperately needs today, may flow forth!”

He further offered prayers for the strengthening of the Christian community in the region, particularly for Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem: “We pray for the well-being of our brothers and sisters, especially for our brother Patriarch Theophilos, wishing him many blessed years.”



The Patriarch also reflected on the strong support the Ecumenical Patriarchate has always provided to the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, praising their ongoing efforts to safeguard the Holy Shrines. He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Archbishop Nektarios of Anthidon, the Commissioner of the Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople, for his significant role in maintaining good relations.

“We witness your tireless efforts and struggle on behalf of the three Metochia of

the Holy Sepulchre here in Constantinople. We congratulate you for your zeal, self-denial, and devotion to the duty entrusted to you by your Church, as well as for your touching love for the Holy Great Church of Christ and its humble Primate.”

During the service, the Patriarch also marked the 33rd anniversary of his election to the Patriarchal Throne, which took place on 22 October 1991. Reflecting on this milestone, he said:

“We are deeply grateful to God, the Father of Lights, for allowing us to serve Him and His Church. We also extend our thanks to all of you—our Priests and beloved brothers and co-celebrants—for our truly brotherly cooperation, which has contributed greatly to the Holy Great Church of Christ and to us personally. May the Lord grant you health and strength for many more years, so that together, we can continue to offer our valuable services to the Mother Church.”

Concluding his address, the Patriarch called on the faithful to pray for continued grace and protection:

“Pray for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to proclaim the mystery of Christ (Col. 4:3-4). May the Lord, through the intercessions of St. James the Brother of God, keep us always in His love, that we may work His commandments and fulfill His holy will, bringing forth His kingdom on earth as in heaven, to the glory of His most holy name, in which we are all saved. Amen.”

Before the conclusion of the service, Archbishop Nektarios of Anthidon, the Commissioner of the Holy Sepulchre, offered a warm address to the Ecumenical Patriarch and presented him with an engolpion as a gift, marking the anniversary of his election.

The Vespers service was attended by Hierarchs of the Throne, members of the Holy and Sacred Synod, Archons, faithful from Constantinople, and pilgrims from America.















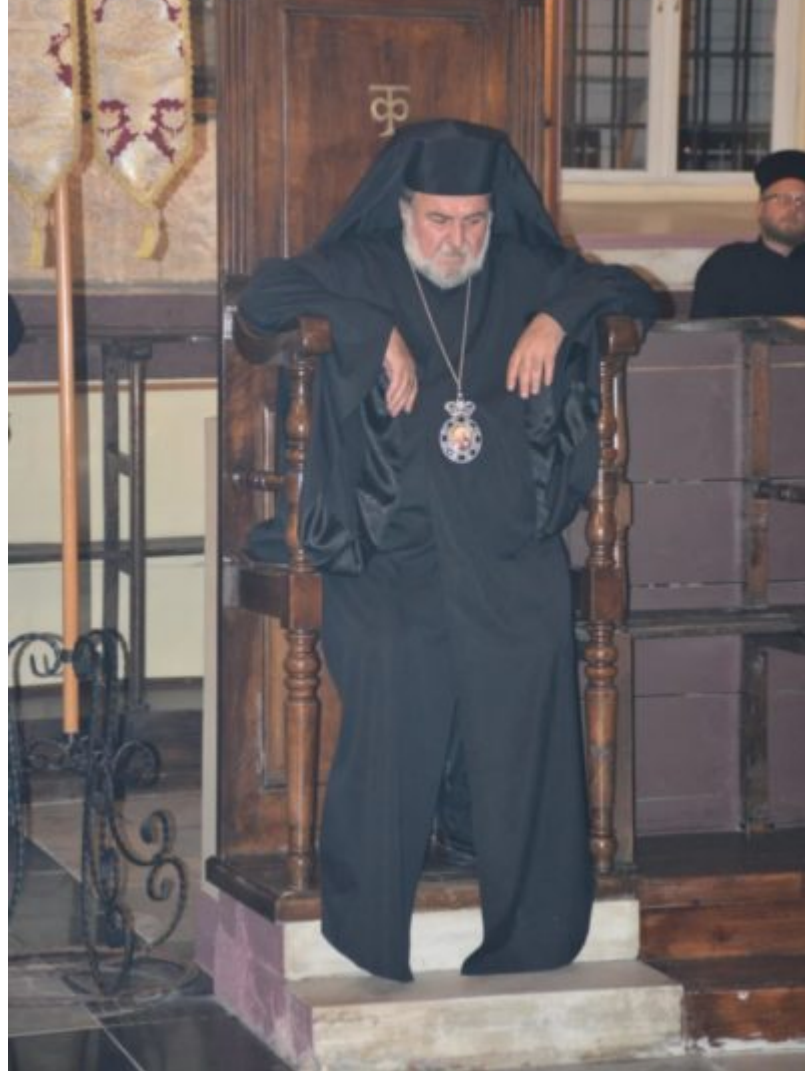












































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