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President of The Hellenic Republic: “I bid farewell to one of great figures of Orthodox Church”



With profound sorrow, the President of the Hellenic Republic, Katerina Sakellaropoulou, bids farewell to the late Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durres, and All Albania, describing him as one of the great figures of the Orthodox Church. She highlighted his opposition to intolerance and religious fanaticism, emphasising his dedication to mutual understanding, dialogue, fraternity, and the peaceful coexistence of peoples.

In her statement, President Sakellaropoulou remarked:

“With deep sadness, I bid farewell today to one of the great figures of the Orthodox Church, Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durres, and All Albania. A towering personality who combined theological thought with tireless service, leaving behind a remarkable pastoral, social, educational, and charitable legacy. A hierarch who stood against intolerance and religious fanaticism, striving for mutual understanding, dialogue, fraternity, and the peaceful coexistence of peoples.

His studies in comparative religion, his scholarly contributions, his missionary

experience in Africa, and his relentless efforts, despite numerous challenges, to rebuild the Orthodox Church of Albania constitute an exemplary journey. His unwavering support for the Greek National Minority, as well as his concern for the progress of Albanian society as a whole—irrespective of religious or racial distinctions—has left an indelible mark on the hearts of the people he assisted, supported, and loved.

The high values that defined his path will continue to inspire and move us."

The late Archbishop Anastasios of Albania "opposed intolerance and religious fanaticism" and advocated "mutual understanding, dialogue, brotherhood and the peaceful coexistence of peoples," President Katerina Sakellaropoulou has said in a tribute.

Anastasios, "a leading personality who combined theological reflection with the practice of tireless service," contributed immensely to pastoral, social, educational and charitable work, she added.

"His religious studies, his scientific studies, his missionary experience in Africa and his tireless struggle, despite the difficulties, for the reconstruction of the Orthodox Church of Albania constitute an exemplary path" she said.

"His constant support for the Greek national minority [in Albania], as well as his interest in the progress of Albanian society as a whole without religious or racial discrimination, have left indelible traces in the hearts of the people he met, supported and loved."

In his tribute, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said the late archbishop made an invaluable contribution to Orthodoxy and has left an indelible mark not only on Albania "but in every corner of the earth where Hellenism lives and breathes."

"Today, the diaspora in Albania, the homeland and Hellenism as a whole are in mourning at the passing of Anastasios," the prime minister said.

"He was both a spiritual leader and an active servant of mankind and his rights. Sometimes as a helper of the children of Africa and sometimes as a supporter of the Greek students who resisted the dictatorship," the premier continued, describing Anastasios "as a pioneer of the Church in Albania" and "the pioneer for the interests of our national community" there.

While the archbishop’s “voice may have been silenced, it will forever broadcast messages of life and peaceful coexistence,” he added.

Albanian President Bajram Begaj said Anastasios’ “wisdom, dedication and love for the people [contributed] to the strengthening and creating a new path for the Albanian Orthodox faith.”

“He was a tireless example of spiritual dedication and a guide for all who followed him.”

Anastasios, who revived the country’s Orthodox Church after the fall of the communist regime in 1990, died Saturday morning, aged 95, in the intensive care unit of Evangelismos hospital in Athens due to organ failure after several weeks of illness.

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