

22/06/2026

Ecumenical Patriarch: “Our life is not digital, but part of God’s Creation”



His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew spoke about the importance of dialogue as the path to peace in a world troubled by wars during a meeting with representatives of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), as well as Greek and Cypriot journalists’ associations, who had participated in the General Assembly of the European Federation of Journalists in Ankara.

Among other issues, the Patriarch also referred to the prospects for the reopening of the Theological School of Halki following his recent meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

The value of dialogue

“Dialogue is the only path that leads to the resolution of every difference,” Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew stressed during the meeting at the Patriarchate

in the Phanar.

The Patriarch expressed deep concern over the wars that continue to shake the world, making particular reference to the conflict in Ukraine and the violence in the Middle East.

He noted that thousands of people, both soldiers and civilians, including many children, have lost their lives, while millions have been forced to leave their homes. He emphasized that problems cannot be resolved through violence and conflict, but only through dialogue among people and nations.

The future of Halki

The Ecumenical Patriarch also spoke about the Theological School of Halki, expressing optimism about its future. He noted that recent positive developments surrounding the issue strengthen hopes for the future of the historic institution, which for more than a century educated the clergy and leaders of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Referring to his recent meeting with President Erdoğan in Ankara, he said he had observed a positive disposition regarding the matter.

The mission of journalists

The Ecumenical Patriarch highlighted the role and contribution of journalists, describing their work as a vital social mission and a service to humanity.

He stressed that media professionals have a responsibility to serve the truth, provide reliable and objective information, and build relationships of trust with society. Journalism, he said, must be grounded in honesty, independence, integrity, and adherence to ethical standards.

At the same time, he acknowledged the difficulties and dangers faced by journalists around the world, especially those covering wars and crises, paying tribute to those who lost their lives while carrying out their mission.

The challenges of modern technology

The Ecumenical Patriarch also addressed the challenges arising from the rapid development of technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence, and its impact on human life.

He expressed hope that a strong ethical and legal framework would be established for the development and use of AI, while voicing the expectation that “the role of journalists will not be replaced by texts, perhaps technically flawless, but certainly

without soul, or by visual and audio reports generated by digital programmes.”

Protecting God’s Creation

A central theme of the Patriarch’s remarks was environmental protection, a longstanding priority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew reiterated that humanity has a responsibility to safeguard God’s Creation, which he described as the common home of all people. He emphasised that human beings are not owners of the planet, but temporary stewards entrusted with preserving it for future generations.

Referring to the Greek word *oikos* (“home”), from which the words “ecology” and “ecologist” derive, he noted that protecting nature is an act of responsibility toward humanity’s shared future. He also thanked journalists who, over the years, have supported and highlighted the ecological initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The Patriarchate’s enduring mission

Concluding his remarks, the Ecumenical Patriarch expressed confidence that the Ecumenical Patriarchate “continues and will continue forever, with the help of God, its ministry from this historic City.”

“It is an inseparable part of it, an element of its identity; and despite the ‘varied turns’ of the City’s long history, our Patriarchate has survived and daily offers its witness to the contemporary world,” he said.

On behalf of the International Federation of Journalists, Treasurer Raffaele Lorusso thanked the Ecumenical Patriarch for receiving the delegation, praised his multifaceted ministry, and presented him with a commemorative medal marking the IFJ’s centenary.

Representing the Journalists’ Union of Athens, President Maria Antoniadou presented a reprint of the oldest newspaper published in the Cappadocian dialect, preserved in the “D. Pournaras” Library of the Union and at Columbia University.

Also participating in the meeting were Sotiris Triantafyllou, President of Panhellenic Federation of Journalists’ Unions (P.O.E.S.Y.); Themis Beredimas, President of Periodical and Electronic Press Union (ESPIT); and George Frangos, President of the Cyprus Union of Journalists.

Read the full address:

Esteemed Ms. Maria Antoniadou, President of the Journalists' Union of the Athens Daily Newspapers,

Distinguished officers of the International Federation of Journalists and of the national unions represented here today,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We welcome you to the courtyards of the Holy Great Church of Christ, which for nearly two thousand years has proclaimed unceasingly the joyful Message of the Gospel from this corner of the world.

Here, in the year 38 A.D., the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called entrusted to his disciple, the Apostle Stachys, the first Christian community in the city of Byzantium, where, three centuries later, Constantine the Great founded New Rome, Constantinople. From the Apostle Stachys to our humble person, two hundred and seventy Bishops, Archbishops, Patriarchs and, after the sixth century, Ecumenical Patriarchs have served, under all circumstances, the Church of Christ and the sacred institution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the First Throne of the Orthodox Church.

Our joy, however, is made all the greater by your visit here today, because just as the Church transmits the divine Word, the truth, so too you, as journalists, wherever you come from and wherever you exercise your vocation, bear the great responsibility of speaking the language of truth, conveying the truth, and serving the truth.

Your work constitutes a leading social mission, a ministry to your fellow human being, the reader, listener, or viewer, with whom you build a relationship of trust; and this relationship must be founded upon sincerity, objectivity, independence, conscientiousness, and, of course, a high professionalism governed by the ethical principles of the journalistic vocation.

We know that journalists have always faced, and continue to face, great difficulties and obstacles in the exercise of their vocation. Many of your colleagues throughout the world have found themselves in situations threatening their physical safety, while others, sadly, have lost their lives while covering wars and civil conflicts.

It is tragic that even today our world is shaken by wars, as in neighbouring Ukraine, but also in the Middle East, so close to us. Thousands of our fellow human beings, soldiers and civilians alike, among them hundreds of small children, have lost their

lives. Millions more have been uprooted and forced into exile as refugees. For some who are far from the battlefields, war appears to be yet another television production, a daily show that they watch comfortably from their sofas. For some younger people, perhaps, it may resemble a video game. Yet for those who live there, who hear missiles and drones flying over their heads and destroying their homes, their neighbourhoods, and their very lives, war is a harsh, painful, and bloody reality. And it is this reality that we come to know through your fellow journalists, who, with courage and at risk to their own lives, report from the battlefields.

We pray with all our strength to the merciful God to protect all our fellow human beings who are being tried, who live in the daily insecurity of war. We pray that conflicts and wars may cease and that peace may prevail. We remind all that problems are not resolved through conflict, but only through dialogue. Dialogue is the only path that leads to the resolution of every difference.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate has always supported the value of dialogue. For this reason, it has been at the forefront of inter-Christian theological dialogues, and likewise in the promotion of interreligious discourse, which contributes to mutual understanding, peaceful coexistence, and cooperation among people of different national, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

In today's world, all of us, not only journalists, are confronted with new and complex challenges. Technology, the fruit of human intelligence, seems increasingly to be replacing the very human person who created it. In this constantly changing environment, we are called to make rational and prudent use of technological achievements, such as artificial intelligence, so that humanity as a whole may benefit. Artificial intelligence in particular is a significant, promising, and multidimensional development; yet it must not become a factor in the marginalisation of the human person, as many fear. We are confident that all the relevant institutions will cooperate in ensuring the ethical and legal framework for the development and application of artificial intelligence. With regard to the journalistic vocation, we hope that your role will not be replaced by texts, perhaps technically flawless, but certainly without soul, or by visual and audio reports generated by digital programmes.

We have said on another occasion that our life is not digital. We are not a dot in a digital world, but part of God's Creation. And Creation includes all things, which must coexist and live together in harmony, because together they compose and constitute our world. It is this Creation that our Ecumenical Patriarchate strives to protect, seeking to awaken the conscience of every person of good will. By

protecting nature, we safeguard our common home, in Greek, oikos. From this word come the words “ecology” and “ecologist.” We are, therefore, ecologists, because we wish to protect our planet, which is the common home of humanity, as we journey together through the vastness of the universe. And this home does not belong to us. We simply make temporary use of it, and we are obliged to hand it over intact to our children and to the generations that follow. In this effort, in this struggle, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has always had as its supporters journalists from every corner of the planet; and in your persons today, we thank all those who have supported and continue to support the ecological initiatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The First Throne of Orthodoxy, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, continues and will continue forever, with the help of God, its ministry from this historic City. It is an inseparable part of it, an element of its identity; and despite the “varied turns” of the City’s long history, our Patriarchate has survived and daily offers its witness to the contemporary world. We are optimistic that, despite the fact that the historic Greek Orthodox Community of the City has sadly diminished, tomorrow will be better than yesterday. Already, the positive prospects for the Holy Theological School of Halki, where, for more than one hundred years, until 1971, when it was compelled to close, generations of clergy and leaders of our Patriarchate were educated. strengthen this sense of optimism. And once again, in your presence, I would like to express my thanks to His Excellency the President of the Republic of Türkiye, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, with whom we met last Tuesday at the Presidential Palace in Ankara, from which you, too, have come, and with whom we discussed the matter of the School. I was heartened by his positive disposition toward this matter. We are, therefore, optimistic for the future, and we pray to our Lord Jesus Christ for our Community, for our Patriarchate, for the Church, and for all humanity.

May God strengthen you and protect your difficult and multidimensional work.

vema.com.au