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Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: “The convergence of our Churches contributes to dialogue and peace”



His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided over the Great Vespers at the Patriarchal Church on Wednesday, 29 November 2023, to commemorate the Apostle Andrew the First-Called, the Founder of the Church of Constantinople.

Afterwards, a reception was hosted at the Cultural Centre of the Greek Diaspora, located at the historic School of Galata. As part of this event, the renowned musical duo “Duo Violins,” comprising Greek violinists Dimitrios Isaris and Georgios Gaitanos, performed a captivating concert.

The distinguished gathering included the Official Delegation of the Church of Rome, esteemed Hierarchs of the Throne and other Churches, representatives from Constantinople’s Christian Communities, as well as notable guests from various parts of the world. Among those present were Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Education of Greece, Mr. Georgios Kotsiras and Mr. Zetas Makris, along with

members of the Diplomatic Corps and expatriates.

During his homily, the Ecumenical Patriarch extended a warm welcome to all attendees and particularly honoured the official Delegation from the Church of Rome:

“We extend a gracious welcome to the esteemed delegation from the sister Church of Rome, led by Cardinal Kurt Koch. The presence of such Delegations during the Thronal Feast symbolises and embodies the spirit of ecumenism that has prevailed in our relations since the 1960s, marking a significant chapter in our journey towards unity in the Divine Eucharist. Our steps toward this blessed goal remain steadfast, driven by a mutual trust and an unwavering determination to fulfill our divine calling.

We are confident that the convergence of our Churches contributes to the dialogue and peace at large. Christianity and the religious traditions hold principles not only for nurturing inner spiritual peace but also for striving to establish peace in human relationships and society. It is contrary to the essence and mission of a representative of the Church or religion to promote violence in the name of God.”

Moreover, the Ecumenical Patriarch emphasised the sanctity of humanity within Christian faith, urging its practical application in historical circumstances. He highlighted the imperative for the Church to be attuned to human needs, overcome challenges, and seek social progress while being mindful of ecological conservation. He drew from the parable of the Good Samaritan as a beacon for being compassionate neighbours to those in need.

The Ecumenical Patriarch stressed the significance of science as a powerful force in modern times, revolutionising lives, solving previous insurmountable problems, fostering progress, and promising a brighter future.

In conclusion, he expressed gratitude to His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain for arranging the attendance of a group of young people from his province and extended congratulations to the two Greek artists for their exceptional concert performance.









Photos: Nikos Papachristou / Ecumenical Patriarchate

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