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# His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew offers uplifting message regarding Hagia Sophia



Regarding the Hagia Sophia and Chora Ancient Churches recent setbacks, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew offered an uplifting message to the worldwide faithful and reminds us that Hagia Sophia, “as an architectural expression of the salvation of mankind and all of creation in Christ, belongs to all of humanity.”

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Read the original letter: **Greek** | **English**

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To the Most Honorable Dr. Anthony Limberakis, Archon Aktouarios of our Holy and Great Church of Christ, Commander of the Order of St. Andrew, beloved child in Christ of our Modesty, may the blessing and peace of God be with you.

We thank you whole-heartedly for your Statement, through which you express your deep sadness regarding the recent decision of the state government to convert the Museum of Hagia Sophia into a Muslim Mosque.

Christian church architecture is an unsurpassed theological language, which through architectural inspiration expresses rightly the faith of our Church in the Triune God, in the ever-saving incarnation of God the Logos, and in the eschatological fulfillment and fullness of the Divine *Oikonomia* in the Kingdom of God.

It is this truth that the Sacred Church of the Holy Wisdom of God represents and declares in its unique way. No intervention whatsoever is able to obscure, alter, or eliminate the evangelical message and mission of this Church, for wisely it has been said that it constitutes “the architectural expression of the dogma [of the Ecumenical Council] of Chalcedon”, that is, the belief in the “perpetual mystery” of the God-Man, in the union and co-existence of both the human and divine natures in the one person of God the Logos, “unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably”.

In this spirit, the use of this wonderful holy structure as a Christian house of worship corresponds to its essence and salvific witness. In this all-holy space, all things praise Christ, the Word made flesh, Who was in the beginning and Who is to come. This truth, which is the core of Christian faith in the Triune God, is rejected by Islam. For 481 years, while Hagia Sophia was converted into a Mosque, the Muslim faithful prayed within a Christian church, in a Christian environment, despite the iconography being covered. The only use of Hagia Sophia, which respects and exemplifies its true mission, is its use as a Christian house of worship.

The Church of the Holy Wisdom of God, as an architectural expression of the salvation of mankind and all of creation in Christ, belongs to all of humanity. Its recognition as a World Heritage Site expresses indirectly this truth, and is not linked only to the incomparable greatness of its architecture, its iconography and rich adornment.

With these thoughts, we thank you all once again for your profound and honest expression of love and support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The spirit of Hagia Sophia is always present in the life and daily witness of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in its unwavering faith for the Apostolic traditions, and its tireless concern for every human person.

In conclusion, we extend to you our whole-hearted paternal and Patriarchal blessing, and we invoke upon you the grace and infinite mercy of God.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the 28th of August 2020

Your fervent supplicant before God

BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome

And Ecumenical Patriarch

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Source