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The Ecumenical Patriarch at the Holy Church of Saint Kyriaki, Kontoskaliou



“Within this Church of Saints and Martyrs and non-visible Deaconesses, the modern Orthodox woman can also negate the individualistic spirit of our culture, which causes many sufferings and various alienations. But all of us also have a duty and a sacred debt to preserve the tradition of the Church, in fact the tradition of the Great and Holy Church of Christ, the Church of martyrdom and love”, emphasised His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, among other things, in his speech, during the Divine Liturgy, which he officiated over on Friday, July 7, for the feast of Saint Kyriaki the Great Martyr, in the Holy Church of Saint Kyriaki Kontoskaliou, Constantinople.

“Our Saints are the practice and application of the Gospel. Today, when we honour the memory of a martyr of our Holy Church, Saint Kyriaki from Melitini, the role of the Christian woman from the appearance of Christianity to the present day comes to our mind.

The Christian woman worked in many fields, beyond her home, and offered much. Already from the first centuries, women were those who not only attracted many of the national women to the Christian faith, but they also carried out their catechism. In other words, they performed catechetical and didactic work, missionary work.

And not only these things! Another very important area of activity of these women was visiting the sick, the grieving, the poor and the needy. Countless are the silent and unseen women who martyred at the altar of love, sacrifice, offering to their fellow human beings.

One of these women is Saint Kyriaki. Her Christian upbringing and conscience did not allow her to live only for herself. She devoted her whole life to the ministry of others, of brothers and sisters in faith, until martyrdom. In the case of our Saint, the words of the wise teacher of brother Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria, the late Metropolitan John of Pergamon, are fully applicable, that “women, more than anyone else, teach us to live as persons and not as individuals, that is, as beings of relationship, and not as autonomous and independent beings” (I. Zizioulas, Witness and ministry of the Orthodox woman in united Europe, p. 104)”.

His All-Holiness, in another part of his speech, congratulated all those who work and toil for the progress of the Kontoskaliou Community, led by His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria, “who continues with exemplary zeal his duties as Overseer of the Ypsomathia region”, the Parish Priest, as well as the members of the new Ecclesiastical Committee of the Community, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Stylianos Gyulgioun, “to whom we wish a fruitful ministry and the support from above in the multi-dimensional work they have undertaken, in loving and always harmonious cooperation with Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria”. You can read His All-Holiness’ entire speech here in the Greek Language.

Afterwards, The Ecumenical Patriarch warmly welcomed all the pilgrims, from Greece and other countries.

“Welcome all of you to the Queen of Cities, where for centuries now Resurrection and hope and optimism and joy in Christ are preached, at all times and unceasingly, even on days of crucifixion and sufferings, even on Great and Holy Friday, which sometimes here lasts more than twenty-four hours...



We welcome you with feelings of great love, that deep love with which the heart of the Mother Church is always filled for her children everywhere and in all places. And the Ecumenical Patriarchate rejoices and is proud, because it always finds a complete response in the hearts of its Christians, who do not miss an opportunity to display their reverence, devotion, their love and gratitude towards the loving Mother and Caregiver of our Genus, the Holy Great Church of Christ.

Your present pilgrimage is a moving manifestation of your feelings. When you come here we believe that you receive joy and strength and blessing, but also give strength and spiritual joy to us, your spiritual father and even pride and boasting in the Lord for your piety and persistence in the fine traditions of our Nation. Therefore, Welcome to you all!".

With cordiality and particularly warm words, His All-Holiness welcomed "to the City of cities, the city of the Mighty and Invincible General and the Akathist Hymn, the city of God's Wisdom", His Eminence Metropolitan Nektarios of Kition, Hierarch of the Church of Cyprus, who is visiting the headquarters of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with a large group of pilgrims.

"Most venerable brother, In your person we greet the entire Holy Church of Cyprus and we embrace its Primate, the much-loved His Beatitude Archbishop Georgios of Nea Justiniana and all Cyprus, whose recent peaceful visit here filled us with spiritual joy and rejoicing, and its memory always remains vivid and sweet within

us. Because our two Churches are connected by holy and indestructible bonds, bonds of common faith and common struggles for the Church, and bonds of love, which, according to the Apostle Paul, “never fails”. And today our Churches are fighting the good fight to preserve the authenticity of correct and healthy ecclesiology, which is cast away and threatened in various ways on the altar of political pursuits and geostrategic planning, even if this spiritual struggle of ours is rough and difficult, as long as “our struggle is not against blood and flesh”.



Earlier, His All-Holiness was addressed by His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria, while Ms. Aiki Gyulgioun-Konstantinidi, Secretary of the new Supervisory Committee of the Community, read the report of its activities.

During the Divine Liturgy, the Divine Word was preached by Patriarchal Deacon Ieronymos Sotirelis.

At noon of the same day, the Ecumenical Patriarch went to the Holy Monastery of Zoodochos Pigis (“Life-giving Spring” in Baloukli and performed a Trisagion Memorial Service at the Tomb of the late predecessor Patriarch Athenagoras, on the occasion of the 51st anniversary of his falling asleep in the Lord on Thursday, 6 July.

























Photographs: Nikos Papachristou / Ecumenical Patriarchate

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