

## **Concelebration of the Ecumenical Patriarch and Archbishop of Cyprus for the Sunday of Orthodoxy**



“The bond of love and the fraternal relations between our two Churches are a guarantee that we will continue the common struggle in the face of contemporary religious, moral, cultural, social, economic, and technological challenges, against all tendencies that threaten the sanctity of the human person and the integrity of creation,” the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew said in his homily after the glorious Divine Liturgy with the Primate of the Church of Cyprus, Archbishop George, which took place on Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 5, 2023, at the Patriarchal Church in the Phanar.

As the Patriarch characteristically said, “the witness of the Church to the world does not lead to the secularization of the Church, a tendency which is always identified with the loss of her eschatological consciousness. To such a loss leads, with certainty, to the closeness of the Church, its separation from the world, and its indifference to history. Introversion and secularism are a misunderstanding of the “not of the world” character of the Church”.

Referring to all that threatens the human person, the Ecumenical Patriarch underlined the importance of faith and noted that the power of the two Churches, the Holy Great Church of Christ and the ancient Church of Cyprus, is spiritual.

“The Great Church of Christ and the ancient Church of Cyprus are distinguished by their faithfulness to doctrine, sacred canons, liturgical tradition, the monastic ideal, and the benevolent tradition of the ministerial ethos. They have a decisive contribution to the preservation of the idiosyncrasy of the Nation and to the creative meeting of the people of God with modern civilization. Through their struggles for the unity of Orthodoxy and through their participation in ecumenical dialogues, they contribute to the strengthening of the “culture of dialogue” and cultural progress”.

He then made a special reference to the late Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus,

with whom he had concelebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Phanar on the Sunday of Orthodoxy in 2020.

“Indeed, he was an ecclesiastical man of open horizons, a man of dialogue, and, at the same time, an unyielding defender of our ancestral traditions. May his memory be eternal.”

Subsequently, the Ecumenical Patriarch underlined the importance of unity in Orthodoxy, and on the occasion of the Archbishop’s peaceful visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, he congratulated him once again on his worthy election to the Apostolic Throne of the Church of Cyprus.

In his reply, Archbishop Georgios of Cyprus, after expressing his emotion from his visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, referred, among other things, to phenomena of our time, “such as globalization, ethnophyletism, the misuse of the spectacular achievements of technology”, against which, as he said, “we are called to promote the ecumenical perception of the world and the unity in Christ of humanity”.

“This misperception of things,” he continued, “is, in our opinion, also due to the sad situation we are witnessing today in Orthodoxy. Some felt strong and self-sufficient. And they wished to break the seamless robe of the Lord, by expelling from the diptychs others, their brethren. He who considers himself self-sufficient experiences an imaginary fullness, an imaginary omnipotence. This self-sufficiency, however, is naivety and delusion.” Elsewhere in his speech, he appealed “in the name of our common faith, to stop the schisms and the violation of the rules and institutions that govern the relations of the Autocephalous Churches. The criteria in Orthodoxy have never been quantitative. Let some consider the experience of others in the Christian life and the timing of their own entry into the Church. And let them stop moving “the heel against the Benefactor.” In a world of non-religious and non-Orthodox, but also with increasing agnosticism and atheism, we have a duty to keep our Orthodoxy united, because only in this way will we be able to better serve both our faithful and the whole of humanity.

The Archbishop of Cyprus referred to the timeless and inextricable ties of Cyprus with Constantinople.

Cyprus was linked by ties inextricably with the queen of cities and the spirit she represented. He took part in all the Ecumenical Councils. Cypriots also ascended to the Patriarchal throne. And earlier, in order to safeguard the Autocephaly of our Church, which had been recognized by the Third Ecumenical Council, against the aspirations of Antioch, we addressed Constantinople. And Emperor Zeno entrusted

Archbishop Anthemius with the symbols of the empire. These symbols, Your All-Holiness, we kept in the terrible centuries of slavery, and as if in a sacred litany we brought them today and here, from where we took them.

But also in the recent past, in the first-throne Church of Constantinople, we have addressed ourselves, many times, to solve many of our problems. In the middle of the last century, twice the Ecumenical Patriarchate assisted us with the mission of hierarchs in order to complete the Holy Synod of the Church of Cyprus and to accommodate the election of Archbishops and Metropolitans. And in 2006, under your presidency and at your invitation, Your All-Holiness, a great Synod was convened in Geneva, which honorably relieved the then Archbishop of Cyprus of his duties due to illness and helped to elect the new Primate of the Church.

It is for this reason that, although we have our Autocephaly from Ecumenical Councils, we are grateful to the Great Church of Christ as the Mother Church.

The Divine Liturgy was attended by the Bishops, Panteleimon of Vryoula, Nektarios of Kition, Vasileios of Konstantia, Evangelos of Sardis, Kyrillos of Rhodes, Hilarion of Winnipeg, Elpidophoros of America, Job of Pisidia, Bartholomew of Smyrna, Kyrillos of Hierapytna and Siteia, Vissarion of Spain and Portugal and Demetrios of France.

The commemoration of the victims of the recent deadly earthquakes in Southeast Turkey and Syria, as well as of the tragic train accident that occurred a few days ago in Greece, caused great emotion. In his speech, the Ecumenical Patriarch, addressing the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, Nikos Dendias, thanked him for the recent visit he made to the areas affected by the earthquakes in order to express the sympathy of the Greek people “to our earthquake-stricken brothers in the SE region of the country and to meet with his counterpart of Turkey. And we believe that such meetings and cooperation build unity and trust between the two neighbors and allied peoples.” Also, the Ecumenical Patriarch asked the Minister to convey “the condolences of the Mother Church to the Greek people for the great tragedy of Tempi. We have already mentioned the names of the victims and the earthquakes and the railway accident. We wish a quick recovery to the injured. May God send his mercy to the families of the victims and protect all people and all peoples from such calamity.”

The service was attended by the Metropolitans Elder Emmanuel of Chalcedon, Nektarios of Anthidon, Commissioner of the Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople, Theodoretos of Elaia, Irineos of Myriophytos and Peristasis, Chrysostomos of Myra, Theoleptos of Iconium, Adrianos of Halicarnassus, Kassianos of Arabissos and Paisios of Xanthoupolis, Archons Offikialioi of the Great Church of Christ, the

Consuls General of Greece, the United States and Ukraine in Constantinople, Georgia Sultanopoulou and Julie Eadeh, and Roman Nedilskyi, respectively, teachers and students of Greek-American schools, many faithful from Constantinople and pilgrims from abroad.

The procession of the Holy Icons followed, in the courtyard of the Patriarchate, during which the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Archbishop of Cyprus blessed the faithful with the icons they held.







































































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