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Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: “The Great Church is and remains Great always in its humility”



His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, on the occasion of the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the temple, on Tuesday, 21 November 2023, presided over the Divine Liturgy at the celebrating Cathedral Church of the Community of Stavrodromi.

His Eminence Elder Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon, His Eminence Elder Metropolitan Demetrios of Princes' Islands, His Eminence Metropolitan Eirinaios of Myriophytos and Peristasis, His Eminence Metropolitan Theoleptos of Iconium, His Eminence Metropolitan Theoktistos of Fokida, His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Selyvria, His Eminence Metropolitan Andreas of Forty Churches, and His Eminence Metropolitan Bartholomew of Poliana and Kilkis concelebrated the Divine Liturgy along with the Ecumenical Patriarch.

The Divine Word was proclaimed by Archimandrite Nathaniel, Abbot of the Holy

Monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos.

Their Eminences, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myra, Metropolitan Stefanos of Kallioupolis and Madytos, Their Graces, Bishop Benjamin of Tralee, Bishop Iakovos of Claudioupolis and Bishop Paisios of Xanthoupolis, clergymen, monks and nuns, Archons of the Ecumenical Throne, Ambassador Konstantinos Koutras, Consul General of Greece in Constantinople, Christos Karagiannis, Vice-Rector of the University of Athens, and Emmanouil Karageorgoudis, new Dean of the Theological School of the same University, Professors, and students of the Zografeion Lyceum lead by its Director, Mr. Ioannis Demirtzoglou, as well as a group of old graduates of this historic educational institution of the Diaspora, and many believers from Constantinople and pilgrims from abroad attended the Divine Liturgy

During the Divine Liturgy, the Ecumenical Patriarch ordained the subdeacon Georgios Doxastakis, from Crete to the rank of Deacon, to whom he gave the name Anatolios.

In his speech, before the ordination of the new clergyman, who joined the Patriarchal Court, the Ecumenical Patriarch addressed him with paternal advice and exhortations.

“Today, when the Virgin Mary enters the temple, you also enter into the Holy of Holies of the Church and become a member of the clergy of the Patriarchal Court of the Phanar.



You enter the mystery of the Great Church, which cannot be described but only experienced. This mystery, which they experienced, and in which they glorified, generation after generations, in which giants of the Mother Church and Great Theologians, Gregory's and Chrysostom's, and Photios' and Gennadios' emerged, honouring and glorifying the heavenly name of the Builder of the Church.

You are welcomed by the Abbot of the great Monastery of Orthodoxy, our Ecumenical Patriarchate, and you are embraced by your brother priests and deacons, who preceded you and are already experiencing this living mystery. Together you will envision the future of the Great Church, you will study and be inspired by its long and adventurous history, its glory and martyrdom, its testimony and its ministry for centuries, many near and far, you will be exemplified by the heroic struggles of those before us and you will also write, ascending the ranks of your priestly ministry, a page of glory for our Church. Alas!, if you do not have such noble ambitions and visions and pursuits for the future of the Church! And at the same time, the readiness to accept, and in their prayers, humiliations and sufferings and persecutions. Our Church also has many examples of glory and dishonor, praise and slander. So you must be ready for everything!

You come from Great Island of Crete, whose local Church is a precious and beloved climbing vine of the great shade-providing tree of the Great Church. And so you have a heroic and valiant mind and spiritual valiance. Always remain heroic and

upright spiritually, dignified and wholesome, genuine and authentic, far from hypocrisy and pseudo-piety. Unfortunately, even today we have phenomena of such false prophets, who go about under heaven deceiving others. The Lord had predicted and condemned the appearance of all these misguided people, who have piety as their goal, behaving disrespectfully and exposing themselves and the Church”.

Referring to the reasons why he chose the name Anatolios for the new clergyman, the Patriarch said:

“I have named you Anatolios, in honour and memory of a great predecessor of ours, who participated in the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus and deservedly presided twenty years later at the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon. He was born in Alexandria where he was educated and distinguished from a young age for “his priestly prudence and the sharpest and safest of intellect”. It was once written about him that he was a “patriarch who rose the patriarchal staff and the pen, in praise of God”.



It is known that the Council of Chalcedon, in addition to its doctrinal terms, also issued 30 canons for ecclesiastical order and gave honours and privileges of ministry and responsibility to the Throne of Constantinople, which caused the envy of the West at the time, and later to this day and of our Eastern counterparts. Anatolios was a strong personality, who put his indelible stamp on the general

affairs of the then undivided Church, and indeed on those of our Church of Constantinople.

Elsewhere in his speech, the Ecumenical Patriarch stressed:

Be a bright beacon for navigators and not a shadow, not a darkness. Pour out the light of Christ around you, always with modesty and humility, with a loving disposition and a flattened heart. Without becoming a prisoner or predator of the axioms, which when they come are certainly welcome, they are not those that give value and contentment to man, but conversely man to them.

“Well, my dear child, coming from the flagship of the Patriarchate in the Mediterranean, from the fair and glorious Crete, you have now anchored in the eternal Bosphorus, “in the bays and the Bosphorus” of Kostis Palamas. And if you will not drink all of the Bosphorus, take care and fight, and fight with the others, “as the sacred olkas (round ship) passes unscathed through the The Symplegades and the Cyanean Rocks”. May you become a bright beacon for seafarers and not a shadow, nor like Erebus. May the light of Christ spread around you, always with modesty and humility, with a loving disposition and a wide and open heart. Without becoming captive or a hunter of office and position, which when they come are of course welcome, but they are not the ones that give value and content to human kind, but conversely human kind gives to them. Let us never forget that the Great Church is and remains Great always in its humility.



After the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was addressed by His Eminence Metropolitan Andreas of Forty Churches, Archiepiscopal Vicar of the Community of Stavrodromi, and Mr. Georgios Papaliaris, Chairman of the Ephorate Committee. In his response, the Ecumenical Patriarch congratulated all the members of the Community for their multidimensional work.

A reception was then held at which the new deacon, Fr. Anatolios made his ordination speech, expressing his infinite gratitude to the Ecumenical Patriarch for joining the clergy of the Patriarchal Court.





Photos: Nikos Papachristou / Ecumenical Patriarchate

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