03/11/2022

Ἀντιφώνησις On the Occasion of the 31st Anniversary of the Enthronement of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew And the Feast of Saint Elpidophoros

Beloved Chancellor of our Sacred Archdiocese of America,

Your Grace(s) and beloved Clergy,

Distinguished Representatives of Greece and Cyprus,

Dear Faithful,

I am deeply touched and truly humbled this day, because of the many congratulations and well wishes I have been receiving for my Nameday from around the country and the world.

And my joy is made complete by the continuing spiritual happiness, occasioned by the 31st Anniversary of the Enthronement of the Spiritual Father of us all, His All-

Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The blessing of this longest tenure upon the See of the Holy Great Church of Christ is an ineffable blessing for both the Orthodox and secular worlds.

Allow me just a moment to speak to this, though; for the gracious words of our Chancellor are more than enough about me.

Our Ecumenical Patriarch is standing in the breach, like the one sought by Lord in the words given to the Prophet Ezekiel:

And I sought for anyone among them who would repair the wall and stand in the breach before Me on behalf of the land, so that I would not destroy it, but I found no one.*

His All-Holiness is standing in the breach for the People of Ukraine, while Orthodox Christians are being sent by their government and by their Church – the Moscow Patriarchate, which should be ashamed – to kill their fellow Christians for the sake of a madness that knows no bounds.

His All-Holiness stands in the breach "on behalf of the land," constantly and consistently preaching the pure Orthodox theology of creation and ecological responsibility.

He is known as the "Green" Patriarch, because he understands that if we do not coexist with the natural world, we will destroy ourselves. It is not God Who destroys; it is humankind, when we are not aligned with God's purposes and His will. The Ecumenical Patriarch leads not just the Christian world in this regard, but because he is not afraid of dialogue and difference, he is able to reach out to any human being. He knows the truth of the Lord's saying, that he who is not against us, is for us. †

My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we celebrate the Enthronement of our Ecumenical Patriarch, I express to all of you my deepest appreciation for your thoughtfulness for me, and for your felicitations and greetings on the occasion of my Nameday.

As I have said many times before, the Ecumenical Patriarch gave me the name, "Bearer of Hope." But it is His All-Holiness who fills my heart and mind with hope every day. He is leading all of us on the course of love, of peace, and of a vision for a brighter tomorrow.

Thank you again for your kindness, and may the Lord our God grant unto His All-

Holiness our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew length of days – that he might always reign and serve His holy churches in peace, safety, honor and health, rightly teaching the word of His truth.

Unto many years, Father and Master!

* Ezekiel 22:30.

† Cf. Luke 9:50.

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