

13/11/2023

“Our Ecumenical Patriarchate is not in danger, because God was, is and will be its protector”



On Saturday, 11 November 2023, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, performed the blessing and opening of the renovated Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos, Balinos, and its Sacred Spring, which is dedicated to the Holy Great Martyr Minas celebrated on that day, and then following this, His All-Holiness officiated at the Divine Liturgy.

Present also in prayer were Their Eminences, Elder Metropolitan Apostolos of Derkoi, Metropolitan Theoliptos of Iconium, Metropolitan Job of Pisidia and Metropolitan Joachim of Bursa, as well as Archons of the Great Church of Christ, Mr. Byron Nikolaidis, who made a decisive contribution to the completion of the renovation projects, representatives of expatriate associations from abroad and leaders of the Greek Community of Constantinople, as well as believers from Constantinople and pilgrims from abroad.

Deacon Father Oikoumenios Amanatidis, Codifier of the Holy and Sacred Synod,

delivered the holy sermon.

In His All-Holiness' address after the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, he emphasised that the construction, sound preservation and handing down to the coming generations of the holy Churches of our faith and the holy institutions of our pious Nation is "a duty of the utmost importance, which is incumbent on all of us". For this reason, as he said, with particular willingness and pleasure he accepted the invitation to bless the opening of the Church of the Virgin Mary, after the completion of the renovation work.



"This laudable initiative is considered as a decision of persistence in the homeland, remaining here in order to continue the life of the Balinos Community, within the embrace of the whole omogenia of Constantinople, which will also continue its life and history under the wings of the Great and Holy Mother Church of Christ.

Dear children in the Lord, reject and resist the occasional rumours heard from various directions, out of recklessness or, at best, connected with various expedients, about imminent and impending dangers for the continuation of our presence here. Our Ecumenical Patriarchate is not in danger from anything and anyone, because God has always been and is today and will continue to be its protector until the end of the ages of ages! Have confidence in your Mother Church and her discernment, and follow her commands in everything!"

Then the Patriarch emphasized:

“The Holy Great Church of Christ has always been a protector of progress, of illumination, both in good times and in bad times. And yet, there were and are still people “moving their heel against the benefactor”, who accuse the Church of being medieval and obscurantist. But our Church is neither one nor the other. The Phanar, the centre of Orthodoxy, is full of light – the never-fading light of the Resurrection, the gladsome light of Him Who dispelled all darkness and said with divine self-knowledge: “I am the light of the world; he who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”



Therefore, In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (cf. Matt. 5:16). This is exactly how the good works shine before us today here in the Balinos Community and indeed our heavenly Father is glorified, and the Mother Church is humbled, and we become an example through which to imitate the good works of our forefathers and brothers and sisters and to hold high what they left behind and bequeathed to us.

The sacred duty of continuing the work of our fathers' rests today on all their descendants and in fulfillment of it you all hastened to help and contribute to the repair, maintenance and smooth operation of this sacred respect of our Nation. The number of parishioners in Balinos may be small, minimal, but we Greek Orthodox,

and indeed in this City of Constantinople, have never evaluated or counted our own in numbers, because history teaches us that the good is not found in the many, but much is found in the good and that “out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham” (Matthew 3:9).

His All-Holiness expressed his Patriarchal satisfaction towards His Grace Bishop Adrianos of Halicarnassus, Hierarchical Head of the Phanar – Golden Horn District, and his coworkers for their initiative to proceed with the renovation works of the Church, both to honour the memory of its founders and to give impetus and reinforcement to the life of this Community. “disappointment, despair and pessimism are unique to those of little faith, whom the Lord rebukes and asks them, like Peter in the sea: “Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?”, said the Patriarch and added:

“And what did not take place during the time since this Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos was founded: how many dramatic changes were experienced by all the peoples and especially the Country in which we live. How many storms didn’t the Church and the Omogenia face! There have been cases in which “We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.”. And yet we are still here today and we all celebrate together, with the joy of the resurrection in our hearts and with hope for tomorrow, we celebrate a milestone in the life of our beloved Community. We are celebrating the literal resurrection of the Church of Panagia of Balinos, brighter than ever.”



His All-Holiness then praised Mr. Byron Nicolaidis for all that he offered to this Church, but also to the omogenia in general. “Beloved, Mr. Nicolaidis, we congratulate you and your family who prayed with us today and we grant you the praise and satisfaction of the Mother Church.” He also particularly congratulated the Ecclesiastical Committee and its President, Mr. Simeon Soltaridis, who took the initiative to collect the required amount of money to carry out the renovation.

The Patriarch was addressed with warm words by His Grace Bishop Adrianos of Halicarnassus and the President of the Ecclesiastical Committee, who expressed their warm thanks to him for the encouragement and support he gave them, in order to carry out the restoration and salvage works of the Church, and also thanked all the donors for their blessed contributions.

Immediately after, His All-Holiness visited the adjacent building of the Philoptochos Association and was informed about its upcoming renovation works.





















Photographs: Nikos Papachristou / Ecumenical Patriarchate

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