03/02/2025

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: “Archbishop Anastasios himself became the unshakable rock of the Church of Albania”



On Saturday, 1 February 2025, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided over the Divine Liturgy, on the occasion of the Feast Day of Saint Tryphon, patron saint of gardeners, florists, farmers, at the Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos, Belgrade Gate, in Constantinople. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, His All-Holiness blessed the Koliva in memory of Saint Tryphon and Archimandrite Caesarios Chronis, Archivist of the Patriarchate, read the exorcism prayer of Saint Tryphon which is read, on the day of his feast, in gardens and over crops.

Immediately afterwards, His All-Holiness, speaking to the congregation, referred to the celebrated Saint Tryphon, and the special honour he enjoys in rural areas, such as in his birthplace of Imbros.

“Every person leaves something of themselves, of their heart, where they first saw the light of day. And this something later transforms into nostalgia, into memory,

into a lasting and indissoluble spiritual bond, which gives sweetness to life. This happened in our own case with the feast of Saint Tryphon in Imbros of our childhood. This memory led our steps on this day three years ago to our homeland, to bless the consecration of an old chapel in Schinoudi, which was renovated from the ground up, with a kind donation from the Imbrian Union of Macedonia – Thrace and the local Shepherd, His Eminence brother Metropolitan Kyrillos of Imbros and Tenedos. This restoration also contributed greatly to the revival of the glorious celebration of Saint Tryphon on the island."

Underlining the importance of erecting or renovating a Holy Church for the strengthening of faith, the Ecumenical Patriarch shared with the congregation his intense emotions from his recent trip to Tirana for the funeral service of the late Archbishop Anastasios of Albania.

"Every construction or renovation of a church is a source of hope, that the candle of faith will continue to burn, even if contrary winds blow, even if the conditions are adverse and the environment inhospitable. We witnessed this great truth with our own eyes a few days ago, during our trip and brief stay in Tirana, in order to fulfill a sacred duty, to attend the funeral service of the blessed brother Archbishop Anastasios of Albania at the glorious church of the Resurrection, this jewel of the Albanian capital that he himself erected from the foundations, as well as the Orthodox Church of Albania, which he literally resurrected from its ashes.



Still greatly moved by feelings of deep emotion, we wish to share with you today certain thoughts of ours in memory of this great Leader of the Church. The late Primate was initially appointed as Patriarchal Exarch and within a short period of time was elected by our Holy and Sacred Synod as Archbishop of Tirana, Durres and all Albania, for the many abilities and talents that God generously bestowed upon him and placed him in the service of the Church from a young age, as we mentioned in our funeral eulogy. It was the most appropriate, and most excellent choice of the Mother Church of Constantinople for the Orthodox believers of Albania who were in great need, as Anastasios not only proved himself worthy of his calling in every way, but also exceeded even the most optimistic expectation with the miracle he achieved.

For thirty-three consecutive years, the blessed brother plowed, like another good farmer, the Lord's field in Albania and bore abundant and rich fruit. He built from scratch a Church with an exemplary administrative structure, inspired catechetical and pastoral work, and exemplary charitable and social activity. Archbishop Anastasios literally gave everything to the Church of Albania, his entire being, and ultimately even his own body, which the Albanian land, in which he now rests since the day before yesterday, gratefully accepted.

As he used to say: "We collect the stones that those who fight our work throw at us and build churches and schools with them"! Ultimately, however, Archbishop Anastasios, now buried in a special crypt under the Church of the Resurrection, himself became the immovable stone of the Church of Albania, strengthening its foundations, so that "even the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". May the memory of Archbishop Anastasios be eternal and unfading! May his prayers bring forth a worthy successor, a bearer of his spirit and a continuer of his work. May we all have his blessing!

Concluding his address, His All-Holiness expressed his Patriarchal satisfaction with the Supervisor of the Region of Hypsomatheia, His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria, "who strives day and night for the interests of this Community," as well as with the Ecclesiastical Committee, chaired by Ms. Vasiliki Katsoni, for the work being carried out in the Community.



Previously, His All-Holiness was addressed with warm words by His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria.

The Ecumenical Patriarch received the Chanters of Constantinople

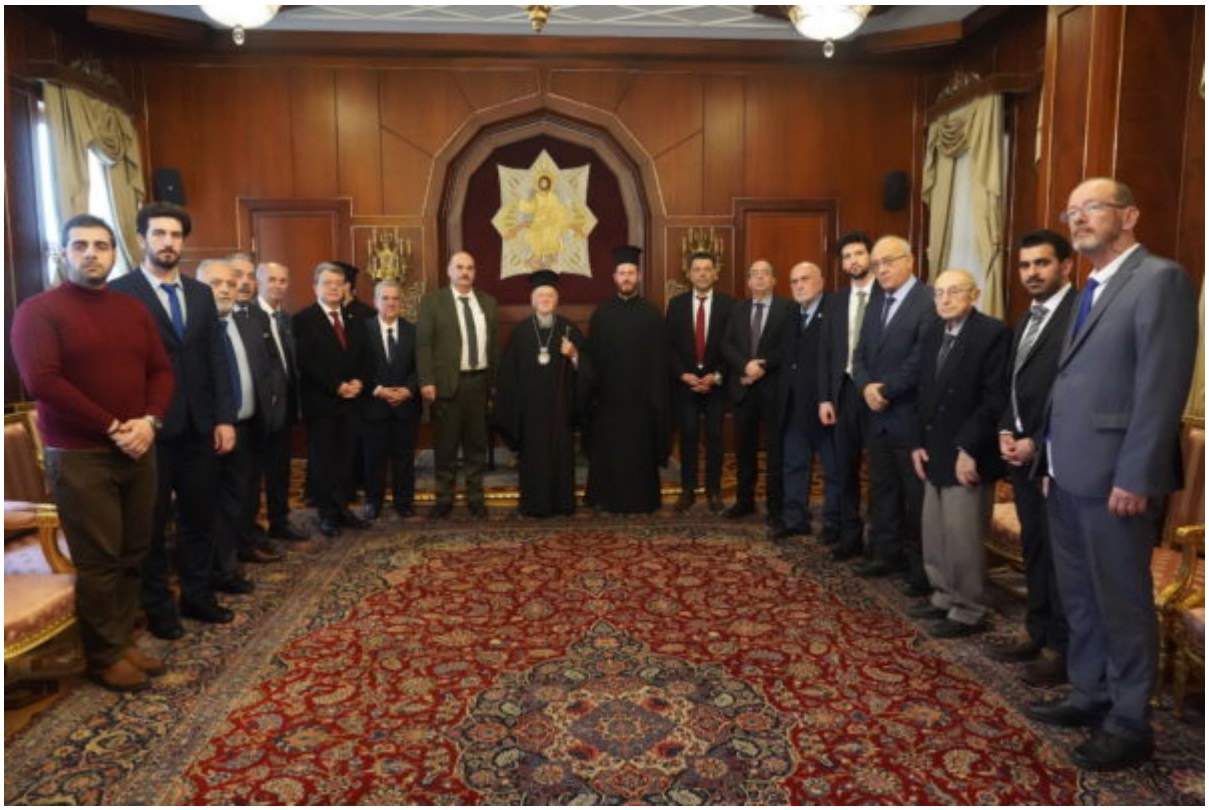
At noon of the same day, His All-Holiness received, on the occasion of the entry into the new year, the Musicologists of Constantinople, who attended the annual meal in their honour at the Patriarchate.

Subsequently, His All-Holiness, in his speech in the Throne Room, congratulated the President, the Board of Directors and the members of the Musicians' Association of Pera, the only still operating chanting association in the City of Constantinople, for their contribution and their efforts to continue the history of this important Association for the preservation and transmission of church music. At another point in his speech, he referred with emotion to the late Protopresbyters Georgios Tsetsis and Seraphim Farasoglou, Archons Leonidas Asteris and Nikolaos-Stefanos Isteklis, and Professor Emmanuel Hadjigiakoumis, who passed away during the past year, whom he described as "emblematic personalities for the chanting world of Constantinople and for the Mother Church".

His All-Holiness then pointed out:

"These significant losses certainly sadden and distress us, but they do not deter us,

but rather strengthen us to continue in their steps, to respond to the demands of the times, to take over from their worthy hands the baton of duty! It is, therefore, necessary for your Association to be strengthened, your choir to be supported by everyone, without exception, the teaching of music of the homeland to be intensified, your actions to be enriched! And individually, to stand with all responsibility at your chanting stands, take on your duty, not succumbing to innovations and novelties. Strictly observing the Order, the provisions of the Typikon, the traditions, whether you chant in a small Church, or in a central and large one.



The support of the Association’s activities and the conscientious service of your chanting duty is the best way to honour the good memory of your teachers, it is the best memorial service of our blessed Archons and your unforgettable chanting predecessors, it is the best way to please your Patriarch, but above all the best way to feel the inner joy and moral satisfaction of contributing to the common effort for our church music, this divine gift of Divine Worship in the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church.”

Previously, on behalf of the Musicians' Association of Pera, His All-Holiness was addressed by the President of its Board of Directors, Archon 1st Domestikos of the Great Church of Christ. Mr. Georgios Kioseoglou, who, among other things, referred extensively to the work being carried out, as well as to the activities of the Association during the previous year.

Monastic tonsure and Patriarchal Horostasia at the Venerable Patriarchal Church

On Saturday afternoon, 1 February 2025, His All-Holiness officiated during the Great Vespers for the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple at the Venerable Patriarchal Church of Saint George, at the Phanar.



Before its commencement, he performed the monastic tonsure of Mr. Photios Poulopoulos, Theologian and Architect, whose ordination as a deacon will be celebrated during the Divine Liturgy on 6 February 2025, when the memory of Saint Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople and founder of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity of Halki, is honoured, in its Katholikon.

The candidate clergyman is destined to serve in the Patriarchal Court.

Photographs: Nikos Papachristou

























































































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