

The Life and Work of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew documentary on ERT



A rare documentary on the life and work of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew will be presented exclusively by ERT on Thursday, 22 October 2026, at 10:00 pm, on ERT3, ERT Cosmos (with a repeat broadcast on 23 October at 2:00 pm), and ERTFLIX.

In an in-depth conversation with journalist Pierros Tzanetakos, on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of his elevation to the throne of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, His All-Holiness speaks about the significant milestones of his life, as well as his ministry as the Primate of Orthodoxy.

The documentary is accompanied by the ERT Contemporary Music Orchestra, performing original music composed by Evanthia Reboutsika.

Thirty-five years after his elevation to the throne of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew recounts his long journey from his birthplace, Imbros in the 1950s, to the Phanar and present-day Constantinople. His has been a life dedicated to the Church, guided by the spiritual values of Orthodoxy, with the sacred duty of passing on the Greek Orthodox tradition, and inspired by the words of his spiritual father, the late Metropolitan Meliton of Imbros

and Tenedos, spoken during his ordination 65 years ago: “Walk with your eyes fixed only upon Jesus.”

The Ecumenical Patriarch opens the doors of his family home in the village of Agioi Theodoroi on Imbros, recalling childhood memories, his first encounter with the Church, and his love of learning. He takes viewers on a tour of his father’s coffeehouse and the village cemetery, where his parents rest alongside fellow villagers.

He explains his longstanding efforts to help the Greek minority regain its footing, following the persecutions of 1964 and the difficulties endured over the decades, with particular emphasis on the Greek schools that have reopened on the island after many years. There, in his beloved homeland to which he always returns, he meets with young people, whom he describes as the hope for the future of Hellenism. As he himself remarks, “May sweet water emerge from what is difficult and bitter.”

From the Throne Room, he reflects upon his ministry as Ecumenical Patriarch, from October 1991 to the present day, always with the objectives of preserving the unity of the Church, strengthening dialogue among Christians, and promoting understanding among religions in a complex world filled with challenges.

He recalls his historic meetings with the Primates of the Roman Catholic Church, his discussions with prominent world leaders, and his landmark initiatives in support of ecology and environmental protection.

He speaks openly about the division within Orthodoxy, reiterating that the primacy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate will be preserved forever, with priority given to the coordination and joint action of Churches throughout the world. He also highlights the importance of synodality, culminating in the convening of the Holy and Great Council in Crete in 2016.

He describes the unifying essence that binds the Greek community of Constantinople to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, known as Romiosyni, which, despite adversity, continues to constitute a distinctive part of history and a bridge between the glorious past and the present day.

From Halki, where he himself studied, the Ecumenical Patriarch expresses his hope that ongoing initiatives will bear fruit, allowing the Theological School to reopen in the near future.

Filming of the documentary took place on Imbros, in Constantinople, and on Halki.

Director: Manolis Papanikitas

Production Manager: Alexandra Kourti

Art Director: Marios Polyzo-gopoulos

Research – Screenplay: Pierros Tzanetakos, Elvira Krithari

Editing: Thodoris Metaxas

Music: Evanthia Reboutsika

Featuring the ERT Contemporary Music Orchestra

Orchestra Conductor: Stathis Soulis

Orchestration: Giannis Gkikas