

05/05/2019

Ecumenical Patriarch about Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp: This place will always be a symbol of radical evil



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on Thursday joined the March of the Living, a 3-kilometer walk from the Auschwitz concentration camp to Birkenau in Poland, to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust.

The annual march coincides with Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom Hashoah) and marks the murder of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust.

Participants in the March on Thursday, May 2, 2019, included Romania's PM Viorica Dăncilă, the US Ambassador to Israel David Melech Friedman, representatives of the White House, ambassadors from all across Europe and other officials.

'In the history of humanity, very few places have ever incited the same degree of fear, abomination and scandal as the ground we stand on today,' the Ecumenical Patriarch said opening his speech in front of approximately 10,000 people.

His Holiness said that the two names - Auschwitz-Birkenau - 'encapsulate what humankind, when motivated by pure hatred, can do to desecrate and deface the

dignity of the human person, who is created in the image of God.'

March of the Living 2019 began at [@AuschwitzMuseum](#). Thousands of people, mainly young Jews and groups of Polish youth are marching together from Auschwitz to Birkenau sites to commemorate [#YomHaShoah](#), reflect & learn. We remember about the past to build a better future. pic.twitter.com/35pBHUGJpg

— Auschwitz Memorial (@AuschwitzMuseum) [May 2, 2019](#)

'Auschwitz will forever remain a symbol of radical evil – proof of the destruction and violence that man is capable of when he falls victim to brainwashing and the rhetoric of hatred; when his emotions are neutralized and his creative powers are depleted.'

The Patriarch of Constantinople said he was 'profoundly moved' to visit the place where so many people suffered and died.

He recalled that for almost twenty-eight years, since the beginning of his tenure as Ecumenical Patriarch, he has denounced 'anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia, but also religious extremism and fanaticism.'

Patriarch Bartholomew stressed the importance of dialogue as 'a precious gift of God' and as a vehicle to overcome prejudices and mistrust.

His Holiness underscored that dialogue 'promotes mutual familiarization and appreciation; it builds respect for difference; it builds bridges'.

'Dialogue is always a gesture and source of solidarity.'

Ending his speech, the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople cautioned that 'silence in the face of injustice and exploitation, silence in the shadows of helpless suffering, and silence to the ideologies of racism and discrimination, exacerbate these problems.'

That is why, 'we must do everything within our means to ensure that the tragedy of Shoah never happens again.'

During his three-day stay in Poland, the Ecumenical Patriarch was accompanied by Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, Archimandrite Agathangelos Siskos, Panteleimon Vingas, Nikolaos Papachristou - head of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Press Office, and Nikolaos Manghinas, photographer.

— Photography courtesy of Israel International News / Yossi Zeliger

— Source: basilica.ro