

The Censer

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Ecumenical Patriarchate-Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

Message on the Day of the Protection of the Environment

†BARTHOLOMEW

By the Mercy of God

Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarchate

To the Plenitude of the Church

Grace and Peace from the Creator, Our
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

* * *

Beloved children in the Lord,

God's grace renders us worthy today to commence yet another ecclesiastical year, one more festive cycle, within whose blessed opportunities we are called to struggle spiritually in order better to evaluate the potential that we have been granted for growing "in the likeness" of God so that we also might become His saints.

However, today, on September 1st, the first

day of the church year, is also dedicated – at the initiative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate – to prayer for the natural environment. This pioneering decision is by no means unrelated to the beginning of the new ecclesiastical year inasmuch as the spiritual struggle that brings about the good transformation of the human person contributes to the improvement of our relationship with the environment and the cultivation of our sensitivity for its protection and preservation.

Therefore, today, we praise the holy name of God for granting to humanity the gift of nature, which he preserves and sustains, as the most suitable environment for human beings to develop in body and spirit. At the same time, we cannot remain silent about the fact that humanity does not properly honor this divine gift and instead destroys the environment through greed and other selfish ambitions.

As we know well, our environment consists of land, water, sun, air, but also of fauna and flora. Humankind can take advantage of nature for its own benefit, but only up to a certain point, so that it may blossom and so

that it may have the opportunity to propagate the consumed energy resources as well as the living, animal creatures. In any case, the proper exploitation of nature comprises a commandment of God both before and after the fall of Adam. Yet, the extreme exploitation – which is, unfortunately, a phenomenon of the last two centuries in human history – destroys the balanced harmony of nature and leads to the exhaustion and destruction of nature as well as of humanity itself, since we cannot survive in an ecosystem whose balance has been irreversibly injured. The result of this phenomenon is the appearance and proliferation of illnesses caused by the pollution of nutritional goods through human actions.

In our time, there is appropriate emphasis on the vast significance of forests and generally of plants for the flourishing of the earth's ecosystem as well as for the protection of water resources. But we cannot undermine the crucial importance of animals, too, for the orderly function of the world. Animals have always been friends of humanity and servants of human needs, providing food, clothing, transportation but also protection and affection. Man's relationship with animals has been very close, as demonstrated by the fact that they were created on the same day as Adam and Eve (Gen. 1.31) and by God's commandment to Noah to save each species of the animals in pairs before the great flood (Gen. 6.19). It is characteristic that God reserves special care for the preservation of the animal kingdom. In the lives of the saints, there are numerous stories about the excellent relations between saints and wild beasts, which would not normally be associated with friendliness toward human beings. This, of course, is not due to an evil nature on the part of animals but to our resistance to God's grace and the consequences of this for our relationship with the elements and animals. After all, one of the results of Adam and Eve breaking their relationship to their Creator God was the disruption of their relationship with the environment: "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken." (Gen. 3.17-19) Man's reconciliation with God results in man's reconciliation with nature.

After all this, it is clear that our good relationship with the environment develops parallel to our proper relationship with God. We all know the story from the lives of the saints about the experience of St. Anthony the Great, who at the age of ninety decided, with the guidance of the Lord's angel, to enter the deeper desert of the Nile in search of another hermit, St. Paul of Thebes, in order to benefit spiritually from the latter. After walking for three days and following the tracks of animals, he came across a lion that bowed before St. Anthony and turned around to lead him to St. Paul's cave, where he found the hermit being served by animals. A crow would bring him his daily bread! In fact, on the day of St. Anthony's visit, the crow brought a double portion so as to provide for the visitor!



These saints developed a good relationship with God, which meant that they also enjoyed a good relationship with all of nature. The creation of such a good relationship with God should become our foremost priority, while the attending good relationship with the animal, natural and inanimate world should flow spontaneously from this. In this perspective, love for animals will not simply comprise a sterile social expression of compassion for our favorite animals, which might even sadly be accompanied by indifference for suffering human beings, who are created in the image of God, but the result of our good relationship with the Creator of all.



May the Creator of the "very beautiful" universe (Gen. 1.31) and the wonderful earthly ecosystem inspire all of us to treat all the elements of nature with affection, with a compassionate heart for all human beings, animals and plants, just as Abba Isaac the Syrian once replied to the question: "What is a merciful heart?" "It is a heart burning for the sake of the entire creation, for men, for birds, for animals, for demons and for every created thing; and by the recollection and sight of them the eyes of a merciful man pour forth abundant tears. From the strong and vehement mercy gripping his heart and from his great compassion, his heart is humbled and he cannot bear to hear or see any injury or slight sorrow in creation." (Ascetic Treatise 81)

Through such compassion toward the natural creation we shall honor our divine dignity as stewards of creation, concerned with paternal love for all its elements, which will

obey us when they discern our benevolent disposition as they realize their own commission to serve our needs.

September 1st, 2011

Your fervent supplicant before God,

+BARTHOLOMEW of Constantinople

Note: See more about Orthodox Church and Environment: <http://www.patriarchate.org/environment>

1st September Day of the Protection of the Environment

In 1989, Patriarch Dimitrios published the first encyclical letter on the environment. This encyclical, proclaimed on the occasion of the first day of the new ecclesiastical calendar, formally established 1 September as a day for all Orthodox Christians within the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to offer prayers for the preservation of the natural creation. A similar encyclical is published annually on the first day of September.



Glory to God for His great Blessing!

of the Church of Piraeus, the Church of Greece, and the Radio Station of Art and the Word of the Municipality of Thessalonica. He is a regular contributor to the printed and electronic press.

He served at the Holy Metropolis of Piraeus as a Sunday School teacher, on the staff of the summer camps, as a collaborator of the Youth Department, and as a representative at youth conferences.

He was ordained Deacon by His Eminence Nikitas, Metropolitan of Hong Kong, on 25 January 2003, and Priest, by the same, on 26 January 2003. On 19 July 2003 he was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite.

The Chancellor of OMHKSEA was elected as the First Metropolitan of Singapore

On November 3, 2011 the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate elected the Rev. Archimandrite fr. Konstantinos Tsilis, Chancellor of the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, as the First Metropolitan of Singapore!

The Episcopal ordination of the new Bishop was held on November 21st at Panagia of Pera Church in Constantinople.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

of His Eminence Metropolitan Konstantinos of Singapore

Metropolitan Konstantinos Tsilis was born in 1973 in Piraeus.

He studied at the Higher Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens and the Department of Pastoral Theology

of the School of Theology of Athens University. He has successfully completed seminars on a) journalism, b) elocution, c) the symbolism of the spoken and written word, d) filming and editing, in Greece and abroad, e) Dealing with those suffering psychological trauma following natural disasters, at the Eastern Mennonite University in the USA, on a US government bursary, f) traditional practical medicine, with an emphasis on first aid and malnourishment aid, in Thailand, g) teaching Greek as a second language, at the School of Philosophy of the University of Athens.

As a layman, and for a period of fifteen years, he worked as a journalist for church and secular journals and newspapers, as a collaborator and producer of radio programs, and as a news editor for church and secular radio stations, including the stations

From 1998, he regularly visited the missionary Metropolitanate of Hong Kong as a volunteer, while after his ordination, in 2003, he served at the Holy Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia as Vicar General, and from March 2005 until today, he served as Chancellor.

Following the tsunami in South Eastern Asia, in December 2004, he organized programs of moral and material support for the victims of the disaster, the distribution of humanitarian aid, and the reconstruction of clinics and schools in Thailand and the Nias Islands off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia.

He has a good command of the written and spoken English language. He has some knowledge of Italian, French, and Hebrew. He also knows sign language and Braille.



Mikro and Mega Minima Ceremony at the Phanar

The special services known as Mikro Minima and Mega Minima (the official announcement of election) were held on Saturday, November 18, at the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George in Constantinople.

In the presence of Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Throne the Great Ecclesiarch Archimandrite Benjamin read the official decision of the election followed by the reading and signing of acknowledgement, of acceptance and gratitude by bishop-elect Konstantinos.



Ordination of the First Metropolitan of Singapore

On Monday, November 21, 2011, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided over the Divine Liturgy with members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and other Hierarchs on the occasion of the feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple. The service was held at Panagia of Pera in Istanbul, where His Eminence Konstantinos, the first Metropolitan of Singapore, was ordained. In attendance were hundreds of pilgrims from Greece, Hong Kong and elsewhere.

Photos from the ordination of His Eminence Metropolitan Konstantinos of Singapore. *(photos by Nicolaos Manginas)*







Sacred Synod, as it has been decreed by an ancient custom—we receive Christ in us, we become partakers of the divine nature, we receive nourishment that immortalize us, that makes us children of God, so that we may become united with Him, but also with each other.

This fest, my dear brothers and children, calls each one of us to make the body and our heart a sanctuary through virtue and through the incessant prayers and contemplation of God, “so that when God comes in fire at His second Parousia, take boldness and approach Him in order to enlighten ourselves and remain always enlightened, in glory of that highest light of the thrice-lightened and monarchic divinity.” After all, if our likeness to God were imperfect, it would

Homily of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew during the Ordination to the Episcopacy of Metropolitan Konstantinos of Singapore

Most Reverend Brothers,

Your Grace, Metropolitan-elect of Singapore, Konstantinos,

Honorable Counselor General of Greece

Beloved Children in the Lord,

“Who may speak your wonders, O Virgin, and who may make heard your praises, O child of God, Maria? You became Mother of God, having united your mind with God, you united God with the flesh, you made God the son of Man and man the Son of God, you make the world a friend with the Creator of the world, and you taught us that the vision of God by the saints does not take place only by the senses or by syllogisms, but by the purity of the mind and by the participation to the divine grace, thanks to which, and not by syllogisms but by an immaterial sense, we feast on God’s beauties.”

By these words, the God-bearer

saint Gregory of Palamas, the authentic worshiper of the Mother of God, gives us the meaning of today’s splendid feast which this Cathedral Church of our most Holy Archdiocese of Constantinople celebrates.

Living in the holy of holies the immaculate Lade Theotokos, brought her mind in a purity above all the earthly things and in a moment made the whole earth into a heaven. She did not call on clouds, which obeyed many other saints, but rather Him who brings about and brings up the clouds to the ends of the earth. She did not call on the dew and the transient rain, but Him who is the treasure of all good things.

Thanks to the purity and perfection of the Virgin, this blessing is given to each and every Christian, who might participate conscientiously in the life of the Church. Partaking of the divine and awesome mysteries of the Eucharist—which today too, by the Grace of God, we celebrate with our Holy and

become impossible to remain eternally in unity with God.

It was that pure and perfect life that our beloved spiritual son, and as of this day brother and co-celebrant, Konstantinos loved since his youth, predestined to serve, by the Grace of God, the newly-founded Holy Metropolis of Singapore, since he has become enriched, as a laden ship, by the experiences and the fruits of his long priestly service as the Chancellor of the Holy Metropolis of Hong-Kong, part of which was until recently this newly-founded Metropolis. Our most Holy Mother Church looked at how he spent himself in the missionary vineyard of the Lord, first next to Niketas, then Metropolitan of Hong-Kong and now Metropolitan of Dardanellion, and now next to Nektarios, the current Metropolitan of Hong-Kong and his brother, and so elected him, by canonical votes, to assume further load on his shoulders, “so that he may bring forth more fruit” as the Bishop and Shepherd of the Holy Metropolis of Singapore.

Thus, his exceptional family was blessed in offering to the service of the Church two of her children and for this the wages and blessing by the just wage-giver will be great for such an offering.

The ecclesiastical ethos and mentality demonstrated until now by our brother soon-to-be ordained, his missionary zeal, his proven productivity and reliability, and his significant philanthropic contribution to the flock of the Mother Church in those lands, when the terrible disaster of the oceanic waves, namely of that tsunami, devastated those regions—all of this guarantee for the successful and fruitful Hierarchical service of his which now begins.

At this service and missionary course, we pray and exhort you, holy brother, to have as perennial provision the five virtues of which St Macarios of Egypt speaks and which “they build the whole man, though they can be divided in many ways: prayer, continence, charity, poverty and forbearance. Through these five virtues, the Lord’s follower will accomplish a great deal of piety.”

Our Lord calls man saying “come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). “And as many souls are convinced and come, He gives them rest from the heavy and bothersome and impure thoughts, and they rest for every iniquity, keeping the true and holy Sabbath and celebrating a feast of the Spirit, a feast of joy and ineffable delight” (St Macarios of Egypt). It is that rest that our Orthodox Church is called and is able to offer to the modern man who ignores God but who genuinely desires Him. It is only Her that is capable of taking man out of idolatry’s and ignorance’s darkness that dominates those very regions you have been called to serve, without doubt by the divine providence, our dear brother. You are called to lead our brothers there to a pure and God-loving worship, out of a pure heart.

Do not forget that the entire choir of the genuine missionaries cared for nothing else than the spirit’s friendship with God and goodness; instead of wealth, they preferred poverty; instead of glory dishonor; instead of enjoyments the hard times; instead of anger love. Hate what is pleasurable in the present life. Do not forget that “there is no other way to salvation, but through the neighbor” (St Macarios of Egypt, 37th Homily), and that no effort in the Church’s service is in vain for our Lord condescends to all and compensates all.

“See that you don’t despise one of these little ones” (Matt. 18:10) of your brothers who live in the lands which you have been called to serve in mission. Every moment will be for you significant and you will reckon with God for what you made out of it. You must struggle in sanctifying yourself daily and in keeping the light of the Lord’s commandments, for otherwise a kerygma only in words would remain “a clanging cymbal.” Do not fear that you will have to face daily people who are not Christians and whose culture, civilizations and mentality is at times at variance with those of ours or even hostile toward our Christian faith. After all, we cannot say that the spirit of Christ prevails even in the developed countries of the West! Yet, this should not make you afraid. As the blessed elder Sophrony Sakharov, that great father and theologian of our Church in these last days, says: “it is possible that apostasy become of yet greater proportions. It is not impossible that each one of us, in order to persevere in the faith, must be ready to resist the whole world. Let them be billions; let them, those intellectuals and ignorants, consider us fools. Our answer is one: no matter how small and insignificant we may be, it is right him who lives in Christ and not him who lives away from Christ.” We can recover the great brilliance of the Church of Christ only through the desperate effort to live Christianly, according to the Gospel, without turning our attention to how our contemporaries might treat us.

In this effort of yours, you will have with you the prayers of all of us, of your Archbishop and Patriarch, of the members of the Sacred and Holy Synod of the Mother Church of Constantinople, who honored you and entrusted you by their votes, and of all those who are present here today praying with us that you be strengthened by God, of those who live here but also of those who came from abroad in order to share with you the joy of this unique day of your life. We pray that you show yourself worthy of that trust and of the expectations of the Mother Church, which, from the very first centuries has fought for the propagation of Gospel to all nations, moved by the love for God and for man, the same love that vouchsafes for us eternal life. This Church does not fight in order to dominate over others, She does not seek followers. She struggles only for the dominion of the kingdom of the Father, which is neither food nor drink, but life in the Holy Spirit, sanctification and salvation.

We pray that our Lady the Theotokos, whose entry in the sanctuary we celebrate today, protect you in your missionary efforts, be a helper and assistance in your work, that She may bless and materialize your visions with regards to the propagation of the Gospel of Her Son, for His glory and for the salvation of the least of His brothers.

To Him may be the honor and the worship for ever and ever. Amen.

(Constantinople, 21st November, 2011)

Cathedral Church of the Entry of the Theotokos of Pera

Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos)



Homily of Metropolitan Konstantinos of Singapore during his Ordination to the Episcopacy

When love beckons to you, follow him,
 Though his ways are hard and steep.
 And when his wings enfold you yield to him,
 Though the sword hidden among his
 pinions may wound you.
 And when he speaks to you believe in him,
 Though his voice may shatter your
 dreams
 as the north wind lays waste the garden.
 For even as love crowns you so shall he
 crucify you.
 Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto
 himself.
 He threshes you to make you naked.
 He sifts you to free you from your husks.
 He grinds you to whiteness.
 He kneads you until you are pliant;
 And then he assigns you to his sacred
 fire,
 that you may become sacred bread for
 God's sacred feast.

(Khalil Gibran)

All-holy Father and Master,

Venerable choir of Bishops,

Reverend Fathers and brethren and all
 beloved Christians who pray together
 with us today,

At this sacred moment as I stand before
 the holy Altar awaiting to receive the ap-
 ostolic grace of Archieratical office and
 become Bishop and Pastor, President of
 the Eucharistic assembly, and deacon
 and guide of the People of God who
 sojourn in Singapore, I chose to express
 my emotions with the verses of the great
 Lebanese poet which I have just read.

I am convinced that all my humble
 priestly service in the Far East and my
 presence here today is a result of the call-
 ing of divine Love.

Thirteen years ago my journalistic curi-
 osity led my steps to the depths of Asia.
 I gained first hand knowledge of the
 missionary work of the Metropolitanate
 of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. My
 initial curiosity turned into admiration.
 My admiration quickly became a mag-

net that drew me visit over and again
 the Orphanage in Calcutta in India, the
 soup-kitchens for the poor in Manila in
 the Philippines, the Eucharistic Com-
 munity of Hong Kong and to offer my
 voluntary service. In time I realized that
 these visits were nothing other than the
 call of Love to the rough and precipitous
 path of Christian mission.

One evening the telephone rang and to
 my utter astonishment I heard the voice
 of the then Metropolitan of Hong Kong
 saying to me: I am coming to Greece.
 Prepare yourself to be ordained. I over-
 came my initial surprise and doubts
 with the thought that the call of divine
 Love is simple and clear just like this.
 When Love incarnate and crucified calls
 you to serve him, he does not become

involved in complicated discussions
 and analyses, but in a simple and calm
 way he stretches out his hand and beck-
 ons you to come near. When our Lord
 chose his disciples he said no more than
 two words: Follow me. He did not at-
 tempt to offer a full analysis and present
 the content and benefits of the call. He
 made his call with directness and clarity.
 And they, without discussion but with
 humility and complete trust, surren-
 dered themselves to the divine calling.

When love beckons to you, follow him.
 There is no room for any other thought
 or for any delay. I bowed my head and
 surrendered completely. Devoutly I ac-
 cepted the great gift of priesthood and
 under the Omoforion (pallium) of my
 Bishop I was actively enrolled among
 the missionary workers of the Holy Met-
 ropolitanate of Hong Kong and South-
 east Asia. I very quickly realized that
 priestly service in Communities that can
 number only a few years of Christian life
 is an unprecedented experience. All the
 things that you had previously taken for
 granted crumble before you. You see un-
 folding before your eyes situations and

events that previously you had found only in the agreeable study of the Acts of the Apostles.

In the Far East I encountered the Church that approaches people with simplicity and transmits to them the breath of God's infinite love. I saw the Church that does not speak from a distance and from an elevated pedestal of authority. I saw the Church that stands side by side with the disillusioned or troubled brother, that listens to the groanings of the soul and responds with simplicity, tenderly pouring "oil and wine" on the wounds and "lifts up the drooping arms and feeble knees".

There I served the Church of Christ that, in spite of her material poverty, is living, revelatory and a guiding light, able to articulate the "word of truth" in all directions and knows how to engage in dialogue in a friendly and humble manner with every person, far removed from any kind of fixations.

I regard it as miraculous that at the ends of the world, in the furthest extremity of the Asiatic continent, Orthodox Communities have been created by the grace of God that in spite of their newness, their different language and peculiar national and traditional culture, preserve with authenticity the deposit of faith they have received from the Mother Church of Constantinople: Christian love, Crucified Love, that has its arms always open in embrace to gather the nations and people into a marvellous unity and relationship with our Heavenly Father.

The years passed by with spiritual joys and also with sorrows and anxieties and a demanding daily struggle. For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. He threshes you to make you naked. He sifts you to free you from your husks, that is from your false moves, from whatever keeps you attached to things that are vain and worldly.

Almost ten years after that first calling, divine Love has come once again to unfold my sinful and earthly being with

his sacred flame and to address to me a new vocation. He wishes to invest me with the apostolic grace of Archieratical office and calls me as Bishop to pilot the spiritual ark of the local missionary Church of Singapore through the seas and storms of the world. I had never thought of or sought for high office and greater gifts. I was always grateful because God overlooked my unworthiness and allowed me to serve as a presbyter in his Church. Now he asks infinitely more.

When love beckons to you, follow him. What point is there in asking questions and seeking to interpret the judgements of God? Once again there is no room for second thoughts. I surrender myself to the will and infinite mercy of divine Love. "For you are my endurance, O Lord: my hope from my youth; upon you I have leaned from my birth, from my mother's womb. You are my shelter. My song is of you for ever" [Psalm 70].

I know that I will have to tread difficult and rough paths. The service of a Bishop is sacrificial and responsible in the extreme. The Bishop continues the work of the Apostles. The Church entrusts him with the ordination of those who will shepherd the people of God. He presides at the Eucharist, he preaches the Gospel in word and in deed, he transfigures his flock into the "salt of the earth", with his life he becomes "a lamp illuminating all those in the house". Every work of the Bishop, whether pastoral, social, charitable, missionary or ascetic, tends towards one single aim: return to the grace and love of God.

I know also that in my new work of service in the missionary Metropolitanate of Singapore I will have to face many trials and temptations. Missionary work has nothing to do with the shining and exotic photographs or with the moving stories, but rather it involves many tears, a hard and persistent struggle, humiliations and dangers. It requires discrimination and much prudence. Hard work, but also fervent prayer. A humble temperament and great patience. Resis-

tance to the snares of the evil one and to the impediments that are unfortunately created by certain brethren who see the mission field as a place for competition and who, with their arrogant attitude and thoughtless actions, explode the unity within the embrace of the Orthodox Church and also weaken the power of Orthodox preaching to the Nations.

All-holy Father and Master,

At this sacred hour I am obliged to thank and glorify God, worshipped in the Trinity, for the spiritual gifts I receive today. I return glory to the All-compassionate God for all his benefactions bestowed on me, most particularly for the honour of serving the Holy Mother and Great Church as a Bishop of one of her missionary sees. I pray to Him from the depths of my heart that He may illuminate my mind, give wisdom to my thoughts and humility to my heart, that He may purify the dispositions of my soul and bless my service as Bishop.

With tears I offer my thanks and infinite gratitude to the All-holy Theotokos, protectress and benefactrix of my unworthy self, who has embraced and blessed in superabundance all of my priestly service and who today vouchsafes that I receive the gift of episcopal office in her own exquisitely beautiful temple, the Cathedral Church of the Ecumenical Patriarch as Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome.

After God and the All-holy Theotokos, allow me, Most Holy Father and Master, to direct to You, the revered Chief Shepherd of the Church on earth, the deep gratitude of my heart. For me you are not only Master and Lord, but also my tenderly caring Spiritual Father. Your prudent heart, your wisdom, your pastoral ability, your liturgical ethos and above all your simplicity, the simple and the rare nobility of your soul make you a model of a true shepherd, a supreme didactic example for the shepherds and fathers of the people of God.

Your fidelity to your apostolic responsibility and to your ecumenical calling is

a lesson to my unworthy self on how to transmit the gladsome light of the sweet figure of the crucified God-man and the unsetting light of His Resurrection to those peoples of Asia who lie in darkness and in the shadow of death. Your All-Holiness, I promise that I will strive to live up to your expectations, always following your own luminous example.

I wish to thank from the bottom of my soul all their Eminences, the Archbishops who make up the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and who honoured me by electing me as Metropolitan of Singapore. I assure them that, with the help of God, I will not disappoint the trust they have placed in me and their love and honour.

I thank all the Holy Archbishops who are present here at this sacred hour. Especially His Eminence the Metropolitan of Samos and Ikaria, Eusebios, who with great love supports the daily missionary work both of myself and of my natural brother Nektarios, the Metropolitan of Hong Kong.

I express my gratitude to His Eminence the Metropolitan of the Dardanelles, Nikitas, who initiated me into the priesthood and gave me the possibility of working as a missionary in the Far East.

I thank all the clergy who are praying together at this Eucharistic assembly, especially the Archimandrites Melchisedek, Abbot of the the holy Monastery of Saint Nikolaos of Varsa, and Epiphanius, Chancellor of the Holy Metropolis of Aetolia and Akarnania, for their surpassing love towards me and their invaluable support.

I owe an infinite debt of gratitude to Archimandrite Ananias Koustenis who always stands by me and supports, teaches and comforts my soul with his overflowing love.

I mention also with deepest respect my Professors at the Highest Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens, at the Department of Pastoral Theology at the University of

Athens and at the Department of Theology at the Aristotelian University of Thessalonika.

It is not possible that I should fail to mention or fail to express my heart-felt thanks to the Hong Kong Community, the clergy and all the co-workers in our missionary and charitable work, who are today offering their prayers for me. I ever cherish their love and trust in my heart as a precious amulet.

It is an obligation and duty of the highest imperative to express my gratitude at this sacred hour to my parents who with zeal and wisdom cultivated piety in my soul. To them we owe, both my brother and I, that good taste of life in Christ. Divine Love called on them to make a great sacrifice: to give both of their children to the service of the Church. They surrendered to the divine call with faith and great willingness. They stood by their sons with every means at their command. And God has honoured their offering and given them great spiritual joy. They rejoiced at the ordination of their first son to the Episcopacy and today they participate with gladness of heart in the ordination of their second son to the Episcopacy. The great spiritual joy of this moment belongs to them because it is God's answer to their sacrificial offering and to their tearful efforts to make their sons worthy of the missionary calling and of God's love. Blessed parents, delight today in the joy of your children and leap in gratitude for the great gift of grace. My own offering of prayer at the holy Altar will be the antidoron for my love towards them. With ever fervent prayer may the Lord sanctify them, bless them and comfort their devout hearts with His grace.

I have left to last my brother His Eminence the Metropolitan of Hong Kong Nektarios. I mention him with special emotion because God has given me the great blessing of serving at his side and of working with him with one heart and mind as missionaries. I owe him an infinite debt of gratitude because he has always supported me with love and

patience. He labours with selfless zeal to spread the word of the Gospel. I assure him that I will always be at his side, working with him in the good work for the salvation of souls that has been entrusted to us by God.

And now, All-holy Father and Master, I surrender myself and all that I am to God and to the word of His grace.

Pray fervently that I may never betray the apostolic grace of the Episcopacy. Pray - and for this I entreat the intercessions of our Most Blessed and Glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, whose Feast of the Entrance into the Holy of Holies we celebrate today, and of Saint Constantine the Great and Equal to the Apostles, founder of this Queen of Cities, whose name I unworthily bear - so that, when the time appointed by the Lord comes, I may return to Him the sacred Omoforion (Pallium) with which your precious Patriarchal hands will invest me, white and fragrant with the tears of sacrificial service.

I wish to give the assurance that for the people whom the Church has entrusted me to shepherd I will attempt to put into practice the words of Saint John of the Ladder:

“Take your people by the hand. Pass through the desert. When you see them burning with their inner flame, refresh them by opening a water-filled well of tears with the wood, that is, with the crucifixion of the flesh along with the affections and the lusts. Wage war with them against the hostile nations of demons and temptations and consume them with the fire of faith in the Lord. Come to the Jordan, separate your people into sections with the word of God and divide the waters of the world with the tears of spiritual struggle that come from the grace of God and make the waters stand firm before the eyes of your people. And go up with them to the Jerusalem that is on high, beholding Christ the God of peace. Unite your people to you with love. Love is God.”

Amen.

Pastoral visit of Metropolitan Nektarios in Philippines

On October 30-November 3, 2011, His Eminence Metropolitan Nektarios of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, escorted by V.Rev.Archimandrite fr.Konstantinos, Chancellor of OMHKSEA, visited the Cathedral Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Paranaque, Manila, Philippines.

Metropolitan Nektarios was welcomed by fr.James Doronela, along with some members of the Parish Council and the Children's Choir.



The Feast of Apostle Luke in Hong Kong

On Sunday, October 23rd the Orthodox Community in Hong Kong in a solemn manner celebrated its Patron Saint, the Apostle and Evangelist Luke. After the Divine Liturgy and the service of Artoklasia Metropolitan Nektarios spoke about the life of Saint Luke and also about the completion of 25 years of the foundation of the Orthodox Community in Hong Kong and of 15 years of the foundation of the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.

At noon was held a feast Luncheon in which Metropolitan Nektarios honored the Great Benefactor Mr. Stavros Papadopoulos for his outstanding contribution to the work of the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Metropolitan Nektarios honored also senior members of the Orthodox Community of Saint Luke.



Photos from the Pastoral visit of Metropolitan Nektarios in Medan, Sumatra, Indonesia

Photos from the Cathedral Church of Saint Demetrios the Myrrh-Bearer and the Theological School “Apostle Paul” in Medan, Sumatra, Indonesia.

Metropolitan Nektarios was welcomed by fr.Chrysostomos Manalu and fr.Athanasios Manalu, along with many members of the Orthodox Community and techers and students of the Theological School.





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