

22/05/2026

## **Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: There has never been, nor will there ever be, a “holy war”**



On Wednesday, 20 May 2026, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided over the Divine Liturgy for the Leave-taking of the Feast of Pascha at the Church of Saint George Antiphonitis in the Phanar.

“Today, once again, is Pascha, for we celebrate the conclusion of the great feast of our faith. Yet every Sunday in our Church is Pascha, and throughout their lives, Christians experience Pascha because they believe in our risen Redeemer. The Lord’s triumph over death is also our personal victory. This truth was expressed

most clearly by Christ Himself, who said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.'

The Ecumenical Patriarch further stated: "How foundational for our faith is the Resurrection of Christ! Without the Resurrection, faith in the Nazarene would have been buried with the Lord Jesus Himself on the evening of Great and Holy Friday. Yet this faith was not buried, nor did it vanish; rather, it prevailed throughout the pagan world, despite its superstitions and prejudices. It has endured to this day, despite experiencing moments of glory and dishonour, defamation and praise, persecution and fierce opposition, as well as grandeur and worldly power over the past twenty-one centuries. This is one proof among many that faith in Christ Crucified and Risen is not "a stumbling block" or "foolishness", but "the power and wisdom of God".

"Armed with deep faith and certainty, we Christians face the various sorrows of life, whether as individuals or as communities. Take this beloved community of Antiphonitis, for example, which has borne its own cross for decades, patiently awaiting its resurrection. Since the resurrection of Christ conquered even death itself, our final enemy, we have nothing to fear!"



Elsewhere in his address, the Patriarch emphasised: "The new creation bestowed upon us by the risen Lord allows no room for hatred and enmity, only love, love

without limits, compassion and understanding. By this shall all know that we are true disciples of the risen one: if we have love for one another and for all people. We must always proclaim peace and brotherhood among peoples and nations, not war, even if we baptise it as “holy” to please an authoritarian secular power. There has never been, nor will there ever be, a “holy war”! Holiness and war are, by their very nature, mutually incompatible concepts incapable of coexisting in any form!

He also expressed particular gratitude to His Grace Bishop Adrianos of Halicarnassus, “who tirelessly devotes himself to this community and the surrounding communities of the historic region of the Phanar and the Golden Horn in a spirit of sacrifice and service”, and wished all those in attendance “many more celebrations of the Resurrection in good health throughout their lives”.

His All-Holiness also welcomed His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America with heartfelt words. The Archbishop was leading a large group of graduating students from the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Boston on their annual pilgrimage to the Mother Church of Constantinople, also known as the Queen of Cities.

“Holy Brother, the Mother Church, which nurtured you from childhood in Christ and led you to episcopal dignity, of which you have proven yourself a worthy bearer in every respect, welcomes you home. We are especially pleased that you are accompanied on this visit by our beloved graduating students, the future clergy of the Archdiocese of America, for whom we have high hopes,” said the Ecumenical Patriarch.

Earlier, His Grace Bishop Adrianos of Halicarnassus had also welcomed the Patriarch warmly.

At midday, the Ecumenical Patriarch invited the American group to join him at the Patriarchal table. He then addressed the graduating students of the School with paternal words of encouragement, after which the Archbishop of America spoke about the ministry and work of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

Photographs: Nikos Papachristou









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