

26/03/2025

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew officiated at the celebrating Church of Panagia Evangelistria, Tataoula



On Monday, 24 March 2025, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew officiated during the Great Vespers on the eve of the Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, at the celebrating Church of Panagia Evangelistria in the Tataoula District, Constantinople.

The holy sermon was preached by Hieromonk Fr Ieronymos Sotirelis.

At the end of the Vespers Service, the Patriarch performed a Trisagion for the repose of the souls of the late teachers and graduates of the historic Galata Greek School.

In his address, His All-Holiness, immediately afterwards, expressed his joy for his officiating at the Vespers of the feast day of the beautiful marble Church, after two years of absence due to the renovation works carried out under the care of the

Archon Exarchos of the Great Church of Christ, Mr. Athanasios Martinos and his wife, Mrs. Marina Martinos.

“We all know, of course, that this entire City of Constantine is a great pilgrimage site and an immense temple where thanks are constantly inscribed, for the victories, to the victorious General, The Theotokos”

Even more, however, the Panagia (Evangelistria) is honoured in her celebrating churches, such as this beautiful marble church that gathered us all together tonight and we were transfigured by the melodious chanting of the hymns of the feast by the Choir of the Music Association of Pera, under the direction of the Musician, Archon Protopsaltis of the Great Church of Christ, Mr. Panagiotos Neochoritos. We praise and paternally bless all the participating chanters for tonight’s musical feast, as well as for the fact that you continue unwaveringly this beautiful tradition of decades of brightening the sacred chanting stands of this venerable house of the Mother of God every year on this evening.”

His All-Holiness referred to the feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, which, as he said, this year is celebrated within the week in which we also honour the veneration of the Holy and Life-giving Cross.

“And the Virgin Mary, before she was glorified and sat at the right hand of her Son, “adorned with the gold of Ophir.” (Ps. 14:10) and before all generations of men blessed her, did she not experience the pain of the death on the cross of her innocent child? “And a sword will pierce through her own soul,” the elder Symeon had prophesied. That is why she can understand better than anyone the unbearable pain of every mother who mourns the loss of her child.

We fervently and reverently implore her, especially tonight, to soothe and calm the heart of every aching mother and to banish the wars and calamities that afflict our world. May the salvific message of the incarnation of Christ spread everywhere, and with it the love, justice and peace that accompany it. Only these can bring lasting and indelible joy to the people and peoples of the earth, precisely that joy that our Church proclaims to the ends of the earth: “O earth, announce the good tidings of great joy; You heavens, praise the glory of God.!”

With this spirit of absolute devotion to God, let us celebrate this year the veneration of the Holy Cross and the Annunciation of the Theotokos. Let us respond with our Panagia: “Behold, we are the servants of the Lord; let it be done to us according to His word.”

With these festive thoughts, we find ourselves this evening in your midst, dear

pilgrims of the Annunciation, to wish you all paternall, Many blessed Years!

Then, His All-Holiness expressed his Patriarchal pleasure to His Eminence Metropolitan Stephanos of Kallioupolis and Madytos, “for the zeal he demonstrates in carrying out the ministry entrusted to him by the Mother Church, for his love for the sacred services, as well as for all of you, our Christians of Tataoula. After all, your Supervisor is born of this Region of our Most Holy Archdiocese. He was born here and grew up ecclesiastically before entering the Patriarchal Court. He knows you and you know him. He loves you and you love him! We thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his fruitful ministry and we wish him all the best from the Lord.”

His All-Holiness also congratulated the Parish Priest, Economos of the Most Holy Archdiocese of Constantinople, Father Philotheos Kelepouris, as well as the Community’s Board of Trustees for the work being done.

His All-Holiness welcomed all the pilgrims and especially the graduates of the Galata Greek School. “Tonight we have just conducted a Trisagion memorial service for the repose of the souls of the teachers and graduates of this historic educational institution of the Greek Orthodox community of our city who have fallen asleep, among whom was the name of our late Elder Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon, who was a graduate of the Galata School. May the memory of all be eternal and unfading.”

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew also warmly welcomed a group of teachers and students from the 3rd High School of the American College of Greece.

“We are accustomed to urging the pilgrims who visit us, because this is a pilgrimage and not an excursion or tour, not to be content with the remains of our glorious Byzantium and the visible, but to extend their attention and interest to the invisible and to listen to the secret voices of the past, because all these seemingly obsolete things are equally real and existent and perhaps more instructive than what we can see and touch today. We address the same exhortation to you, wishing that your stay here will be pleasant, but also beneficial and constructive.

It is with great joy that we see you all here tonight at the home of the Panagia of Good tidings (Evangelistria). Accept first her grace and then our paternal blessing and the wish that you may pass the remainder of Holy and Great Lent in health and devotion and celebrate a joyful and blessed Holy Pascha! [Read [HERE](#) the full text of the Patriarchal speech in Greek]

Previously, His All-Holiness was welcomed with warm words by His Eminence

Metropolitan Stephanos of Kallioupolis and Madytos, and the President of the Community's Board of Trustees, Mr. Prodromos Kosmaoglou.

Present, praying together, were His Eminence Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myra, His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Konstantinos Koutras, Consul General of Greece in Constantinople, Archons of the Great Church of Christ, and a multitude of believers.

Photographs: Nikos Papachristou



























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