

SUNDAY OF PENTECOST DURING THE HOLY AND GREAT SYNOD OF ORTHODOXY

On Sunday, the 6th/19th of June 2016, the Pentecost was observed at St Minas Cathedral in Heraklion with a Joint Patriarchal Liturgy led by the Ecumenical Patriarch who had as concelebrants the Heads of the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches, namely: the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Jerusalem, Serbia, Romania, the Archbishoprics of Cyprus, Athens, Albania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Also participating in the service were the Entourages of the Heads of Churches, as well the Metropolitans of the Synod of Crete, and priests of the island. St Minas Choir sang on the right and the "Cretan Maîtres" on the left. Attending the service were the Mayor, the Head of the Region, Under-Secretary Amanatides, the Police, the Army and the Greek President, Mr Pavlopoulos. A great crowd of faithful participated, declaring the unity of the members of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church of Christ.

During the Divine Liturgy, upon the consecration of the Holy Gifts, the bread and wine were turned into the Body and Blood of Christ, of which all Heads of Churches partook, declaring thus the unanimity of the Church and their unity. Members of the congregation also partook of Communion for atonement, strength, life and salvation.

After the apolysis, the Vespers of Whit Monday was held, during which the troparia of Pentecost were sang, followed by the Doxastic prayer:

"O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere and fillest all things; Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and abide in us and cleanse us from every

impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Prayers were read in Greek and Romanian, as the faithful knelt to receive them with piety.

After the Apolysis, the Municipality of Heraklion hosted breakfast in the Forecourt of the Dependency of St Catherine of Mount Sinai, followed by lunch hosted by President Pavlopoulos in honour of the Heads of Churches and their Entourages.

During lunch, the President addressed guests, referring to the First Ecumenical Synod which had established the institution of Synods as a way of life within the Church.

The First Ecumenical Synod also composed the Nicene Creed. St John Chrysostom says that the liturgy is performed for peace in the entire world and the ecumene. This particular Synod is of great importance, being the first great Synod of Orthodoxy after the 1054 schism. It has since defined the course of the Orthodox Church in the world we live in.

In His reply-speech, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew expressed joy over the fact that the Heads of Churches and their Entourages were hosted to joint lunch in demonstration of the "principle of reciprocity". *"The core of the interest of both Church and State is man"*, said Patriarch Bartholomew. *"The State, as an institution, is interested in order in this world, whereas the Church shows man the way to the future city we seek for"*. *"The world today is in need of philanthropy, love and peace"*, added the Ecumenical Patriarch.

This completed the activities of the Great Synod of the Church on Pentecost Sunday.

From the Secretariat-General



