

## **Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Speaks at the Consecration of the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist, Essex, in Maldon, England**



### **Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate**

In the presence of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the newly built Chapel dedicated to Saint Sophrony the Athonite, founder of the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Essex, was consecrated in Maldon, England on Sunday, June 22, 2025. Presiding over this solemn and joyful event was His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain.

Attending the Consecration were Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, National Commander of the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and National Vice Commander Hon. B. Theodore Bozonelis.

“This day of consecration,” said Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, “is truly a day of joyous commemoration and historic celebration. It is a day that brings to completion and fruition a circle of aspiration and expectation.”

His All-Holiness recounted how Saint Sophrony the Athonite, who was canonized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 2019, founded the of the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist, Essex, in 1959, and that it came under the omophorion of the

Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1965. As the community grew, a larger church was needed. The Ecumenical Patriarch stated: "It is a rare occasion for a church to be dedicated. This construction was envisaged as early as 1992, when Father Sophrony assembled the monks and nuns of this respected community, to announce that the moment had arrived for a new church to be conceived as a way of paying tribute to their own homecoming, now that their monastery was well established. The community was indeed settled, catering to the spiritual and pastoral needs of numerous visitors from all around the world, and it was time for a larger church to be constructed, to suit and meet the needs of the multitudes."

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew also recounted his 2022 Patriarchal visit to Great Britain, during which he laid the foundation stone for the new church: "It was a privilege and pleasure, and really a blessing," he said, "for us to lay the foundation stone for this church in a momentous and memorable service just three years ago in the context of our patriarchal visit on the occasion of the 100th anniversary since the establishment of our archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain."

His All-Holiness emphasized that the Consecration was about much more than simply an ecclesiastical structure: "This day of consecration," he said, "is not simply about brick and mortar. As we chant in the Vespers service, 'This is how a human being is renewed,' or consecrated. This is how we celebrate the consecration of a church. It is above all a commemoration of the communion of saints. In other words, it is a celebration of the succession of holiness. For just as we speak of an apostolic succession, in the canonical order and ordination of bishops, there is also a charismatic succession in the spiritual and mystical experience of the saints."

View His All-Holiness' remarks here, in Greek beginning at 6:02:40, and in English at 6:05:15.

Photo: J. Mindala.

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