

Patriarchal Horostasia at the celebrating Church of Saint Alypius in Antalya, on the 180th anniversary of its construction



On Monday, 9 December 2024, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew officiated from the throne during the Divine Liturgy which took place on the feast day of Saint Alypius, according to the Julian Calendar, at the celebrating Church of Saint Alypius of the Holy Metropolis of Pisidia, where this year the Church celebrates the 180th anniversary of its construction.

Also present for the Liturgy were His Grace Bishop Ambrosios of Evdokiada, Assistant Bishop of the Holy Metropolis of Pisidia, clergy of the Metropolis, heterodox clergy serving in the region, the Consul of Ukraine in Antalya, Mr. Oleksandr Voronin, and several faithful – of Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Georgian and Turkish origin, from the multinational flock of the local Church.

In his Address, His All-Holiness referred to the honoured Saint and, among other things, to the respect of the people of Antalya towards Saint Alypius, a fact that led them to erect a Church in his honour.

"Alypius, who was outwardly thin and physically weak, became a towering granite pillar of faith and virtue! Christians loved him, respected him and honoured him as a Saint even while he was alive! For centuries, his fame has moved the faithful, so that here too, this venerable Church was erected in his honour by the pious people of Attaleia, one hundred and eighty years ago, at the very time when our venerable Theological School was being built in Halki, which unfortunately is still involuntarily closed. It was founded on 1 August 1843 and completed on 7 May 1844. May the memory of the pious founders be eternal and blessed.

The Church, after eighty years, as a result of the disaster that occurred, fell silent and ceased to function, for eighty whole years as well! But, the all-powerful right hand of God has worked wonders impressively in recent years and behold, the house of Saint Alypius is open again, radically renovated and in every way decent, housing the Christians of Attaleia and their rational worship and sanctifyingly connecting the present with the past and with the eternal, the living with the deceased and those who are about to be born, those already here with those uprooted from here a century ago, the earth with the heavens!

Eternal and holy is the memory of the Late Metropolitan Sotirios of Pisidia, the missionary of Korea, who laboured greatly for the resurrection of the fallen scene of Pisidia and the recovery and restoration of this holy Church! In his old age, with youthful zeal, he worked diligently here in this ancient cradle of Christianity, and with the help of God, the guidance of Mother Church and the assistance of many people, both among us and from abroad, he became the servant of the miracle that we are experiencing today. May he, through the intercessions of the Virgin Mary of Pisidia, Saint Alypius and all the Saints of Pisidia, Side and Attaleia, first and foremost the Chief Apostle Paul, have a rich reward for his labours and struggles before the Lord in the Land of the Living!



The Patriarch then pointed out:

"The Mother Church is constantly vigilant and lovingly cares for the God-saving Metropolis of Pisidia, as she does all her children. For two years now, the baton of the pastoral care of the local Church and the responsibility for its stability and growth has been entrusted to the worthy hands of His Eminence Metropolitan Job of Pisidia, a distinguished academic and experienced Hierarch, who, together with His Grace Bishop Ambrosios, Assistant Bishop, also a novice and devoted worker of the Church, and the good collaborators the Presbyters, faithfully and sacrificially serve the multinational and multilingual Christian population of this blessed Eparchy of our Ecumenical Throne. And certainly, as the luminary of the place, the Apostle Paul, emphasises, "for in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek," and consequently neither Russian, nor Ukrainian, nor Georgian, nor Serbian, nor Romanian, nor any other, "for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

All the blessed Orthodox Christians of Antalya, regardless of national origin and linguistic expression, you are, beloved, one flock of Christ, under one shepherd and Bishop, in one body, one soul, one ecclesiastical community and presence. Far from you is the temptation of ethnic and racial discrimination, which divides and tears the Church! You are a small flock, in the midst of a non-Christian environment. Strive together with your Chief Shepherd, your Bishop and your Priests, to offer daily to all a good testimony of Jesus Christ.

Sanctify yourselves liturgically, as regularly and frequently as you can, in your Church of Saint Alypius, full of divine grace, and live the supernatural Mystery of the Church. We know that the Divine Liturgy is celebrated here daily. This is the greatest blessing for you and the area. The Lord and the Theotokos and all our Saints will rejoice to see you gathered together fraternally and peacefully in communal and rational worship.

They will be happy to feel that you “smell like incense”, as the saying goes. Do not forget that here you are like the “salt of the earth” and “a city set upon a hill”. You must be a shining example of morality and virtue, workers of good and holy works of humanity and love, so that, seeing your path and manner, those outside the Church may also be exemplified and thus the all-holy name of God may be glorified.

On this occasion, we express our warm and grateful thanks to the honorable State and Municipal Authorities of the city and the region for the opportunity they gave us to restore the Church and for it to be a bright spot of Culture and religious worship today, a place of peace and reconciliation. Their benevolent attitude honours modern Turkey!

His All-Holiness then delivered a greeting in Turkish.

Previously, the Patriarch was addressed by His Eminence Metropolitan Job of Pisidia, who welcomed him once again to the city of Attaleia and the Apostle Paul, and then referred to the history of the Church.

“It is certainly no coincidence that the only Orthodox Church of worship in Antalya is honoured in the name of Saint Alypius. It is certainly no coincidence that this Church was not only saved, but today, thanks to Your All-Holiness, is the centre of Orthodox life and witness in the blessed city of Antalya. It is certainly not just “luck”, but a blessed “hour”, that today, with the advent of its new “founder”, Your All-Holiness, the anniversary of the completion of 180 years since the erection by the venerable first founders, Efstratios, Kyriakos, Ephraim and Dimitrios of the Danielids, of this holy tabernacle of Saint Alypius the Stylite, is celebrated and

honoured.



This holy and Orthodox Church is the only one of the ten magnificent Churches of the city that has been saved. And it was acquired thanks to your special providence, our Patriarch, under the loving care and supervision of my late predecessor Metropolitan Sotirios, whose memory is eternal and for whose contribution not only the hearts of the faithful but also the stones of this holy Metropolis cry out and to whom the gratitude of all of us is inexpressible.

The city of Attaleia, “bathed with the blood of heroes and martyrs,” and the Holy Metropolis of Pisidia, clergy and people alike, welcome you to the Orthodox presence reborn from its ashes in this Holy Church, where “sorrow is laid to rest” and “curses are lifted” and the Church is functioning, which was “bought at great price,” spiritual and material, through the sacrifices of many of the Holy Centre of Orthodoxy and You personally, Your All-Holiness.”

After the Dismissal, His All-Holiness performed a trisagion for the repose of the soul of the Late Metropolitan Sotirios (Trampas) of Pisidia, and then a small musical event was held in honour of His All-Holiness, by the children of the Sunday School and the members of the Church choir.

Immediately afterwards, His All-Holiness went to the Bishop’s quarters, where he performed the Blessing of inauguration, following its thorough renovation.

As the Metropolitan of Pisidia pointed out in his speech, the renovated building will become the spiritual centre of Orthodox ecclesiastical life and witness.

"You blessed, Your All-Holiness, our work and its contributors, those named and anonymous benefactors and donors who contributed to the execution of the work. Bless all of us, the Shepherd, the holy clergy, the faithful Orthodox people of all nationalities. May our work continue without fail, successfully and without obstacles. Your All-Holiness is aware of the problems that have recently arisen. Remember our Late fathers and brothers and sisters in whose footsteps we are following.



We assure you that we will continue our struggle and ministry with all our strength. You have blessed through the sacred ceremony this historic place of sacrifice and testimony of our Nation and of the Orthodox nation in general. Strengthen us with Your Patriarchal and paternal wishes and blessings."

His All-Holiness, in his response, expressed his Patriarchal satisfaction with the Chief Shepherd, Metropolitan Job, his assistant Bishop and all their collaborators for their ministry and their multidimensional work.

Photographs: Nikos Papachristou

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