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## **Phanar receives Archbishop Elpidophoros, HCHC seminarians**



On Wednesday, May 20, the Apodosis of Pascha, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew received in formal audience His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, together with the rising seniors of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

The day began at the small Church of Saint George of Potira, a humble and modest parish in Constantinople, which was filled with the blessing and spiritual joy of welcoming His All-Holiness as he presided over the Divine Liturgy on the final day of the Paschal Season. For the students, this served as a profound learning experience: that within the life of the Orthodox Church, even the simplest and smallest churches are transformed through the Divine Services into great cathedrals, sanctified by the presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch and the gathered faithful.



**His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew addresses the seminarians. Photo by Orthodox Observer/Huseyin Aldemir**

Following the Divine Liturgy, the group was received at the Phanar by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in a formal audience marked by warmth, spiritual reflection, and paternal affection. During the audience, His All-Holiness expressed his paternal love and enduring care for the theological school.

His All-Holiness also acknowledged the devotion and steadfast commitment Archbishop Elpidophoros has demonstrated toward the Mother Church of Constantinople through his ministry in America. The Patriarch, speaking warmly about the Archbishop's ministry in the Sacred Archdiocese of America, further noted the Archbishop's continued support and efforts in strengthening Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

On behalf of the group, Holy Cross rising senior Konstantinos Kazantzis delivered an address in the Greek language to His All-Holiness. Additionally, the President of the Student Government Association of Hellenic College Holy Cross, Andres Duran, presented a gift to His All-Holiness on behalf of the students in attendance.

The seminarians ended the day by attending Vespers at Sts. Constantine and Helen Church in Pera, where His All-Holiness presided, before taking a walking tour of the Fener neighborhood.



**His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew with His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America and the seminarians. Photo by Orthodox Observer/Huseyin Aldemir**

Archbishop Elpidophoros is leading the rising seniors during the first two weeks of their pilgrimage to Constantinople, Mount Athos, and Thessaloniki. The pilgrimage has been carefully designed to provide the students a living encounter with the spiritual, historical, and cultural inheritance of our faith. In addition to visiting the sacred center of Orthodoxy, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the students will visit Mount Athos and also participate in a Greek language program in Thessaloniki, further deepening their understanding of the linguistic and cultural traditions connected to the life of the Church.

Throughout the pilgrimage, the students will be immersed not only in the history of Orthodoxy, but also in the living witness of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the enduring legacy of the Great Church of Christ, from which generations of Orthodox faithful throughout the world continue to draw spiritual inspiration and guidance.

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