11/11/2026

The Ecumenical Patriarch’s Visit to Switzerland



His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew arrived at Geneva International Airport at midday on Friday, 6 November, in order to preside, at the invitation of His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Switzerland, over the celebrations marking the 30th anniversary of the consecration of the Parish Church of Saint Dimitrios in Zurich, which His All-Holiness himself had consecrated in June 1995.

Members of the Patriarchal Entourage included Their Graces Bishop Paisios of Xanthoupolis and Bishop Panaretos of Tamisos, Patriarchal Exarch of Lithuania; the Grand Ecclesiarch Fr Aetios, Director of the Private Patriarchal Office; Patriarchal Deacon Photios Poulopoulos, First Secretary of the First Patriarchal Office; the Venerable Monk Ezekiel of Xenophontos; and Mr Panagiotis Grafiadelis, a member of the Patriarchal staff.

His All-Holiness and the members of his distinguished Entourage were welcomed at the airport by the local Shepherd, His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Switzerland; Mrs Aikaterini Simopoulou, Ambassador of Greece to Switzerland, accompanied by her husband, Mr Aristides Sandis, a retired Ambassador; Mrs Eleni

Petroula, Consul-General of Greece in Geneva; clergy of the Holy Metropolis of Switzerland; and Archons of the Holy Great Church of Christ.

On the evening of the same day, His All-Holiness blessed a dinner held in his honour and hosted by Mrs Eleni Petroula, Consul-General of Greece in Geneva, at a restaurant in a lakeside suburb of Geneva. Among those attending were the members of the Patriarchal Entourage, His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Switzerland, the aforementioned diplomats, Mr Ioannis Gkikas, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva, clergy, Archons, and prominent members of the Greek community in Geneva.

On the morning of 7 November, His All-Holiness and those accompanying him departed by road for Zurich. At midday, they stopped in the town of Murten/Morat, situated beside the lake of the same name in the Canton of Fribourg, on the linguistic boundary between French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland, where Archon Petros Malitas hosted a luncheon.



The Two-Day Celebrations

That evening, the Auxiliary Bishop of His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos, His Grace Bishop Phanourios of Tyana, who serves as Protosyncellus and Episcopal Head of the Holy Church and Parish of Zurich, together with the members of the Parish Foundation’s Board of Directors, which he chairs, welcomed His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at a suitable function venue on Käferberg Hill, overlooking the city of Zurich. Following the reception, an official dinner was held in honour of the Patriarch in a specially prepared hall. Before dessert was served, His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Switzerland addressed His All-Holiness, referring both to the 30th anniversary of the consecration of the church and to the 35th anniversary of the Patriarch’s election and enthronement upon the Ecumenical Throne. His All-Holiness responded with an appropriate address.

Subsequently, His Grace Bishop Phanourios of Tyana delivered an address of welcome to His All-Holiness and presented him with a gift from the parish. The gift was an antique Swiss pendulum clock dating from 1820, a characteristic example of the clockmaking craftsmanship of the Neuchâtel region (pendulaires neuchâteloises). Among those attending the dinner were the members of the Patriarchal Entourage, His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Switzerland, His Grace Bishop Phanourios of Tyana, diplomats, clergy, Archons, and members of the Greek community from Zurich and other Swiss cities.

On Sunday, 8 November, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Holy Church of Saint Dimitrios in Zurich, which had been constructed at the expense of the late Archon Grand Logothete Panagiotis Angelopoulos and his family, and consecrated in 1995 by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who also presided from the throne during the Divine Liturgy. Following the Dismissal, His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Switzerland addressed His All-Holiness, recalling the history of the church's construction and consecration, and presented, on behalf of the Holy Metropolis, an epitrachelion and an omophorion, produced by the workshop of a Holy Convent of the Church of Georgia. In his address, His All-Holiness referred, among other things, to the person and work of the late Metropolitan Damaskinos, formerly of Switzerland and subsequently of Adrianople. He also recalled the founders and the consecration of the Holy Church, blessed the pastoral work being undertaken by the Episcopal Head of the parish and the serving priests, Fr Stephanos Athanasiou and Fr Ioannis Fousekis, and presented a Holy Chalice and other commemorative gifts as a paternal blessing.

His All-Holiness subsequently honoured two clergymen of the Holy Metropolis of Switzerland, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Gabriel Baratashvili and the Reverend Protopresbyter Dr Stephanos Athanasiou, a university professor, by conferring upon them the respective ecclesiastical offices of Archimandrite and Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Throne. In doing so, he spoke in praise of their effective service to the Church and their fruitful liturgical and pastoral ministry.

Following the distribution of the antidoron and commemorative blessings to the large congregation, which, according to estimates by specialists and those responsible for maintaining order, exceeded 2,000 people, a festive programme of music and traditional dancing took place in the parish hall beneath the church. The programme was presented by the parish choir, under the direction of Mrs Katia Foskolou, together with Greek dance groups from Zurich whose members originated from Epirus, Livadero in Kozani, Pontus and other regions.

The two days of anniversary celebrations concluded with an official dinner held in honour of His All Holiness hosted by Mrs Aikaterini Simopoulou, Ambassador of



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МАЗИВИК






















35 Jahre
Ökumenischer
Patriarch Bartholomäus


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