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The 40-Day Memorial for the late Metropolitan Soterios Trampas in Seoul

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On Saturday, July 23rd, following the Divine Liturgy, the 40-day Memorial of the late first Metropolitan of Korea, Soterios, was held at the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Seoul.

In addition to the Korean Clergy and Faithful, officials representing various ecclesiastical and political authorities within Korea were in attendance. They delivered speeches extolling the great spiritual and social contributions of the blessed Metropolitan Soterios during his 47-year-long ministry in Korea.

All present received a memorial pamphlet containing the will of the dearly departed Hierarch, written by him thirteen years ago on the Monday of the Holy Spirit in the year 2009, as well as Kollyva made of rice. All participants shared in a common meal of love which was provided by the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea in honor and memory of His Eminence Soterios.

We would like to extend our warm thanks to the members of the Youth Association, Syndesmos, whose diligent work through Friday and Saturday preparing the facilities of the Metropolis ensured that the Memorial Service and reception were able to take place with reverence and care.

Below, we publish the Patriarchal Letter of His-All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, which was read by the protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Throne, Fr. Daniel Na:

+ BARTHOLOMEW By God’s Mercy Archbishop of Constantinople–New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch

Your Eminence Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea, most honorable Exarch of Japan, our beloved brother and concelebrant: May God’s grace and peace be with you.

We are spiritually participating in the forty-day memorial that is being held today in the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Seoul for the late Metropolitan Sotirios, who consumed himself entirely for the service of the Church, falling asleep sacredly at a

ripe old age at the Diocesan Center of your Holy Metropolis, and now reposes, awaiting the resurrection of the dead, at the Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Gapyeong, which constitutes the symbol of his presence and witness in that land.

In every position of responsibility, the Church assigned him to, our late brother Sotirios was an exemplary clergyman, devoting soul and body to his duty, comprising a spiritual, social, and pastoral ministry.

Metropolitan Sotirios dedicated forty-seven years of his earthly life to his service in Korea. He became intimately associated with the land and its inhabitants, whom he loved and to whom he offered – with respect and discernment for their traditions – the good witness concerning Christ the Savior of humankind and the world. He was a genuine expression of the spirit and ethos of Orthodox mission, as these were also described by the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church (Crete, 2016). The proclamation of the Gospel belongs to the core of the Church's identity, in accordance with the commandment of Christ: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19). As the Council determined so judiciously, this mandate "must be carried out not aggressively or by different forms of proselytism, but in love, humility and respect toward the identity of each person and the cultural particularity of each people." (The Mission of the Church in Today's World, Preamble) It was these principles that Metropolitan Sotirios applied with consistency and sensitivity throughout his long ministry.

He was ascetic, prayerful, charitable, unmercenary, characterized by an authentic ecclesiastical mindset, active in the social sphere, devoted to his pastoral diakonia, with steadfast fidelity to the Holy Great Church of Christ and its ecumenical mission, appreciated by all Christians as well as state and local authorities in Korea. Therefore, in 1999, he was declared an Honorary Citizen of Seoul.

It is the same missionary zeal and ethos of service that the late brother Sotirios also demonstrated as Metropolitan of Pisidia in Asia Minor. His contribution to this historic Metropolis and his flock there was invaluable. The three sacred churches there – St. Alypios of Antalya, St. Paul the Apostle in Side-Manavgat, and Panagia Pisidiotissa in Alanya – along with his writings in the Turkish language and his pastoral affection, will remain an eternal seal of his Christ-pleasing tenure in Asia Minor.

We express our gratitude to all the official representatives of state and local authorities and all Christian churches and confessions for their honorable presence

at this sacred memorial for the late Metropolitan Sotirios. We also take this opportunity to address our profound and sincere thanks to the Korean Government for the freedom and support that they bestow upon the Orthodox Church in Korea and, more generally, for the assurance and protection of freedom of religion in their country.

In this spirit, we pray that the Lord of glory may grant rest to the soul of Metropolitan Sotirios in the land of the living and dwelling of the righteous while invoking on you – through the intercessions of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, the grace and mercy of the God of love.

July 16, 2022
Your beloved brother in Christ,
+Bartholomew of Constantinople

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