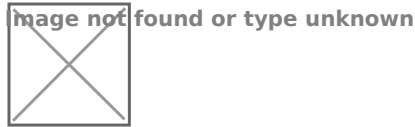


Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: “We love the place that God gave us and the sacrifices of our ancestors”



“We love the place that God gave us and the sacrifices of our ancestors and we must honourably do what is necessary for the decency, stability, security, progress, cultural growth, honour, glory and splendour of our country”.

These comments were emphasised, among others, by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, in his response to the mayor of Pyrgos, Mr. Panagiotis Antonakopoulos, during the ceremony which declared His All-Holiness an honorary citizen, and took place in the town hall.

As he added, “the honourable Mayor and the other municipal leaders of the Elis capital wishing to count the Ecumenical Patriarch among the citizens of their city, they decided to make him an honorary citizen of Pyrgos. And how can we deny this honour, since Pyrgos honours us with the illustrious historical past of the ancient city of Letrinoi, Pyrgos having seven hills, just as the Queen of Cities, Constantinople, has seven hills”.

The Ecumenical Patriarch continued saying “Then how can we not respond to your noble decision, which we are sure is a decision of the heart, not only because the dear Mayor is a cardiologist, but because we see this reflected in the eyes of all the honourable members of the municipal council”.

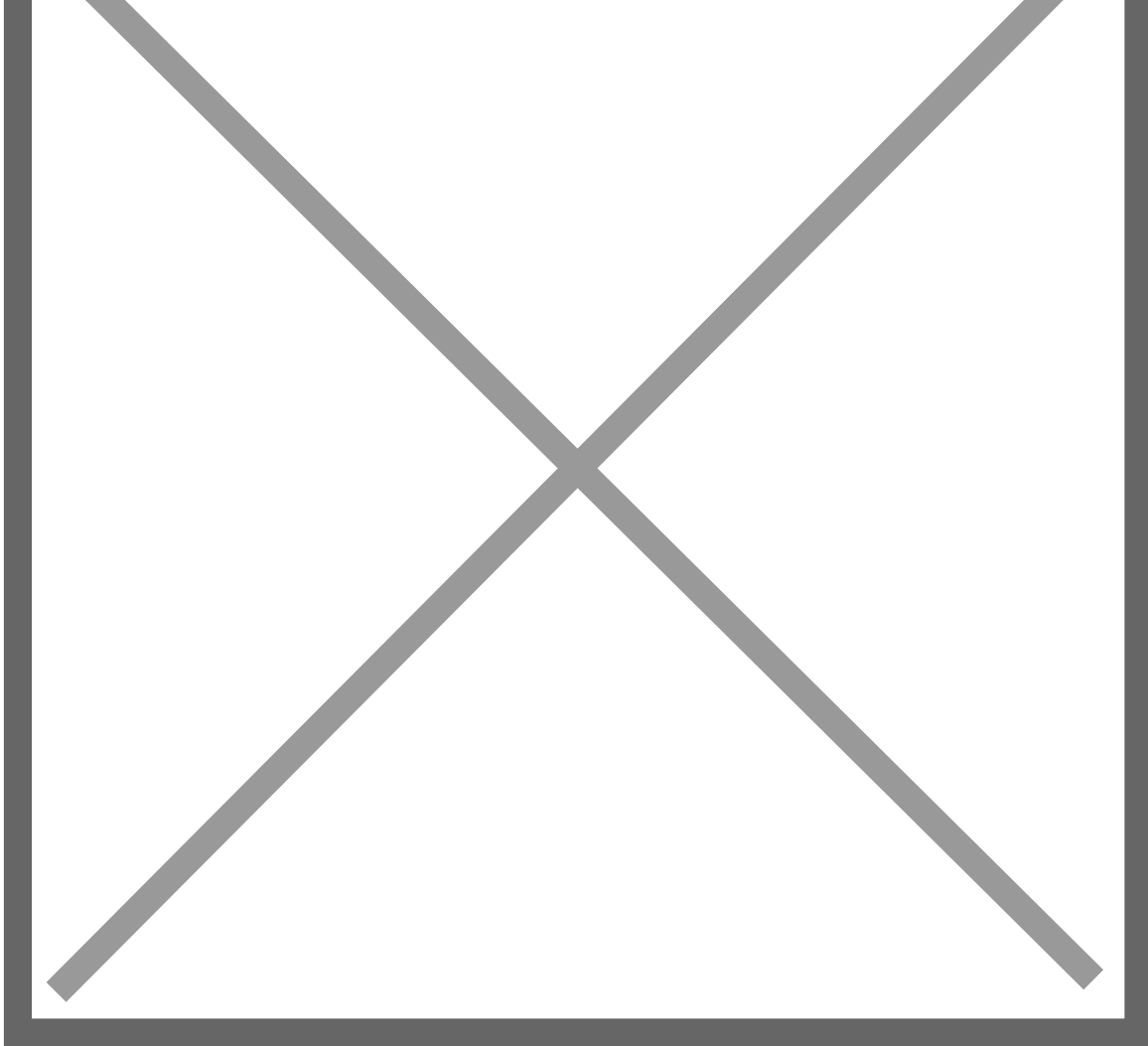
In Concluding, the Ecumenical Patriarch said: “We thank you from the bottom of our hearts, Mayor, President, Vice-Presidents and other honourable and dear members of the municipal council and we grant all of you, and all the citizens and other residents of Pyrgos a warm patriarchal blessing, may God protect all of you, the city of Pyrgos and all of Elis”.

His All-Holiness was declared an Honorary Citizen of the Municipality of Pyrgos together with the President of the Hellenic Republic, Ms. Katerina Sakellaropoulou. As the President pointed out during her reply to the mayor, Mr. Panagiotis Antonakopoulos, referring to the resistive action of the professor of Public Finance

and, as she said, special personality of Pyrgos Mr. Sakis Karagiorgas, “democracy is not a given, but it is a continuous claim, and we all owe honour to those who, in difficult times, fought so that we can enjoy its benefits today”.

Referring to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, President Sakellaropoulou underlined that “it is a great honour which you bestow on me today, to jointly declare me an honorary citizen of your municipality with a religious leader of international scope and influence, like His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who expresses the natural commitment of a common





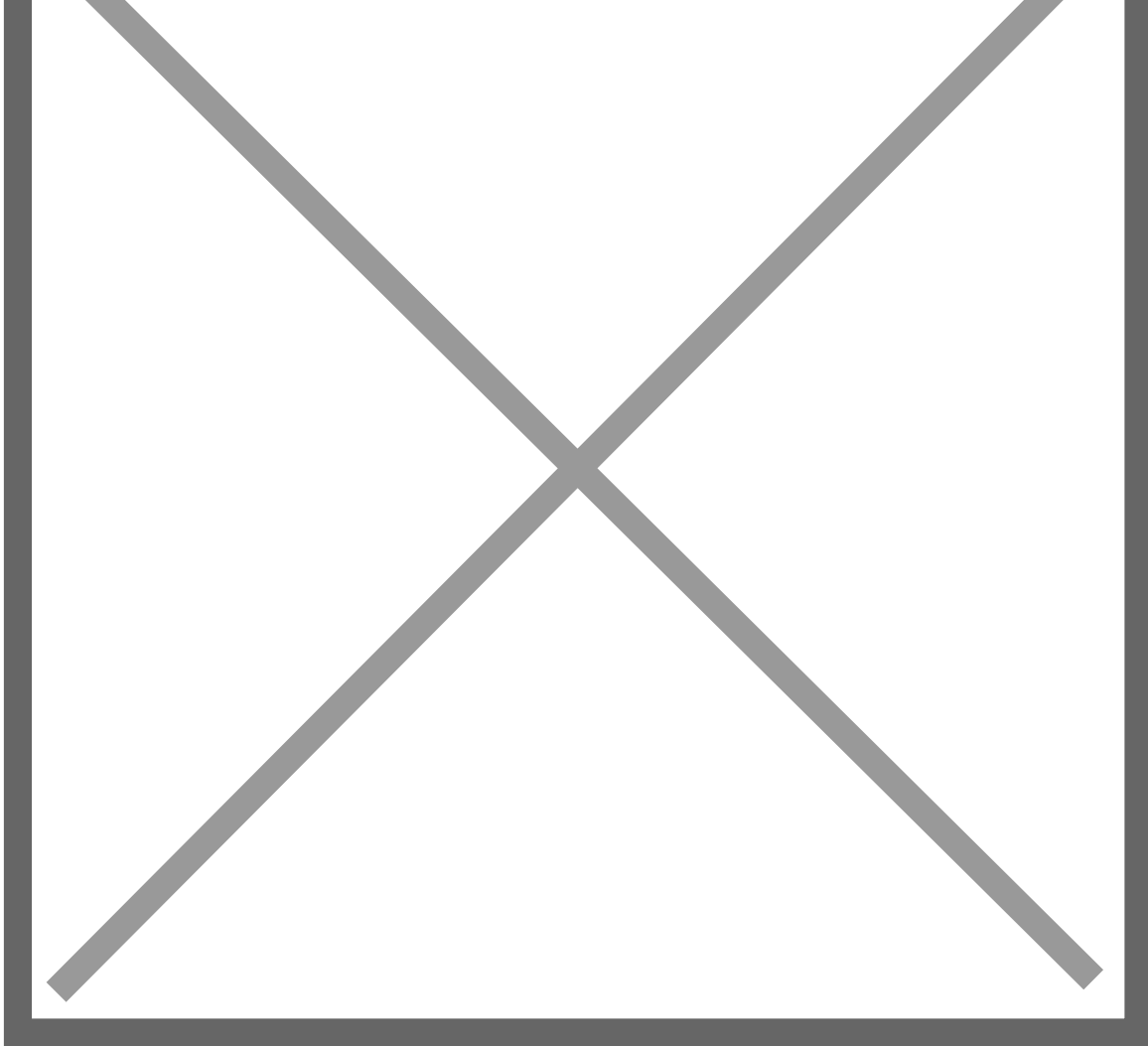
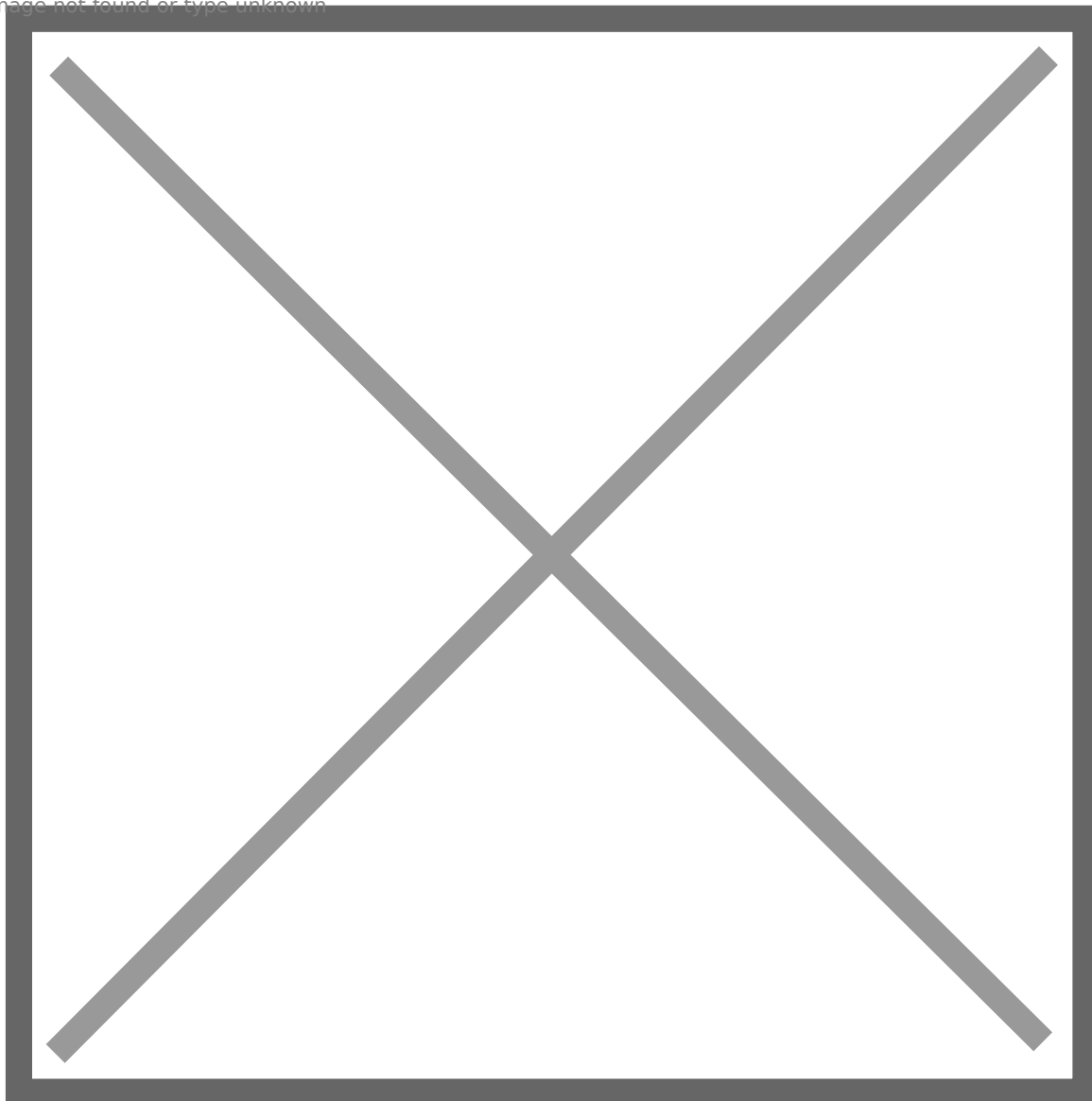


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