

Patriarchal Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Ascension of Christ in Volos, Greece



His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided over the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy which took place on Sunday, 25 June 2023 at the Church of the Ascension of Our Saviour Christ, in Volos, Greece.

Co-celebrating the divine liturgy which His All-Holiness were Their Eminences, Metropolitan Ignatios of Dimitrias and Almyros, Metropolitan Nikodemos of Kassandria, Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria, Metropolitan Ioustinos of Nea Krini and Kalamaria, Metropolitan Bartholomew of Smyrna, Metropolitan Ieronymos of Larissa and Tyrnavos, Metropolitan Bartholomew of Polyana and Kilkis, and Metropolitan Damaskinos of Aitolia and Akarnania.

The Holy Metropolis of Dimitrias

Also present for the divine liturgy and joined in prayer were Their Eminences, Metropolitan Theoklitos of Vresthena, Metropolitan Gregory of Peristeri and His Grace Bishop Epiphaniios of Olbia, the local authorities, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and a great number of faithful.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, His Eminence Metropolitan Ignatios of Dimitrias and Almyros addressed His All-Holiness, whom he characterised as “a visible sign of unity of our Church in service... a guardian and genuine exponent of the Orthodox Faith, the primary institution for preserving and strengthening the unity of the Orthodox Church, for the healing of schisms and the healing of their wounds...”. Metropolitan Ignatios remarked that “you carry with vigour the weight of the cross of the Greek Orthodox Community and with the strength of the Crucified and Risen Christ, and with the patience of Job, persevere day and night for the preservation and continuity of its presence.” He assured His All-Holiness that “our humble prayer for you to the Builder of the Church will accompany you continuously, may he strengthen you, grant you health and length of days, so that you may offer to Holy Orthodoxy the bright fruits of Your patriarchal labours, for the glory of God worshiped in Trinity!”.

This was followed by the address of the Proistamenos of the Church, Archimandrite Maximos Papaioannou, Chancellor of the Holy Metropolis, who referred to the history of the great Church of the Ascension and the varied work it carries out nowadays. In fact, he observed that the Patriarchal visit “becomes a real spring of divine blessing for the Church of the Ascension of Christ, in Volos” and asked the Primate of Orthodoxy to bless “this luxuriant vine, the members of the Parish of the Ascension and our Church”. Finally, in memory of the historic visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch, he offered him, on behalf of the parish, a silver blessing Cross, “as a testimony of our filial love and humble prayers”.

In response, His All-Holiness, made thanks for the honourable invitation to come to Volos, on the occasion of the Maritime Week, which is dedicated to his special homeland of Imbros. His All-Holiness observed that our region, a hundred years ago, proved to be a welcoming embrace, welcoming thousands of in need Asia Minor refugees, tragic victims of the Asia Minor Catastrophe. Taking occasion from today’s Epistle reading, he emphasised that “unpersecuted Christianity does not exist”, as evidenced by the life of the Lord and all the Saints, who through tribulations, were purified and became partakers in Christ’s faith and trust towards Him. Referring to the multitude of refugees who came to our country from Asia Minor, he pointed out that “they came from the great tribulation, bearing the marks of the Lord Jesus on their bodies. From these, Saints emerged, such as Arsenios the Cappadocian, Paisios the Hagiorite, Iakovos Tsalikis, Sophia of Kleisoura and others, who are a great consolation and support of the faithful and a great pride of our Orthodox Church. With respect to the analogies, the same applies to my dear compatriots the Imbrians, who, later on, suffered everything and were obliged to leave their native island of birth, in order to save their lives and their identity... but they remained faithful to Christ and their traditions”.

Concluding his address, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew expressed the just praise of the Mother Church to His Eminence Metropolitan Ignatios of Dimitrias, “for the multifaceted, pastoral, theological and social work, which, with great godly zeal and success, cares for his God-saving province”. The Ecumenical Patriarch then offered to Metropolitan Ignatios a Episcopal Staff, as a gift in return for the great support which is offered to the Phanar and our Patriarchate. And to the Proistamenos of the Church he offered a silver censer, for a lasting blessing.





























































