

## **Consecration of a Church in Antwerp - 125th Anniversary of the Parish (video)**



The consecration of the Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, the historic and illustrious parish of Antwerp, was celebrated with splendour and due ecclesiastical order on Saturday, 31 May 2025.

After the necessary renovation and beautification works of recent years, the first consecration of the parish church was held by His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium and Exarch of the Netherlands and Luxembourg, supported by His Grace Bishop Dositheos of the Patriarchate of Georgia, priests and deacons of the Metropolis.

Praying together during the consecration ceremony were the Abbot of the Holy Patriarchal and Stavropegic Monastery of the Holy Trinity of Sparmos Olympus and Spiritual Father of the Orthodox Christian Brotherhood Lydia, Archimandrite Nikanor Papanikolaou, Protopresbyter Georgios Valcu, Parish Priest of the Antwerp parish of the Patriarchate of Romania, clergymen of the Holy Metropolis of Belgium,

the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Dr. Konstantinos Vamvakas and Mr. Georgios Kritikos, as well as a large congregation.

The chanting stand during the consecration festivities was graced by the musically erudite choirmaster of the Byzantine choir “Tropos”, Mr. Konstantinos Angelides, accompanied by members of the choir, including the regular chanter of the Church.

In the evening, the reception of pieces of the holy relics of the Holy Hieromartyr Kyrillos Loukaris, Saints Theodore and the Holy Five Neo-martyrs of Samothrace took place, which were placed in the Holy Altar during the Consecration Ceremony, which was followed by Great Vespers.

At the end of the consecration and the first Divine Liturgy, appropriate addresses and responses were exchanged between Metropolitan Athenagoras and the Parish Priest, Archimandrite Philadelphos Kafalis, Protosyncellus, while a Greek festival followed in a park opposite the Church.

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## History of the Parish

The parish of Antwerp was founded in the early 1900s, during the Patriarchate of Constantine V, out of the pious desire of the sailors and merchants living in the city at the time, who had founded the Greek community of Antwerp a few years earlier.

Before the establishment of the Holy Metropolises in Europe, the Mother Church of Constantinople blessed the initiative and sent Archimandrite Gennadios Themelis, of Kalymnos, from Constantinople, who established the parish and arranged for the purchase of the first building complex, the first Church.

After the establishment and the passage of 18 years of liturgical life of the parish, Archimandrite Gennadios was succeeded by the Tbilisi-born, Greek-decent, Archimandrite Patrikios Konstantinidis of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, who served for 35 years, endowing the parish with sacred vessels and relics, erecting the second Church in the place of the first, which had fallen into poor condition.

Then, Archimandrites Emilianos Timiadis (later Metropolitan of Selyvria) and Seraphim Patsios, and Protopresbyters Georgios Kritsepis and Angelos Kamalides served in succession.

The first three fathers, beyond the parish of Antwerp, ministered to the liturgical

and pastoral needs of Brussels and other areas of the Benelux, a fact that makes the parish of Antwerp, in addition to being the first organised parish of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on Belgian territory, the beginning of Orthodox presence in the three countries of the current Holy Metropolis.

With the upgrading of the area in which the parish building complex was and is located, the second Church was demolished to create the current building block, within which the current third Church has been housed since 2009.

[Click here for photographs from the consecration](#)