21/04/2026

“The loving care of the Great Church, the preeminent and suffering Church, extends to the whole world”

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His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew attended, in prayerful participation, on Thomas Sunday (Antipascha), 19 April 2026, at the Patriarchal Church of Saint George, during the Divine Liturgy presided over by His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph of Proikonnisos.

On the previous day, His All-Holiness presided at the Great Vespers, at the conclusion of which he welcomed pilgrims from Greece, among them a group of more than 100 students from Thessaloniki and Patras, members of the Christian Student Action, on whose behalf Mr Marios Domouchtis addressed the Patriarch.

“I welcome you into the ever-open embrace of the Great Church of Christ,” His All-Holiness said to the young people and to all the pilgrims. “The loving care of this Church, which is preeminent and suffers, extends to the whole world, to all the lengths and breadths of the earth, not because its jurisdiction is so vast and universal, but because its love is great and embraces all: Greeks, Flemings, Carpatho-Russians, Ukrainians, French, Koreans, and anyone else you may imagine.”

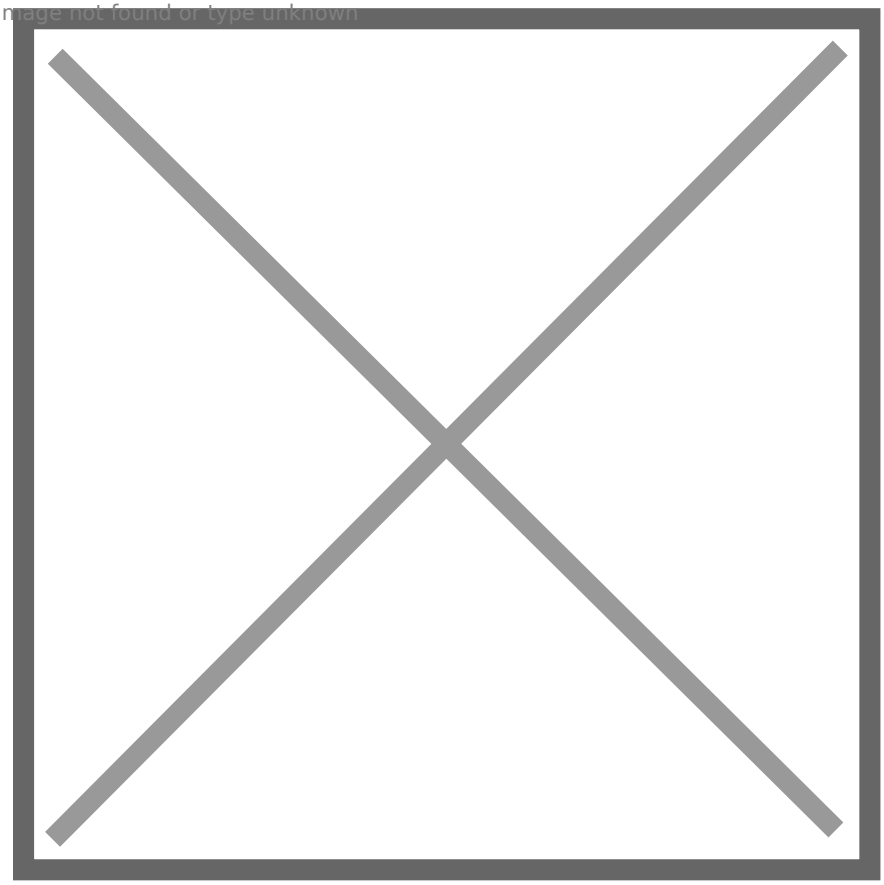
He then expressed his thanks to Mr Marios Domouchtis and to the young people for their pilgrimages and for their support of the pastoral work of the Metropolises of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey and elsewhere.

“The guiding principle of our Ecumenical Patriarchate,” he continued, “is not to coerce anyone or pressure anyone. Yet whoever comes freely, willingly, of their own accord, we cannot cast them out. And, thanks be to God, in recent times we have especially many approaches from young people, and educated people, who feel within themselves a void, and they find the fulfillment of that void in the Christian faith, and particularly in Orthodoxy. It is true that Catholics here in Constantinople also receive, catechise, and baptise many non-Christians, but we Orthodox have, though I would not make numerical comparisons, many as well,

and we do not hasten to baptise them. May the Kingdom of God, which is within us, continue to expand throughout the whole inhabited world. May God fill all of us with a ‘right spirit,’ as we heard the choirs chant a short while ago.”

Photographs: Ecumenical Patriarchate

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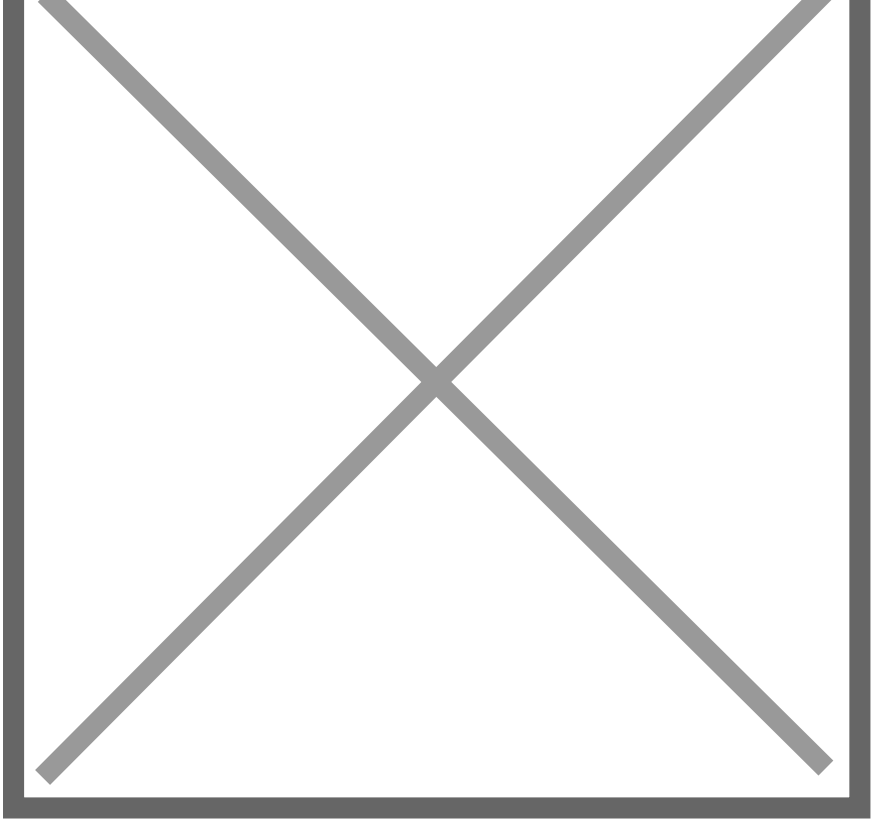
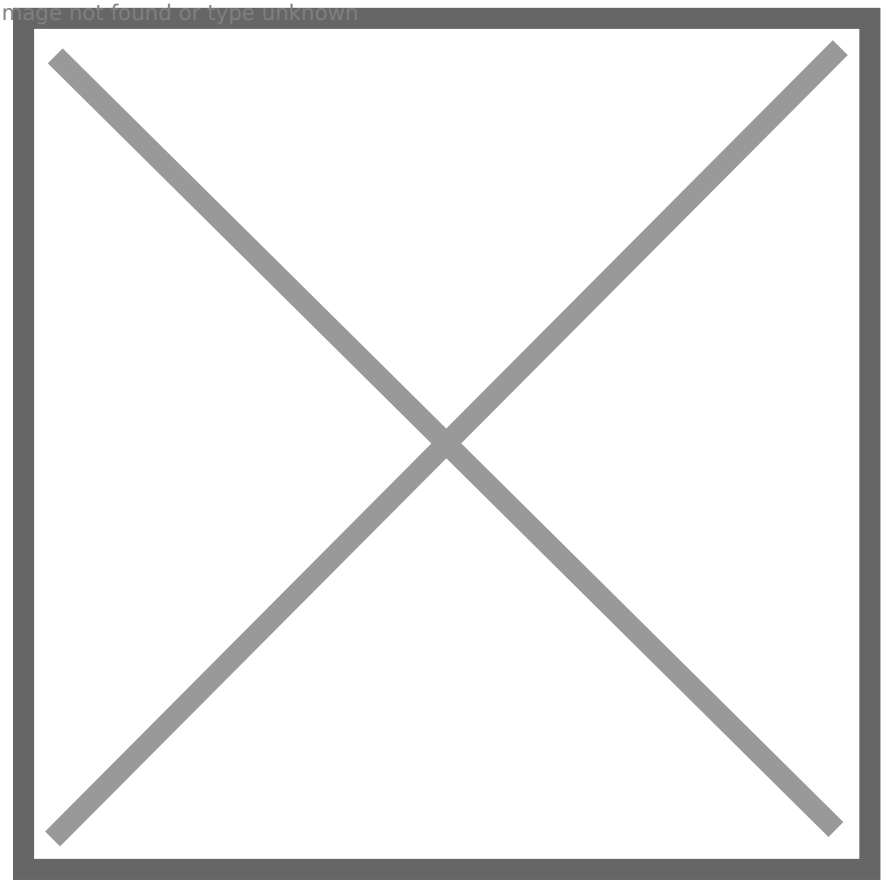


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