

## **Ecumenical Patriarch: “When God distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity”**



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew referred to the need to promote cooperation and unity among Christians in his speech, who presided over the Divine Liturgy, which was held on the Monday of the Holy Spirit, June 5, 2023, at the Church of the Holy Trinity of the Community of Stavrodromi.

The Ecumenical Patriarch pointed out the following:

“The Holy Spirit came down on the assembled disciples and gave them the courage to spread and bear witness to the Christian truth as well as a missionary dynamism, which opened a whole new world to them. The martyrs and confessors of the (Christian) faith, thanks to the power of the Holy Spirit, preached Christianity, as did the Apostles, who often sacrificed their own lives in the name of Christ.

But what this great feast teaches us, among everything else is unity. And we have the example of ideal unity in the Trinity itself: three persons – one God. And we say that unity is the lesson we learn from this feast, because the Almighty God “when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity.”

But, because of human weakness, the teaching about the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of unity and communion, became, at one time in the history of Christianity, a cause of division and separation, when it was added to the Creed that the Holy Spirit proceeds “and from the Son.” Today, however, it seems that the Holy Spirit Himself is again calling divided Christians to unify.”

The Ecumenical Patriarch added: “For this reason, through the Holy Trinity, we must all pray together and ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, especially these that being, at the kind invitation of Patriarch Theodore II, the Patriarch of Alexandria, the official theological dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches held in Alexandria, in the historical seat of the Patriarchate of Alexandria. In our letter, which we sent to the two Co-Chairmen of the Joint Commission meeting, we wished the Holy Spirit to enlighten the appointed

members of both Churches in their important and God-pleasing sitting for the promotion of cooperation and unity between our two Churches.

How demanding and how common for all of us is the responsibility of the witness of the Christian life in today's troubled world! But our Christian witness would be far more effective if we Christians were united, according to the Lord's will, and if we did not scandalize the world with our divisions and rivalities.

In order to achieve this much-needed and desirable common witness of all of us divided Christians today, the sitting of this Commission which was set up to promote Theological Dialogue is commendable. In the last decades, more than ever, for centuries, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." (Romans 5:5). May the Lord bless all our joint efforts in order to make true His holy will "that all of us is united," and that the world may believe and that God may be glorified."

The Ecumenical Patriarch then warmly welcomed the Archbishop of Vilnius, Gintaras Grušas, President of the Council of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe (CCEE), who visited Constantinople at the invitation of the Ecumenical Patriarch. Addressing Archbishop Vilnius in English, he thanked him for his support, both moral and material. He also addressed the clergy of the Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Lithuania, in their effort to revive the historic presence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in their hospitable country.

"The ongoing unholy war in Ukraine for more than a year now makes the bond between our Churches in Lithuania even more important and pertinent. (Lithuania is) the country that prides itself on its heroic struggles in defense of freedom, especially against Soviet-Russian oppression. We hope that our productive cooperation will continue and will be equally effective in the Forum for Dialogue between the Orthodox Churches in Europe and the Council of Bishops' Conferences of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe (CCEE), of which you have recently been appointed as the new President. We congratulate you on your many years of service to the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference, both as Secretary General and as President, but also of your academic expertise in the field of Canon Law. We pray, together with our Orthodox Co-President Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain, and we hope that you will be able to work fruitfully in the Forum to give the good witness of our Christian faith and, therefore, solve contemporary and pressing social issues in Europe."

Concluding his speech, the Ecumenical Patriarch expressed his gratitude to the Metropolitan of Forty Churches, Head of the Great Community of Stavrodromi, "for

his exemplary zeal and his moving devotion”, as well as to Bishop Benjamin of Tralee “for his service” in this region. He also blessed the clergy who serve in the Church, congratulating in particular Mr. Nikodimo Saidam, to whom he gave on Sunday of Pentecost the Offikion of Sakellarios of the Archdiocese of Constantinople. He congratulated the Commission of the Community under the chairmanship of Mr. Georgios Papaliaris for their work, which, as he said, is an example for the entire Greek Diaspora, as well as the staff of the soup kitchen.



s of the

















































More Photos: Nikos Papachristou / Ecumenical Patriarchate

[vema.com.au](http://vema.com.au)