

An exhibition dedicated to Saint Demetrios was inaugurated in the presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch



The opening of the photographic exhibition, “To the Champion of the World: Saint Demetrios the Myrrh-Streamer in the Balkans”, took place at noon in Building M1 of the Thessaloniki Concert Hall. The event was attended by the President of the Hellenic Republic, Konstantinos Tasoulas, and His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Also in attendance were Sofia Zacharaki, the Minister of Education and representative of the government and Prime Minister; Maximos Charakopoulos, the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Group of New Democracy and representative of the Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament; and Deputy Ministers Ioannis Loverdos (Foreign Affairs), Stavros Kalafatis (Development), and Anna Efthymiou (Labour and Social Security). Other attendees included His Beatitude Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece; Metropolitans and Archbishops; former Deputy Prime Minister Evangelos Venizelos; Members of Parliament; Lazaros Kyrizoglou, the President of KEDE and Mayor of Ampelokipoi-Menemeni; elected representatives of local government; and representatives of the Armed Forces and

Security Services.

In his address, President Tasoulas emphasised: “I am especially pleased to attend the opening of this photographic exhibition, which presents churches and monasteries dedicated to Saint Demetrios throughout the Christian Balkans, including the Phanar, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, and Greece. The exhibition highlights the spread of veneration of the patron saint of Thessaloniki throughout the Balkans from the Byzantine period to the present day.”

Mr. Tasoulas further noted that: “Saint Demetrios combined healthy patriotism with universality. He shows us that in Orthodoxy, the supranational does not negate the national. Orthodoxy does not abolish the national element, but neither does it allow it to act divisively or in isolation.”

The Ecumenical Patriarch added, “The photographs in this exhibition reveal a monastic community and a shared experience of faith and worship that transcends state borders and unites the peoples of the Balkans around the Great Martyr. Saint Demetrios does not belong only to one city or one nation, but to the entire oikoumene of Orthodoxy.”

In his greeting, Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens expressed hope that the exhibition would travel to other Balkan countries and congratulated all who contributed to its realisation. Natalia Poulou, President of the Board of Directors of the European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments, also delivered a greeting.

The exhibition showcases the veneration of Saint Demetrios throughout the Balkans from the Byzantine era to the present day. It features churches and monasteries dedicated to the saint, as well as monumental paintings and works of minor arts depicting iconographic themes related to his life.

The Holy Synod of the Church of Greece and the Ministry of Culture co-organised the photographic exhibition, which the journal *Theologia* carried out in collaboration with the European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments.

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