

Ecumenical Patriarch visits the celebrating Church of Saint Kyriaki in Kontoskali

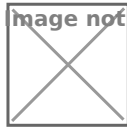


image not found or type unknown

“Saint Kyriaki, who inherited through her perseverance and steadfastness in her confession of faith the ‘everlasting glory’ of her Bridegroom, Christ, stands as an example for us all. For our own life is, and ought to be, a testimony to our faith in Christ and to the glory handed down to us by our Fathers, so that we may preserve it exactly as it was entrusted to us and as the generations before us have faithfully safeguarded it until this day.”

With these words, among others, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew addressed the faithful during the Divine Liturgy over which he presided on Tuesday, 7 July, for the feast of the Holy Great Martyr Kyriaki, at the festal Church of Saint Kyriaki of the Kontoskalion Community.

The Ecumenical Patriarch continued: “The Holy Martyrs and Confessors of our faith, together with our forefathers, received and handed down to us our faith and all that is holy and sacred. It is our duty and responsibility to preserve these treasures, even at the cost of our own personal advantage. Moreover, we are called to continue their work, proving ourselves each day to be worthy descendants of glorious ancestors. For us, our ‘Creed’ must be—and indeed is—our unwavering faith in Christ, our devotion to His Church, and our care and concern for our communities, our churches and our institutions.”

His All-Holiness warmly commended all those who labour for the advancement of the Kontoskalion Community and “for preserving, to the extent possible, its historic greatness even today.” He offered particular praise to His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria for “his tireless zeal and moving dedication in carrying out his responsibilities as Overseer of this District.” He also expressed his gratitude to the Community Council and all its collaborators for their devoted service.

Warm Welcome to an Official Delegation of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church

The Ecumenical Patriarch also warmly welcomed a three-member official delegation of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which attended the Divine Liturgy

during its official visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Addressing the delegation, His All-Holiness said: “With sentiments of sincere love and profound honour, we welcome to the City of the Most Holy Theotokos, the City of Hagia Sophia, the official delegation of the Most Holy Church of Bulgaria, consisting of His Eminence Metropolitan Naoum of Ruse, His Grace Bishop Gerasimos of Melnik, Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and Mr Alexandar Smotshevski, Patriarchal Counsellor, who have come bearing an official invitation from the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Church, inviting Our Modesty to preside over the festivities in honour of Saint John of Rila at the Holy Monastery dedicated to him this coming October.”

He continued: “In your persons we greet the entire Most Holy Church of Bulgaria, and we embrace fraternally her Primate, our beloved brother, His Beatitude Metropolitan Daniel of Sofia and Patriarch of All Bulgaria, whose recent visit to our birthplace of Imbros for our name day celebrations filled us with profound spiritual joy and heartfelt emotion. The memory of that visit remains vivid and precious to us. Our two Churches are united by sacred and indissoluble bonds, bonds of common faith and love, which, according to the Apostle Paul, ‘never fails.’ Today our Churches continue to strive together in preserving the purity of sound ecclesiology, which is under attack and threatened in various ways upon the altar of political ambitions and geopolitical strategies, even though this spiritual struggle is difficult and demanding, for ‘our struggle is not against flesh and blood.’”

Tribute to Archbishop Sotirios of Canada

His All-Holiness also presented His Eminence Archbishop Sotirios of Canada, offering warm praise for his many decades of faithful and distinguished ecclesiastical service. The Patriarch announced the Archbishop’s intention to retire from active ministry and enter retirement.

Welcome to Metropolitan Damaskinos of Aetolia and Acarnania

The Patriarch likewise extended a heartfelt welcome to His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Aetolia and Acarnania, who was visiting the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Asia Minor with a large group of pilgrims.

Addressing him, His All-Holiness remarked: *”Your Eminence, beloved brother, and beloved children, How wonderful it is that you have come to the Queen of Cities! We trust that your stay here will be both spiritually enriching and beneficial, enabling you not only to hear the voice of history but also to perceive those unseen realities that lie beyond what is visible, realities that form an integral part of our

weighty inheritance and sacred legacy. We especially encourage you to visit and venerate the tomb of the great Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, who fell asleep in the Lord exactly fifty-four years ago today and now rests within the grounds of the Holy Monastery of Baloukli, together with other blessed predecessors of Our Modesty. Today, in a special way, his soul hovers over us and rejoices with us. He inaugurated a new era for the Mother Church of Constantinople and for the whole of Orthodoxy through immense labour, prayer and patience, and for this we remain ever grateful to his blessed memory.”*

Earlier in the service, the Ecumenical Patriarch was welcomed by His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria, while the sermon was delivered by the Second Patriarchal Deacon Fr Barnabas.

Later that day, His All-Holiness visited the Holy Monastery of the Life-Giving Spring at Baloukli, where he celebrated a Trisagion at the tomb of his late predecessor, Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, marking the 54th anniversary of his repose.

vema.com.au