

## **“Our societies are judged by what they do for the protection, progress, life and future of children”**



On Sunday 9 July 2023, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew officiated during the Divine Liturgy at the Patriarchal and Stavropegial Monastery of the Transfiguration of Our Lord on Prote Island (of the Princes' Islands). At the facilities of the Monastery, at the top of the hill of the island, the children's camp of the Patriarchate operate every summer, where children of the Omogenia, and not only these, are accommodated and welcomed.

After the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew performed an Agiasmos sanctification service on the occasion of the start of the new Summer Camp period, blessing the group of children and their companions, from the Romanian Community this time, who are hosted at the camp facility called "Paidopolis" during these days, as well as those responsible for its operation. Then His All-Holiness performed a Trisagion memorial service for the repose of the soul of the Great Benefactor of the Nation, Mr. Simeon Siniosoglou, in front of his grave, which is located in the courtyard of the Monastery.

Immediately after this, in the courtyard of the Monastery, the President of the Board of Directors of the "Paidopolis" Association, Ms. Maria Apostolidou, and its Director, Mr. Diamantis Komvopoulos, welcomed His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and all those present with warm speeches and referred to the renovation and upgrading projects carried out at the summer camp facilities, with the care and support of the Patriarchate and with the assistance of ecclesiastical Communities of Constantinople, but also of many named and likewise anonymous donors. Afterwards, the head chaperone of the group of youth from Romania expressed her warm thanks to His All-Holiness for the hospitality, and in light of this they all sang and danced Greek traditional dances in honour of the Patriarch.

In his speech, His All-Holiness warmly welcomed the children and their companions,

congratulating them on the performance they prepared and presented. Addressing in particular the group's chaperones, he congratulated them for the children's knowledge of Greek and for preserving our Orthodox traditions.

"The God who loves mankind has made us worthy to celebrate again this year the opening of the summer camps of the island of Prote for the year 2023, with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy is the core of the life of the Church, the source of our faith, love and hope. It embodies what Christ gives us and reveals our eternal destiny.

We are very happy to welcome the group of children from the Romanian Community with their two accompanying chaperones.

Our dear children, we are sure that you will enjoy many carefree days of holidays in our historic Children's Village, which is housed in the building of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery of Our Saviour on Prote Island. You will enjoy the sun and the sea, games, and the beautiful nature. The camp directors and your chaperones will make sure everything runs smoothly, so that you may discover many interesting things, the importance of solidarity, team spirit and volunteering, the power of prayer, which beautifies our lives and brings out of us creativity, fellowship and a spirit of giving to our fellow human being.

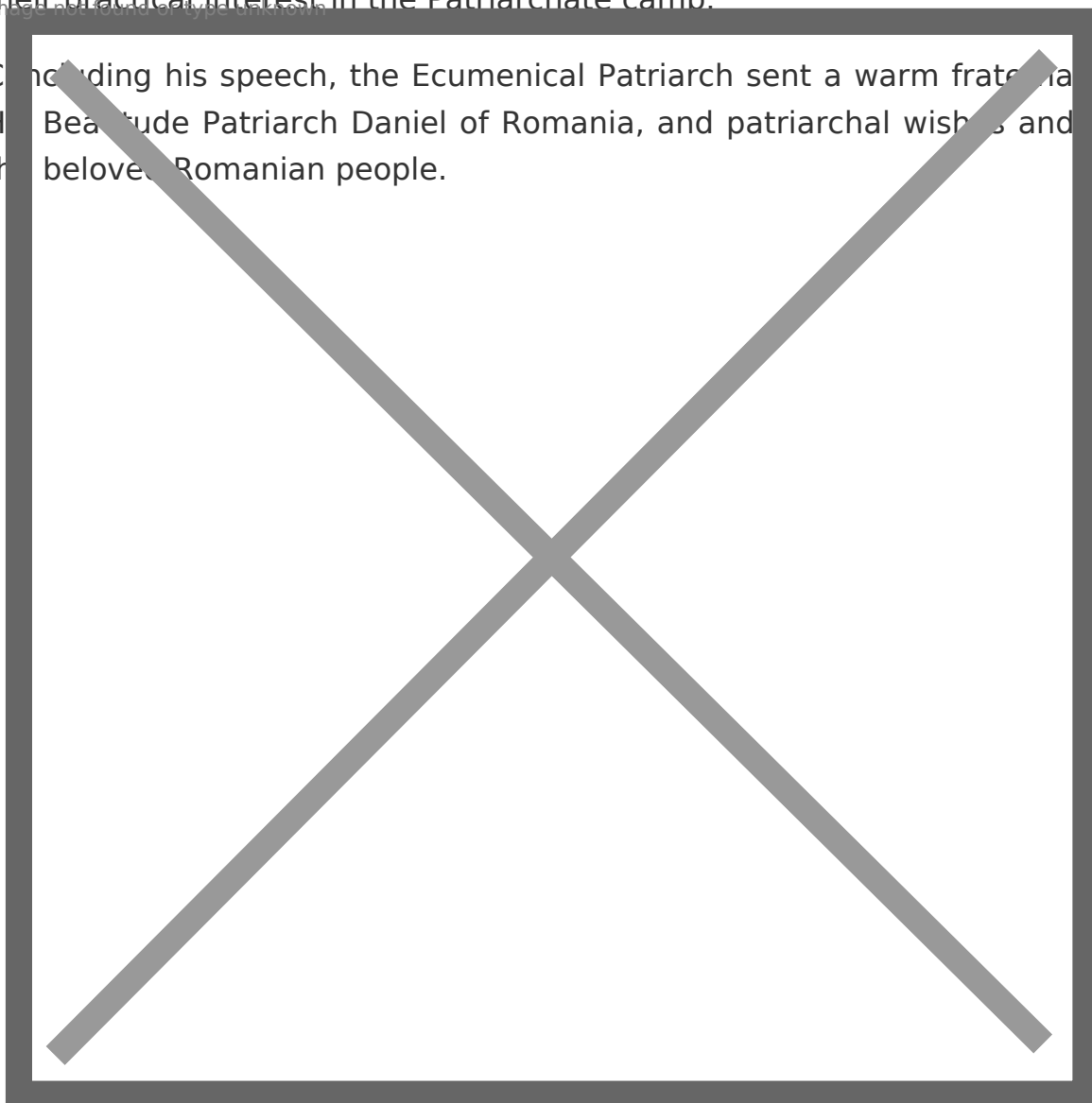
It is very important, in this beautiful phase of your life, childhood and adolescence, to get to know real things, which will accompany you throughout your life, give meaning and orientation to your pursuits and quests. You will hear and experience many truths here, away from the noise of the world. We are sure that you will make and keep in your hearts many beautiful memories.

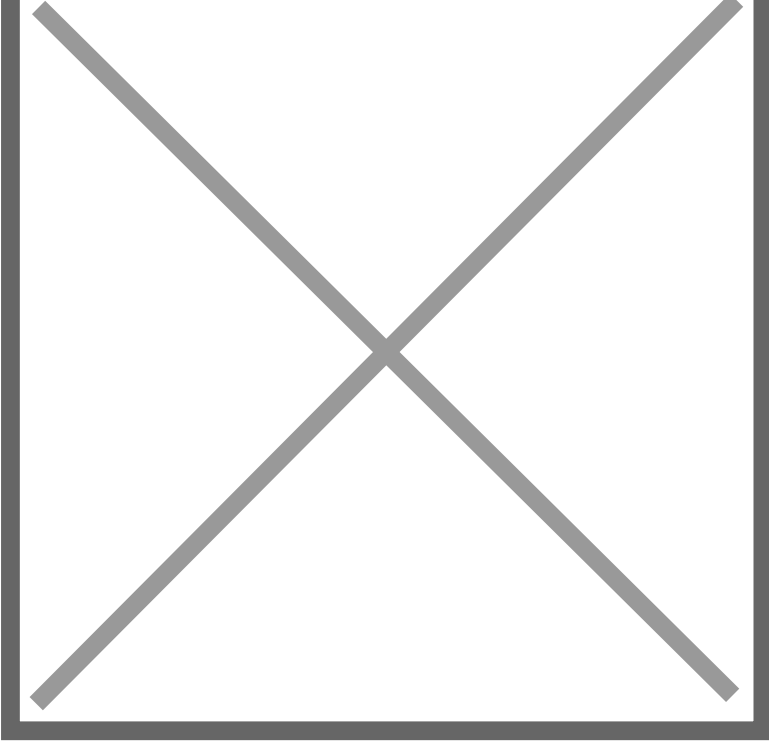
We often repeat that our societies are judged by how they see and understand childhood, by what they do for the protection, progress, life and future of children. In our Church, the protection of childhood and children is a command of Christ himself, who called all the adults to become like children, because to them, the children, belongs the Kingdom of Heaven. (see Matt. 19: 13-15 and Luke.18: 15-17)".

Afterwards, His All-Holiness expressed his gratification to the Director of the Camp for the effective organisation of "Paidopolis", as well as to the Board of Directors of the "Paidopolis" Association "for their patriotic and God-loving work and for their invaluable contribution to our children". The Patriarch also expressed special thanks to Mr. Dragos Gavriil Zisopoulos, President of the Union of Greeks in Romania and member of the country's Parliament, for his assistance in

orchestrating the presence of children from Romania at "Paidopolis", for the second time, as well as to Mr. Andreas Andreou and Mr. Solon Charalambous for their practical interest in the Patriarchate camp.

Concluding his speech, the Ecumenical Patriarch sent a warm fraternal embrace to His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania, and patriarchal wishes and blessings to the beloved Romanian people.





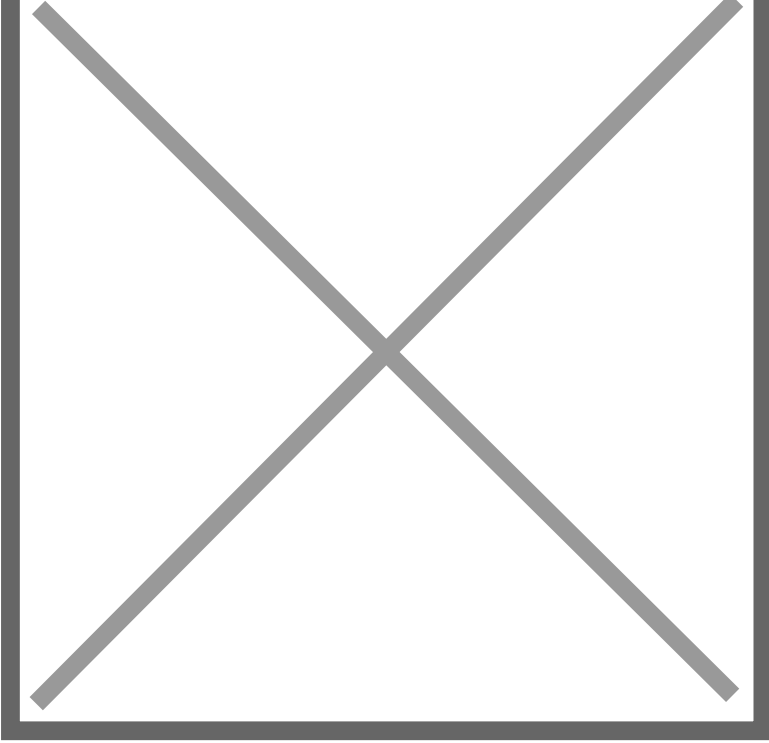






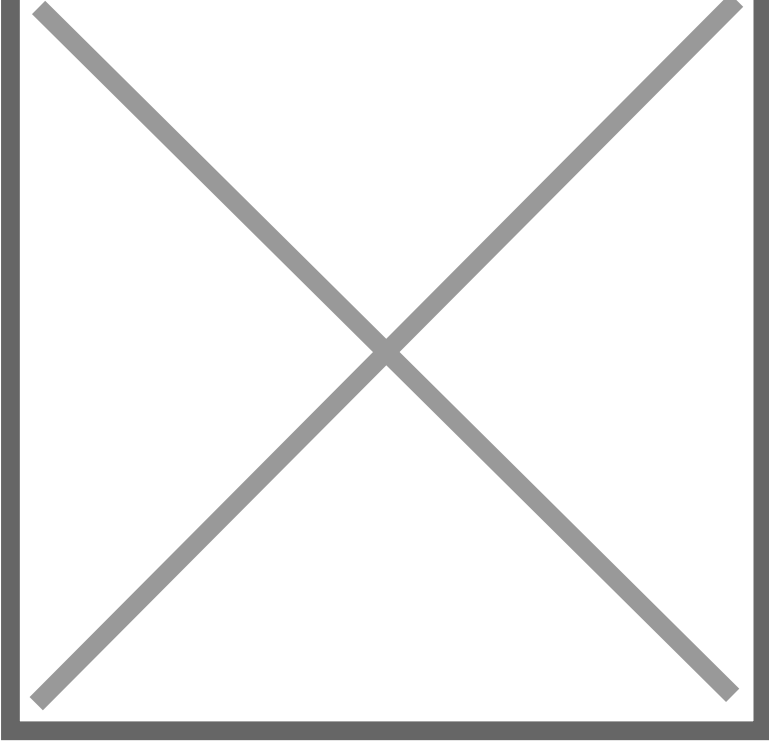








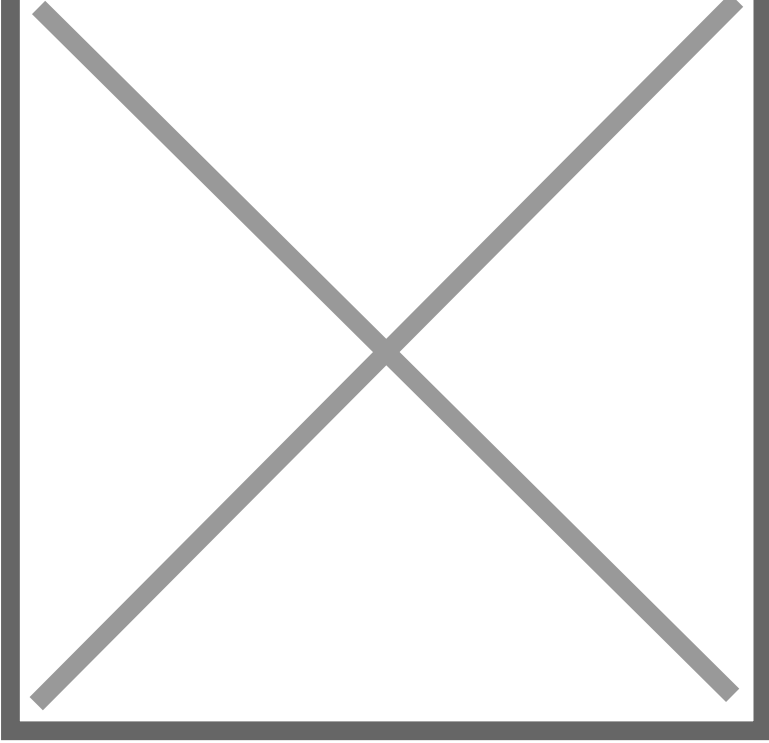














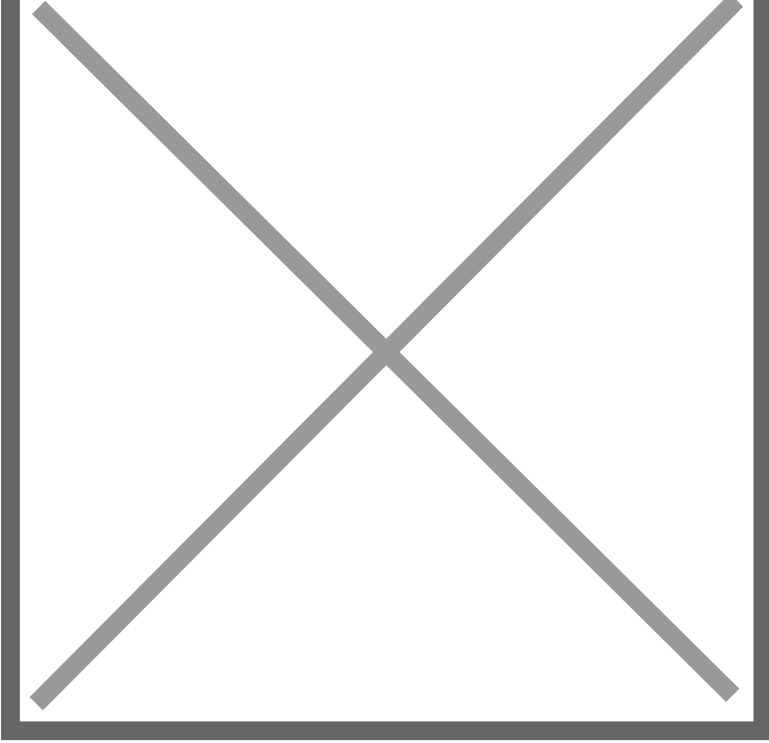


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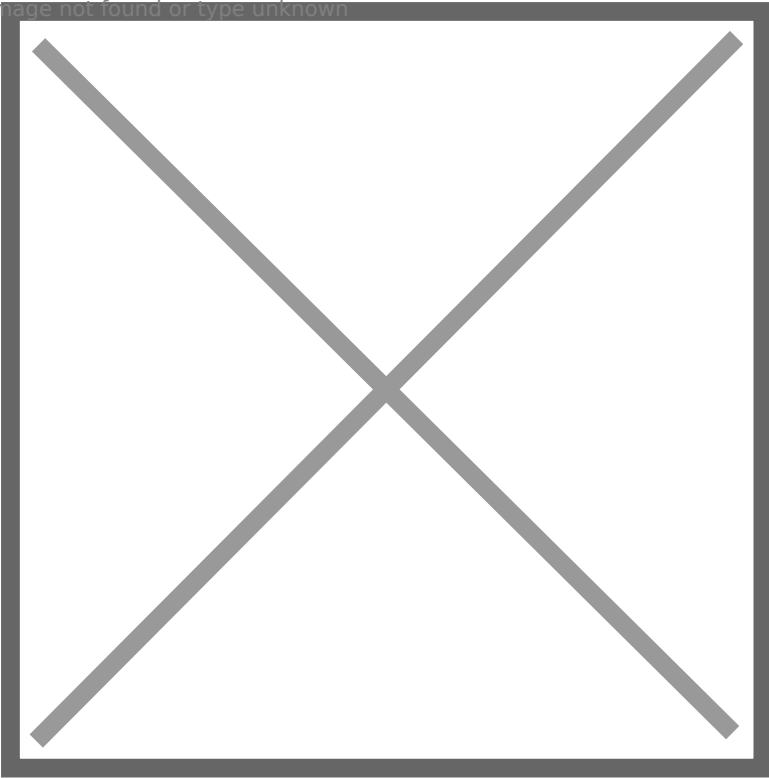
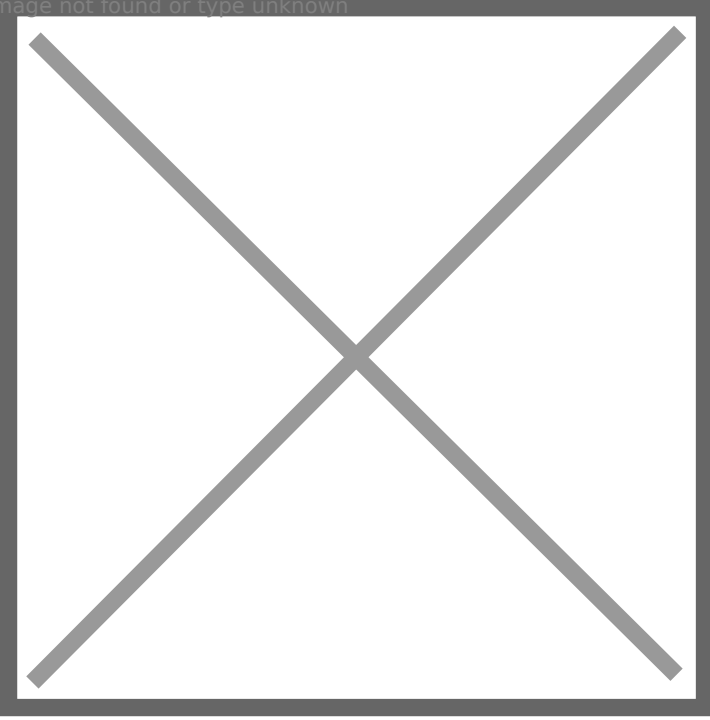


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