

‘The world is a home for all people’: Ec. Patr. Bartholomew speaks at Concordia Summit



Manhattan, N.Y. — The opening of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew’s speech at the 2025 Concordia Annual Summit was guided by a sense of urgency for environmental action.

Returning to Manhattan for its fifteenth session, the Summit is billed as “the largest and most inclusive nonpartisan forum,” and coincides with the United Nations General Assembly’s 80th session, also convening in New York City this week.

The Ecumenical Patriarch made early reference to the wildfires that charred hills of Chios, Greece and destroyed nearly 60,000 acres near Los Angeles, as well as the increasing frequency of extreme weather phenomena caused by warming ocean waters.

“We see how the balance of our physical ecosystems remains in delicate interplay as temperatures on Earth rise and shift that balance in ways that are painfully destructive to life on every level,” the Ecumenical Patriarch said. “We note with sorrow and deep concern how fires continue to afflict our common habitations.”

The Ecumenical Patriarch also spoke on Orthodoxy being co-opted by secular power, and referenced the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war, stating “wars of religion are very seldom fought for religious purposes. But religion becomes a screen behind which dark forces of greed, prejudice, and aggression work their misery in the world.”

“All of us who have studied history have seen how religion can be co-opted by secular power to establish fault lines between civilizations,” the Ecumenical Patriarch said. “We see this unfortunate state of affairs among our own co-religionists in Russia, as the Church of Russia continues to provide cover for the Russian State’s war against Ukraine, a sovereign nation.”

His statements regarding the war in Eastern Europe foreshadowed a later meeting with the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the Ukrainian delegation’s office in New York, which His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America also attended.

His All-Holiness also spoke broadly of geopolitical conflicts over land, stating:

“to honor the land without honoring the human beings who dwell in that land, and vice versa to honor your fellow human beings without honoring the land upon which they should thrive, is a madness that afflicts our world as much today as ever in the history of the human race.”

The Ecumenical Patriarch spoke as part of the summit’s programming theme “Advancing Human Rights & Social Progress.” Speakers in this category foster “mutual understanding across diverse cultures.”

The Ecumenical Patriarch’s ministry has made him globally-known as an interlocutor of faith, politics, and the contemporary issues many view as unique to modern life, such as artificial intelligence. The Ecumenical Patriarch has spent more than three decades as the spiritual leader of the world’s Eastern Orthodox Christians, and has cultivated relationships with prominent scientists and environmentalists.

The summit’s mission to convene business, political, and civil society leaders

around global challenges aligns with the Ecumenical Patriarch's previous addresses to the U.S. State Department and Council on Foreign Relations last week. In both instances, the Ecumenical Patriarch was an envoy for interfaith dialogue.

His All-Holiness's speech at the Concordia Summit reaffirmed this message, the Patriarch stating: "the power of faith to restore ethical and moral foundations throughout our world is undeniable."

Concordia's profile on the Ecumenical Patriarch lists "catchphrases" by His All-Holiness, which speak to issues spanning environmental sin, humanitarian crises, and war.

Elected to the Ecumenical Throne in 1991, the Ecumenical Patriarch has since addressed world parliaments and bodies from the United Nations to UNESCO, and has frequently convened synods that have forged Orthodoxy into what His All-Holiness calls "the eco-friendly form of Christianity."

At an earlier event during the Ecumenical Patriarch's Apostolic Visit to the U.S., Stony Brook University President Andrea Goldsmith said that the Ecumenical Patriarch has brought climate change to the forefront of discourse.

"He has ignited conversation, not only on the science of climate change, but also the moral implications of this most pressing challenge," said Goldsmith. Resounding recognitions have earned him the cognomen "Green Patriarch."

The Ecumenical Patriarch praised the Concordia Summit's mission.

"To address commonly-held problems of society from local to global scale by convening, by coming together, you acknowledge the interdependence of the human community," His All-Holiness said. "For all have a voice that is well-worth listening to. By connecting, you enter, or perhaps re-enter, into a relationship with one another."

The Ecumenical Patriarch's 2025 Apostolic Visit to the U.S. will conclude with his acceptance of the Templeton Prize. His All-Holiness was nominated by Fr. John Chryssagvis, a prominent Orthodox theologian and advisor to the Ecumenical Patriarch on environmental issues. Also involved with his nomination was world-renowned primatologist Dr. Jane Goodall.

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