

HIS BEATITUDE IN CONSTANTINOPLE – SYNAXIS OF THE PRIMATES AT THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

On 6th March 2014, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, participated in the opening session of the Synaxis of the Primates of all the Orthodox Patriarchates and Autocephalous Churches, convened by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios I, at the Holy Church of St George at the Fanari, accompanied by Their Eminences Metropolitan George of Guinea and Metropolitan Gabriel of Leontopolis, as well as the Very Reverend Archimandrite Theodoros Dridakis.

In his reply His Beatitude said:

Most Holy Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios,
Great joy and emotion fills our heart, as we address You on behalf of our Holy Brother Primates of the Orthodox Patriarchates and Autocephalous Churches, who are here at the King of Cities, so that under the protection of our Champion Leader the Most Holy Theotokos and all the Saints, we can consult and take decisions on burning issues regarding on the one hand dangers to Orthodoxy appearing from the outside and on the other our relationships with each other as local Churches. In a nutshell, we have gathered here to speak and think on circumstances influencing, more or less, the tireless, invincible and ceaseless efforts of Orthodoxy towards congregating all within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of the Lord, according to His word “*so that all may be one*” (John 17:22).

Your All Holiness, we greet Your inspired initiative, which is yet one more stage on our journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, to the Kingdom of God. The Orthodox Church has journeyed, is journeying on and will journey on this ontological and eschatological journey, diligently preserving the faith, revealing itself and illuminating all people everywhere, who wish to participate to the knowledge of salvific truth.

Aligning to the behest of not changing the everlasting boundaries set by our Fathers, we sense the articulate expectation of the Church’s body so as Orthodoxy, overcoming the pitfalls of religionisation, ideologisation and ethno-racialisation, to take on and transform contemporary reality, not conforming to, but reforming the world. Being at all times taught by our

Savior, who broke down the dividing walls of the barrier and made both one, we embrace the eloquent messages of the Church's Body so as Orthodoxy, disposing of worldly forms of overbearing power, to harmonize its missionary and pastoral life with graces of common understanding, mutual love, humility and sacrificial service.

Above all, walking in wisdom and in a spirit of meekness for those in disagreement, we wish, "*with glad and generous hearts*" (Acts 2:46), to represent "*the Church without blemish or wrinkle, or any other such thing, but as holy and blameless*" (Athanasius the Great, *Against Arianism*, 2, 67). Contemplative the intellect and sensing the soul, we proclaim our responsibility before a duty of expectation of ecumenical dimension: we first have to set the example of ecclesiastical unity, as the only constant in a world which is dangerously adrift and which thirsts existentially for the prevalence of peace and reconciliation.

The Church being like a ship tossed in the deep, yet not destroyed, we do not disrespect the afore mentioned dictates of Orthodox diachrony and synchrony, par excellence You, Your All Holiness. Therefore we fervently wish and pray that, with the advent of the Most Holy and Life giving Spirit, we will solve, with canonical eurhythmy, bold dialogue and creative synthesis, the issues set before us towards achieving both the unity of ecumenical Orthodoxy and the tireless illumination in the world of the hope of the Resurrection, the life and the eternity.

Amen!