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Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: “We persist in the struggle, and we do not lower the flag”



On Saturday, 13 January 2024, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew extended a warm welcome to the chanters of Constantinople, marking the New Year, and joined them for a traditional meal held in their honour at the Patriarchate.

Following his welcome, In his speech, the Ecumenical Patriarch, noted, among other things, that he was aware that today, the ministry of the chanter is both difficult and lonely.

“Many times I reflect on those humble chanters who sing tirelessly and honourably for the sanctuaries of the Nation in the churches of Constantinople, without assistance, without any supporters, relying solely on the strength provided by the Lord. Much like us, they contribute to the sanctuaries of the Nation, upholding the legacy bequeathed to us by our holy fathers. The lesson is that we persist in the struggle. We do not lower the flag. We are “few and innumerable” and determined, and yet “Never betraying what is right” because this is our life, this is our blessed

characteristic. Nothing would bring us greater joy than the honourable and optimistic service of those we hold in high regard as holy and sacred. Those who are worth sacrificing our 'tranquility' and 'quietness,' because they are the truly important people."

The Ecumenical Patriarch went on to say that "the difficulty in carrying out any task should never serve as an excuse for anyone to exert less effort. The chanters, even if chanting on their own, have a sacred obligation to strictly observe the order and that which has been handed down since ancient times. A worthy chanter is not the one who praises God before a large congregation that admires him. Worthy is the one who chants the sacred hymns with awe and dignity, even in an empty church, as if chanting in a full church."



His All-Holiness added, "On the other hand, especially you, the workers of the analogion, know better than anyone else that the music of our forefathers is not only a cultural asset. It is a tool of deification. It lifts us up from the earthly to the heavenly. You know that our music is an indispensable component of the patriarchal institution. It contributes over time to the reputation and worldwide recognition of the Mother Church. After all, Constantinople, the Queen of Cities, will always be the centre of the music of our Orthodox Nation."

At another point in his speech, the Patriarch referred to the Association of the Musicians of Peran.

“The mode of expression and coordination of our chanters has been for the last seventy years or so the Association of Musicians of Peran – we heard, just a short time ago, the beautiful address of its new Vice-President and Archon Hymnodos, the Honourable and dear to all, Mr. Georgios Sarris. There our chanters gather or should gather, to improve their God-given talent, to strengthen their social relationships, to promote the music of our fathers and the Mother Church. The association’s choir is a means of disseminating our music and culture and a lever for enriching the knowledge of our musically trained associates. Those who currently make up the choir, themselves once attended the ecclesiastical music courses offered by the Association and of whom we have great need for their continuation into the future”.



Previously, the Ecumenical Patriarch was addressed by the Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the Association of Musicians of Peran, Archon Hymnodos of the Great Church of Christ, Mr. Georgios Sarris. The latter assured the Patriarch of the will and determinacy of all the chanters to work with all their strength “to maintain our Association at a worthwhile level and continue to uphold the chanting tradition of Constantinople in the footsteps of our esteemed predecessors, the great protopsaltes of the Great Church of Christ, and all the chanters of

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