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Academic year begins in several countries; message by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I

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Today marked the commencement of the 2022-2023 academic year, with pupils returning to classrooms in several countries, including in predominately Orthodox Christian Greece, where annual blessing ceremonies were held in the morning, many attended by local Metropolitans and Bishops, as well as office-holders.

The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All- Holiness Bartholomew I, on the occasion of the new school year, welcomed the return of pupils to the reopened ethnic Greek school on the northeast Aegean Island of Imbros.

His All-Holiness underlined that "…education is the process by which treasured values, lessons for life, morals and civilisation are transferred to the new generations."

He added, in a heartfelt message to pupils, that they belong to the ethnic Greek Omogenia, "…which for centuries, stands guard over Sacred Ground, the faith of Christ, Orthodox tradition, the Byzantine spiritual legacy, humanity and solidarity".

Still in wider southeast Europe, the Archbishop of Durres, Tirana and All Albania, His Beatitude Anastasios, also addressed a message to pupils from the Albanian capital, on the occasion of the new school year.

Following the conclusion of a Divine Liturgy on Sunday at the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Resurrection, His Beatitude called on pupils to return to classrooms filled with love.

Children and teens also returned to classrooms on the eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus, with the Metropolitan of Limassol Athanasios calling on pupils to devote themselves to the "struggle", as he said, of conquering knowledge, while reaffirming the Church's sincere and undivided interest in the well-being of youth.

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