30/12/2025

Vienna: Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of Christmas and Ordination of a Deacon



The Nativity according to the flesh of our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ was celebrated with particular splendor and a spirit of reverence at the seat of the Holy Metropolis of Austria in Vienna.

On Thursday, 25 December 2025, at the historic Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, the Festal Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated, presided over by His Eminence Metropolitan Arsenios of Austria, Exarch of Hungary and Central Europe, with His Grace Bishop Maximos of Aristi joining him in prayer.

Assisting the Metropolitan liturgically were Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Throne Ioannis Nikolitsis, Protopresbyter Fr. Georgios Cheilas, Professor of Liturgics at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and Stavrophoros Oikonomos Aristeidis Ganosis.

During the Divine Service, the Metropolitan ordained Georgios Meleshko to the diaconate. The newly ordained Deacon is a graduate of the Lviv Music College and the National Music Academy of Ukraine, and a student at the Department of Pastoral and Social Theology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He is now added to the clergy of the Metropolis to serve the people of God.

In his address prior to the ordination, the new Deacon glorified the Triune God for the great gift of the Priesthood and expressed his gratitude to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for his support and paternal care, as well as to Metropolitan Arsenios for his paternal love and trust. He also thanked his parents, Mykhailo and Olha, and his grandmother, Zenovia, who had travelled to Vienna to attend his ordination.

Addressing the newly ordained Deacon, Metropolitan Arsenios emphasised the lofty nature of the priestly ministry, calling him to serve the holy Altar with faith, humility, and self-sacrifice. He underlined the significance of the feast of Christmas, on which God becomes man so that man may be deified, and exhorted Fr. Georgios to become a servant of this Mystery of salvation.

Special reference was made to the Ukrainian origin of the new Deacon, highlighting the strong spiritual bonds linking the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Mother Church of Constantinople with the devout Ukrainian people, for whom it continually cares. The Metropolitan finally urged the ordinand to become a person of offering, sacrifice, and love.

During the Communion hymn, in place of a sermon, the Patriarchal Encyclical of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was read. In it, the Ecumenical Patriarch stressed that the angelic hymn proclaiming “peace on earth” is heard at a time of escalating warlike tendencies, even though the Lord blesses the peacemakers and His Holy Church prays for peace from above and for the peace of the whole world.

He particularly denounces the absence of peace among Christians and praises dialogue as a means of overcoming division and achieving unity. He calls specifically upon young Christians to assume responsibility for continuing inter-Christian dialogue, standing against indifference and fundamentalism.

Before the dismissal, Metropolitan Arsenios extended to all those present, the faithful, the clergy, and the newly ordained Deacon, his wishes for a blessed and holy Christmas, filled with the light and joy of Bethlehem.









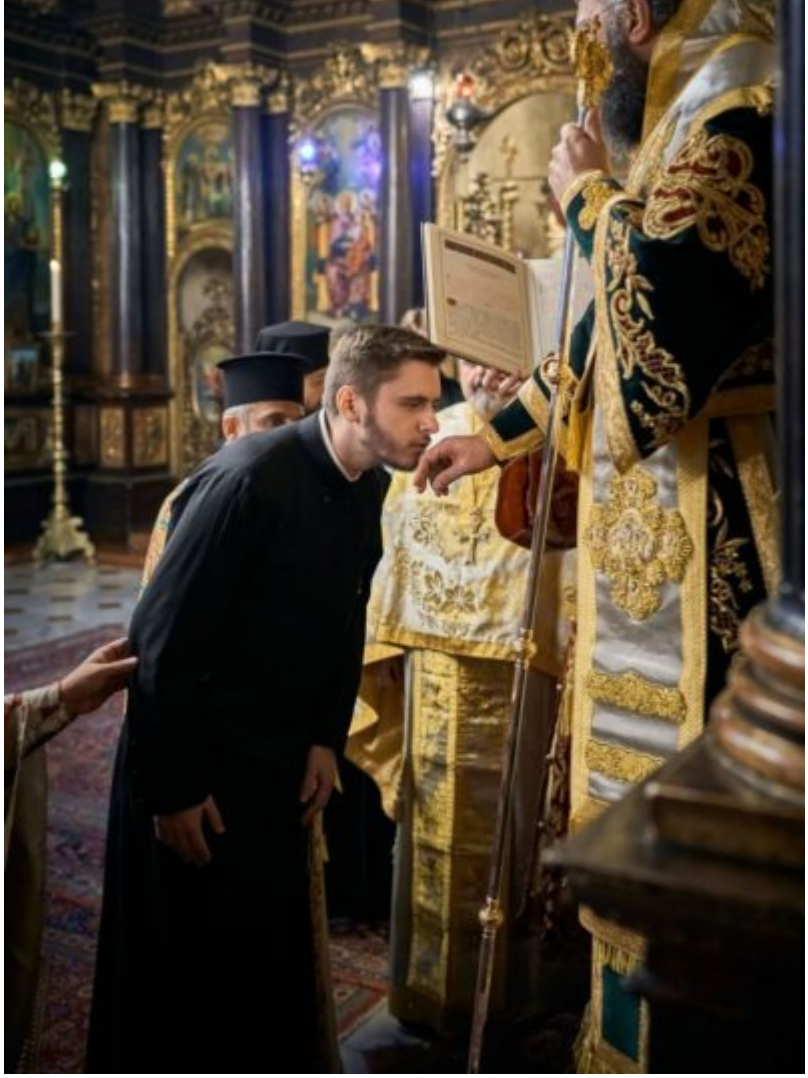






















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