

Patriarch Daniel: The Ecumenical Patriarch is the most influential personality of the contemporary Orthodox world



His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel delivered a message on Thursday, on the occasion of the name day anniversary of His All-Holiness Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch, at the “Dormition of the Mother of God” Cathedral in the village of Panagia (Gökçeada), Island of Imbros, Türkiye.

„Throughout the 35 years of service as Ecumenical Patriarch, His Holiness Bartholomew has become an Orthodox personality whose spiritual prestige is internationally recognized and appreciated”.

The Patriarch of Romania highlighted His All-Holiness’s work in interreligious and interfaith dialogue, as well as his active involvement in environmental protection and in promoting responsibility toward creation.

„The activity of Your Holiness at the international level demonstrates that the Ecumenical Patriarchate seeks to promote the perennial spiritual values of Orthodoxy in today’s world”, transmitted the Patriarch of Romania.

His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel is currently on the island of Imbros, the birthplace of the Ecumenical Patriarch. This year, His All-Holiness marks the 35th anniversary of his election as Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and celebrates 65 years of ordained ministry.

Please find below Patriarch Daniel’s message in English and Greek.

His Holiness Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch — An Internationally Renowned Personality of the Orthodox World

With joy in our Lord Jesus Christ, we received the invitation to participate in the events on the Island of Imbros on June 11, 2026, held on the occasion of the name day of His Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, a prominent Orthodox personality of the contemporary world, a devoted servant of the Gospel of Christ, and a promoter of dialogue,

peace, and mutual understanding between faith traditions and people.

Our presence at these events constitutes a blessed opportunity to strengthen the relationships of communion and cooperation between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Romanian Patriarchate in the service of the faithful and in bearing witness to the Orthodox Christian faith in the contemporary world. We recall with joy that these relations of fraternal communion between the two Orthodox Churches have also been consolidated over time through the fourteen official visits of His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Romania: twice in his capacity as Metropolitan of Chalcedon and twelve times as Ecumenical Patriarch. Each of these visits represented a moment of blessing and affirmation of the communion between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Romanian Patriarchate. The most recent visit took place at the end of October 2025, on the occasion of the consecration of the painting in Byzantine mosaic of the National Cathedral in Bucharest, an event of profound significance for Romanian and universal Orthodoxy. In the context of this visit, His Holiness was decorated by the President of Romania with the highest distinction of the Romanian State, the National Order of "The Star of Romania" in the rank of Collar, in recognition of his entire service and his friendship toward the Romanian people.

His Holiness Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch, is the most widely known and influential personality of the contemporary Orthodox world, enjoying the highest international visibility, particularly due to his constant dialogue with the world's religious and political leaders, as well as due to his active involvement in promoting peace, religious freedom, and the protection of the environment. Thus, throughout the 35 years of service as Ecumenical Patriarch, His Holiness Bartholomew has become an Orthodox personality whose spiritual prestige is internationally recognized and appreciated.

Over the decades, His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has distinguished himself through his strong commitment to inter-Christian dialogue, promoting closer relationships and cooperation between the various Christian denominations and cults. Emphasizing the importance of fostering inter-Christian relationships, His Holiness affirmed that „true dialogue is a gift from God”[1]. Thus, the Ecumenical Patriarch has consistently encouraged a spirit of mutual respect, reconciliation, and unity within the Christian world. A particularly significant moment in this regard was His Holiness' participation in the inauguration ceremony of the pontificate of Pope Francis in 2013, becoming the first Ecumenical Patriarch to attend such an event after centuries of separation between East and West. This gesture carried profound symbolic significance for the rapprochement between the

Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is also regarded as one of the foremost advocates of contemporary interreligious dialogue and of peace between cultures and people, having organized or patronized various international initiatives and conferences for this purpose[2]. Constantly emphasizing that religions can contribute to peace, reconciliation, and cooperation among people, His Holiness has developed relationships of friendship both with representatives of Judaism and with Muslim leaders and representatives of other religious traditions. Thus, His Holiness Bartholomew has continued and intensified the bilateral interreligious dialogue with the Jewish Community, initiated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1977, addressing themes such as law, tradition, the renewal of the modern world, and social justice, while continually underscoring the necessity of knowing Jewish and Christian religious values through dialogue and mutual respect. At the same time, His Holiness Bartholomew has cultivated the bilateral religious dialogue between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Islamic Community, initiated in 1986, and has supported Christian-Muslim cooperation, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence, as well as the fact that “peace and freedom are not only gifts from God; they are also unceasing tasks”[3]. Therefore, through these initiatives and efforts, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew significantly contributed to fostering dialogue, mutual understanding, and peace among the various religious communities of the contemporary world, affirming the fundamental role of religion in today’s society marked by aggressive secularism: “the role of religion is to remind the world of the divine mystery, sometimes overlooked in the diverse masks of secularism, which run the risk of concealing the divine beauty in all things.”[4] As a sign of appreciation, His Holiness Bartholomew has received numerous prestigious international awards, including the Special Prize for Peace of the Galileo Foundation in Florence, Italy, in 2004, and the Ecumenical Prize of the Catholic Academy in Munich, Germany, awarded in 2025 for his work in interchurch dialogue and for promoting peace and cooperation between people.

Moreover, His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is internationally renowned for his active involvement in the protection of the environment and the promotion of responsibility toward creation. Since the beginning of the 1990s, His Holiness Bartholomew has drawn attention to the connection between environmental degradation and the spiritual crisis of contemporary humanity, emphasizing that the destruction of nature represents not only an ecological problem, but also a moral and spiritual problem. This means that “to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin.”[5]. At the same time, it means that “humanity, to whom God has given the responsibility ‘to cultivate and preserve’

the earthly creation [...], must must behave toward it as its wise steward and not as its foolish destroyer.”[6] Through the organization of and participation in major international ecological symposia, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has encouraged worldwide cooperation for environmental protection and the assumption of a shared responsibility for the future of the planet. Consequently, in 2025, His Holiness was awarded the prestigious Templeton Prize for his exceptional contribution to the dialogue between science and religion, as well as for promoting a spiritual vision of environmental protection and raising international awareness regarding humanity’s responsibility toward creation. Given the prestige and worldwide influence of his message, His Holiness is regularly invited to the international meetings organized by the World Economic Forum in Davos, where his message primarily expresses his Orthodox Christian vision concerning the multiple social, economic, and ecological challenges of contemporary society.

We also recall the fact that that, in recognition of his contribution to the promotion of inter-Christian and interreligious dialogue, as well as his participation in international debates concerning ethics, peace, and environmental responsibility, on March 17, 2025, His Holiness Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch, was elected an associate member of the French Academy, occupying the seat previously held by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who later became Pope Benedict XVI. At the same time, throughout his three and a half decades of service as Ecumenical Patriarch, His Holiness Bartholomew has been awarded the title of Doctor honoris causa by numerous academic institutions around the world, as an expression of the high appreciation he enjoys at the international level due to his spiritual, missionary, theological, and cultural activity.

Your Holiness,

In these solemn moments, we wish to express our sincere gratitude for the invitation to participate in this anniversary moment in the life of Your Holiness. This invitation represents an occasion of spiritual joy in Jesus Christ our Lord and an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of communion and friendship between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Romanian Patriarchate.

On this blessed occasion, we also warmly congratulate Your Holiness for the fruitful work that you carry out as Archbishop of Constantinople–New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, as well as for your constant dedication to the mission of Christ’s Church in the contemporary world. The activity of Your Holiness at the international level demonstrates that the Ecumenical Patriarchate seeks to promote the perennial spiritual values of Orthodoxy in today’s world.

We pray our Lord Jesus Christ that, through the intercessions of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew, the spiritual protector of Your Holiness, celebrated today by the Orthodox Church, He may grant you health, help, and many years of service for the wellbeing of the Church and for the continuation of the mission of promoting peace, understanding, and cooperation between people, religions, and cultures. We pray that this blessed work, which you carry out with great conviction, devotion, and responsibility, may continue to benefit the mission of the Church and contemporary society.

Many and blessed years to come!

With high esteem and fraternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord,

† Daniel

Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church

[1] His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, *Encountering the Mystery: Understanding Orthodox Christianity Today* (New York: The Doubleday, 2008), p. 220.

[2] In this regard, we would like to highlight the following events: The Peace and Tolerance Conference, Istanbul (1994 and 2005); The Conference on Peaceful Coexistence between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Brussels (2001); a special conference held in Bahrain (2002); and The Conference on Religion, Peace, and the Olympic Ideal, Athens (2004).

[3] His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, *Encountering the Mystery*, p. 180.

[4] His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, *Encountering the Mystery*, pp. 181.

[5] Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, "Keynote Address at the Santa Barbara Symposium, California, November 8, 1997", in: John Chryssavgis (ed.), *On Earth as In Heaven: Ecological Vision and Initiatives of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew* (Fordham, NY: Fordham University Press, 2012), p. 99.

[6] His Eminence Genadios, Metropolitan of Sassima, and the Very Reverend Archimandrite Evdochimos Karakoulakis (eds.), *Πατριαρχικός Λόγος και Πολιτική, 1991-2011 (Patriarchal Addresses to Political World, 1991-2011)* (Athens: Eptalofos, 2011), p. 182.

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