

† BARTHOLOMEW

By the Mercy of God

Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch

Grace, Peace, and Mercy unto the Plenitude of the Church

From the Fashioner of All Creation

Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ

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Most honorable brother Hierarchs and blessed children in the Lord,

By the good pleasure of God the giver of all, we embark today upon a new ecclesiastical year, glorifying His heavenly name for the uninterrupted and bounteous fruitfulness of the initiatives of His Holy Great Church in the field of creation's protection. The Ecumenical Patriarchate not only highlighted the seriousness of environmental issues from an early stage, but also focused attention on their foundational causes—which are inner, spiritual, and moral—and proposed solutions based on an Orthodox eucharistic and ascetic ethos.

Orthodoxy, in her faith, divine worship, and witness to the world is, one could say, the eco-friendly form of Christianity. Thus, the proclamation of the Feast of the Indiction as a day of prayer for the protection of the natural environment was not merely a reaction to the contemporary ecological crisis, but a natural extension of the Church's life as "applied ecology." From the beginning, we declared the inseparability of respect for creation and the human person, revealing the common root and interconnection of environmental and social problems. Alienation from God breeds a possessive and exploitative attitude and behavior toward creation and fellow human beings, while life in and according to Christ is a source of environmental sensitivity and philanthropic action. As the Lord said: "Every good tree bears good fruit, but a corrupt tree bears evil fruit. A good tree cannot bear evil fruit, and a corrupt tree cannot bear good fruit" (Matthew 7:17–18).

Respect for spiritual values sharpens our discernment of what is good and what must be done. Indifference toward the Transcendent and the "anthropomonism" that follows lead to the entrapment of the human being in the earthly, that is, to a shrinking of his freedom into pragmatic choices and decisions, always intertwined with superficial views of reality and with the identification of the good with "what happens to be useful." The timely call for "ecological repentance"—beyond the call to remorse for the ecological damage already inflicted—and to a radical change in mindset and behavior toward creation, also points to the need to transcend the erroneous stance that upholds the view of the environmentally destructive "self-regulating economy" as the only path to development. This stance further fuels the naive belief in nature's alleged ability to regenerate itself indefinitely, despite the human-induced burdens it suffers, such as the intensification of climate change and its devastating global consequences. Today, in addition to all this, is added the pandemonium of war cries,

bombings, missiles and explosions, which drowns out the cry of the innocent victims of merciless violence and the groaning of creation. The future of life on our planet will either be ecological and peaceful—or nonexistent.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, alongside its struggle for peace, justice, and solidarity, will continue to lead in protecting nature, upholding ecological themes as central issues in inter-Christian and interfaith dialogue, and promoting the significance of Christian eco-friendly principles and traditions within international institutions, environmental organizations, scientific foundations, and civil society. We are confident that cooperation in the field of ecology strengthens our sense of shared responsibility for the future and opens up new and favorable prospects.

Returning to what we stated in a previous Message, we once again call upon the Metropolises of the Mother Church around the world, parishes, and monasteries to develop coordinated actions and specific interventions to mobilize the faithful, with emphasis on educating the younger generation. Applying the ecological implications of our faith in practice is a defining aspect of our Orthodox identity.

In this spirit, we wish you all a blessed and fruitful ecclesiastical year in good and God-pleasing works. We call upon the children of the Holy Great Church of Christ across the globe to live in a true eco-friendly manner and in brotherly love, to pray for creation and for peace, to strive for the integrity of the natural environment and sustainability, and to cultivate a culture of solidarity. Through the intercession and protection of the Most Holy Theotokos Pammakaristos, we invoke upon you the life-giving grace and great mercy of the Almighty Creator and All-Merciful God of love.

Blessed Ecclesiastical Year, brothers and children in the Lord!

September 1, 2025

† Bartholomew of Constantinople
Fervent suppliant for all before God