12/11/2025

# “Blasphemy, to call ‘soldiers of Christ’ those who are summoned to take lives in the name of the Giver of Life!”



His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, on the feast of the Holy Martyrs Menas, Victor, and Vincent, presided on Monday, 10 November 2025, at the Great Vespers held in the celebrating Church of Saint Menas in Hypsomatheia.

The sermon was delivered by the Patriarchal Deacon Fr. Photios Poulopoulos.

Following Vespers, His All-Holiness, in his homily, said that whenever he visits the churches and communities of the City of Constantinople as Archbishop and Shepherd, he feels like a true pilgrim—“not merely of the buildings of the churches, but of the living temple, which is our faithful, all of you, the people of God who share in the royal priesthood of Christ.”

He continued, “Even when our churches and communities no longer possess their former glory, they nevertheless continue to speak of the fullness of life to which the

Lord has called us. In them we always perceive the enduring dimension of life in Christ, eternal, indestructible, and unaffected by time or decay.

For the Christian, life has at its core a religious meaning. Every action must be a ministry to God, the Creator and Savior, and to one's neighbour, the beloved of God. When this is our view of life, there is no room for pessimism, despair, or hopelessness. Beyond what is transient and visible, we perceive what is eternal and unseen, for these we were created and toward these we are called!"



The Patriarch also referred to the commemorated Saint Theodore the Confessor, Abbot of the neighbouring Stoudios Monastery, noting that he "struggled for the veneration of the holy icons against the Iconoclasts and for defending the cooperation between Church and State, denouncing the subjugation of the former to worldly power." For his steadfastness, St. Theodore was repeatedly exiled but remained fearless and unwavering, "as befits the soldiers and champions of Christ, as befits every Christian."

"This message of faithfulness, endurance, and spiritual struggle we hear from the nearby Stoudios Monastery and from the life of the Great Martyr Menas of Egypt. We transmit it tonight to all of you present for strength and example.

Each of us, in his or her own sphere and environment, is called to become a faithful soldier of Christ and a brave fighter in the battle against the passions. This simple yet fundamental truth of our faith has, sadly, been gravely distorted. Lately, it has

been used—indeed, abused—as a pretext ‘in sin’ to justify the invasion and the heinous war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. There is absolutely no relation between one’s spiritual struggle against the passions and the tragic conflict that has been unfolding for over three years on the afflicted Ukrainian soil. As we have often emphasised, this war is not ‘holy’ but diabolical. It is blasphemy to call ‘soldiers of Christ’ and ‘heroes of the faith’ those who are summoned and obliged to take human lives in the name of the Giver of Life!”



In another part of his address, the Patriarch expressed his paternal satisfaction toward His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria, Supervisor of the Hypsomatheia District, “for his conscientious ministry both in this historic and demanding region of the Holy Archdiocese of Constantinople and in his own renowned Metropolis of Selyvria.” He especially commended his leadership during the recent feast of Saint Nektarios, in which more than a thousand pilgrims from Greece and Constantinople participated.

He also praised the parish priest, Fr. Stylianos Zografidis, the Church Committee, and all collaborators for their dedicated service to the community.

His All-Holiness was earlier addressed with words of reverence and devotion by Metropolitan Maximos of Slyvria.

Photographs: Nikos Papachristou








INRI











vema.com.au