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## **Ecumenical Patriarch receives delegation of Secretaries from Roman Catholic Episcopal Conferences of Europe**



On the afternoon of Tuesday, 17 June 2025, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew warmly welcomed a large delegation of Secretaries from the Roman Catholic Episcopal Conferences of Europe at the Phanar. The group was led by Cardinal Mario Grech, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops.

During the meeting, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew spoke about the great significance of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, which marks its 1700th anniversary this year. He emphasised that the Council established a vision of synodality that continues to shape Christian ecclesiastical life. The Patriarch reminded the gathering that unity is not a matter of strategy but a faith in the truth revealed in Christ and proclaimed through the life of the Church.



Addressing the ongoing dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, the Patriarch noted that both Churches have journeyed steadily and responsibly toward meeting one another. While acknowledging the challenges that remain, he highlighted moments of grace, deepening understanding, and sincere desire for the unity willed by Christ. He fondly recalled his personal friendship with the late Pope Francis, “a true friend of Orthodoxy,” and expressed joy at the election of Pope Leo XIV, with whom he has already met twice. “We are confident that under his leadership, the bonds between our two Churches will continue to grow in truth and love,” the Patriarch said, adding that he eagerly looks forward to welcoming the Pope soon at the Phanar.

Further in his speech, Patriarch Bartholomew referred to the dialogues that the Ecumenical Patriarchate maintains with other ancient Eastern Churches, Protestant

traditions, as well as interreligious initiatives. “Of course, we do not turn a blind eye to the many challenges facing the Church and humanity today. Issues of social justice, migration, war, religious persecution, and the climate crisis demand our attention,” he added.

The delegation included Roman Catholic bishops, clergy, and lay collaborators, all of whom received commemorative gifts from the Ecumenical Patriarch.



Photographs: Nikos Papachristou

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