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Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: “Behind statistics and economic analyses lie human realities”



His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew emphasised the importance of safeguarding peace and social justice in today’s unsettled global environment during his official address on Friday, 24 April, at the 18th edition of the World Policy Conference, held in Chantilly.

Addressing the large audience of the Conference in French, he noted, among other things, that peace is not merely one political objective among others. “It is the deepest expression of communion among human beings. It is also the absolute precondition for the preservation of creation against the forces of fragmentation that threaten it,” the Patriarch stressed. He further observed that although technological advances and economic interconnection have brought us closer than

ever before, there is a growing tension and fragmentation, both geopolitical and geoeconomic, manifested in the increased vulnerability of international trade, market instability, and the gradual decline of global prosperity. “The international trading system, which could serve as a means of peaceful cooperation, tends instead to transform into a collection of sometimes competing regional blocs, structured around dominant powers. In this context, the universality of law is weakened and the sense of injustice intensifies,” he noted.

Elsewhere in his address, His All-Holiness remarked that the global system of governance appears deeply weakened. “Despite the proliferation of international organisations, we do not see greater unity, but rather increasing complexity, sometimes approaching the limits of fragmentation. This network of institutions, if not guided by a common moral vision, risks becoming a new Tower of Babel: a multiplicity of voices without real harmony,” he said, adding that reform of international institutions has now become an urgent necessity. Referring to the major challenges of our time, such as the rapid development of artificial intelligence and technology more broadly, as well as the environmental crisis, which reveals a lack of unity in addressing it while producing profound social injustices that affect the most vulnerable, he recalled that the Ecumenical Patriarchate has undertaken significant initiatives on social issues, including the protection of God’s creation.

“Behind statistics and economic analyses lie human realities: shattered lives, silent suffering, uprooted peoples. The fragmentation of the world is not merely a matter of structures; it reflects an anthropological crisis,” the Patriarch said, continuing: “We are therefore faced with a critical choice. Either we accept division as inevitable, or we commit decisively to building a global order founded on solidarity. Awareness of our interdependence thus becomes essential. The Orthodox theological tradition expresses this reality through the concept of perichoresis, which denotes a dynamic communion, a living interdependence. No one can exist alone. No one can be saved alone. Peace therefore presupposes a transcendence of selfishness, whether individual or collective.”

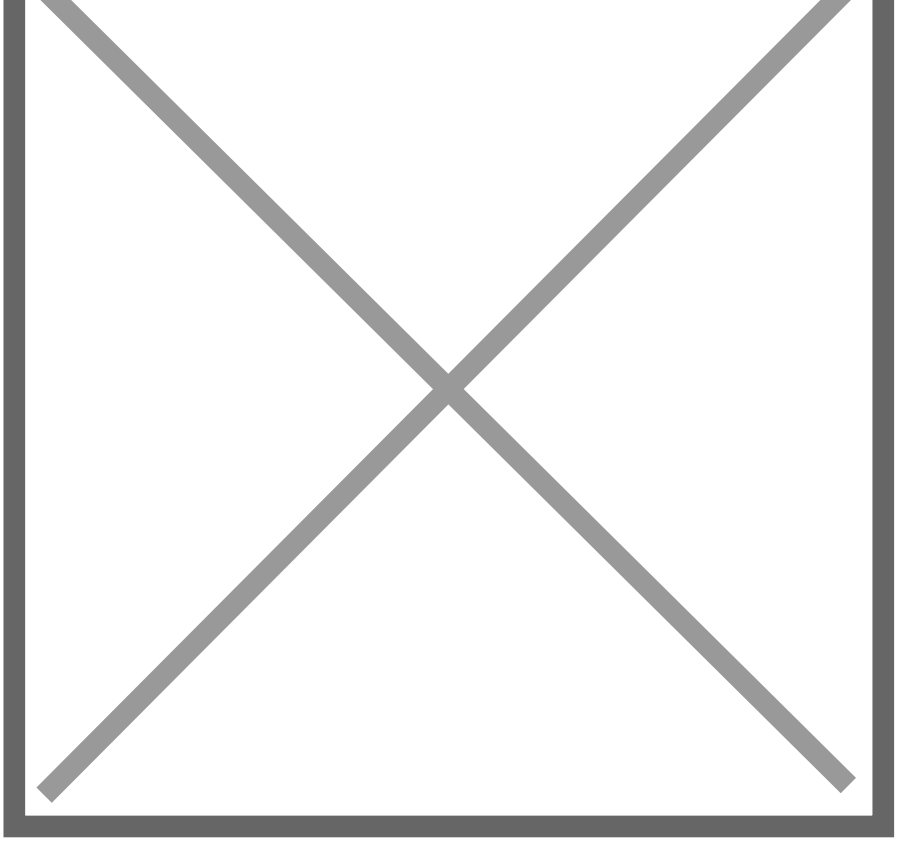
Concluding his address, His All-Holiness stated: “History is not determined solely by economic forces or dynamics of power. It is also shaped by human freedom: the capacity to choose, to transform, to forgive, and to cooperate. In this sense, hope remains possible. It is not founded on naivety, but on the conviction that humanity is capable of transformation, that division is not inevitable, and that peace can be built.

In conclusion, allow us to express a wish: that our work may not remain confined to

analyses, however relevant they may be, but that it may open concrete paths forward. May our reflections be translated into real commitments. May the pursuit of peace become a shared responsibility. May the God of peace and reconciliation enlighten our minds and guide our decisions. May He grant us the wisdom to overcome our divisions and the courage to work together for the common good.”




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