13/02/2022

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew urges dialogue for peace, stability in Ukraine; warns of risk of global war External



The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, on Sunday appealed to all the parties involved to “follow a path of dialogue, in order for peace, stability and justice to prevail in Ukraine,” during a sermon after services at the Patriarchal see in the Phanar district.

His All Holiness underlined that the use of weapons is not a solution, and can only result in “war and violence, sorrow and death.”

He also called on all religious leaders and those in positions of power, as well as all people of good will, to strive for a peaceful resolution of the perilously escalating situation in Ukraine, while ominously warning that hostilities in Europe could escalate in a Third World War.

The Ecumenical Patriarch spoke English before congregants that included several diplomats from east and southeast European countries, as well as ethnic Ukrainians residing in the Bosporus metropolis. Finally, His All Holiness urged all to pray for peace in Ukraine.

The following is the full address by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew after the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee (February 13, 2022):

Call for Peace in Ukraine
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Honorable Consuls General,
Beloved children in the Lord,

On this Sunday, dedicated to the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, marking the entrance to a period of penitence, fasting and ascetical struggles as preparation for the Holy and Great Pascha, we are called to fervent prayer with all our hearts for the preservation of peace in Ukraine. Indeed, the possibility of a new war in Europe, resulting from the escalation of violent rhetoric and militarization of the borders between Russia and Ukraine, should be unequivocally opposed. We call for enduring peace, stability and justice in the region. Peace is a matter of choice and must be shared by all the forces engaged in this extremely complex and sensitive geopolitical context. The duty of us all is to pray for and actively contribute to a peaceful resolution of conflict situations and to the unconditional respect and protection of human rights and dignity. Human conflict may very well be inevitable in this fallen and broken world; but war and violence are certainly to be opposed with every fiber of our being.

The ancient Greeks spoke about “peace” (“εἰρήνη”) as a condition “exceedingly rich and immensely fruitful” (“βαθύπλουτος καὶ βαθύκαρπος”). They adored peace as a goddess, depicted with her son Plutos (“Wealth”) in her bosom. Closer to our times, Benjamin Franklin reminded us that “there never was a good war or a bad peace.” War can appear sweet only to those who have not experienced it (“γλυκὺ δὲ πόλεμος ἀπείροισιν”). Indeed, if we allow our hearts and minds to freely express themselves, without any fear or passion, they will certainly not speak in favor of

war, but they will unequivocally praise peace.

We firmly believe that there is no solution possible to preserve and guarantee peace outside the path of dialogue, which abolishes the conditions that lead to violence and war. Peace comes from mutual respect and cooperation. Within an environment of growing uncertainty with regard to human affairs, the word of the Church has to be a clear message of reconciliation and peace, of love and justice, of brotherhood and solidarity.

We call upon all parties involved to pursue this path of dialogue and respect for international law, in order to bring an end to the conflict and allow all Ukrainians to live in harmony. Arms are not the solution. On the contrary, they can only promise war and violence, sorrow and death. As our beloved brother Francis, the Pope of Rome, recently said: “Let us not forget: war is madness.” All Church ministers, all representatives of religious traditions, all those in position of authority, all people of good will, each one of us, should call for a peaceful resolution of this dangerous escalation of words and means that weight heavily and ominously upon the head of the Ukrainian people. Silence and indifference are not an option. There is no peace without constant vigilance. Therefore, we are all “sentenced” to peace, which means, destined to the permanent struggle for its establishment and defense.
May the God of love and peace bless you all!

