

† B A R T H O L O M E W
BY THE MERCY OF GOD
ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE–NEW ROME
AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
GRACE, PEACE, AND MERCY
UNTO THE ENTIRE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH
FROM THE FASHIONER OF ALL CREATION
OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

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Most Reverend and Right Reverend Brother Hierarchs, and blessed children in the Lord,

By the grace of God, the giver of all good things, we enter today into the new ecclesiastical year, honouring and celebrating at its commencement, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, the “Day of Prayer for the Protection of the Natural Environment.”

The multidimensional contemporary ecological crisis is a crisis of human freedom, of our religion and philosophy, of our ethos and our culture. What comes first is the “harmful alteration” of our freedom — our severance and alienation from the Source of Life; what follows is conduct destructive of the natural environment. We feel profound gratitude that the pioneering initiatives and interventions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, carried out without interruption since 1989 have not only revealed the spiritual aspects of the ecological problem, but have also opened new paths and prospects for addressing it. The ecological symposia, the related inter-Christian and interreligious dialogues, the specific recommendations of the Great Church concerning environmental matters, the emphasis placed upon the social dimensions and consequences of the ecological crisis, and other such efforts together constitute a robust environmental proposal, which emphasizes the imperative need for a “Copernican Turn” in our understanding of the idea of progress and in humanity’s attitude towards nature, as well as in the actions of those engaged in political, economic, and social life, of the Churches and religions, of science and technology, and of those responsible for the education of the younger generation.

We shall continue, in word and deed, to promote the ecological vision of the Holy Great Church of Christ and the eco-friendly dynamism of the eucharistic, ascetic, and doxological relationship with creation, always underscoring that careful theological work is needed for the elucidation of the authentic ecological message of our Orthodox faith and tradition, for the benefit of creation, which is “very good.”

We are convinced that highlighting the religious and ethical dimensions of the ecological threat will lead to an awareness of the pivotal importance of “ecological

responsibility.” Humanity must at last cease acting as though it does not know and definitively cast aside the illusion that planet Earth can in perpetuity withstand the burdens and destruction caused by human activity, or that nature has the power to renew itself of its own accord. The ethos of responsibility for the protection of the natural environment must find expression at the global, national, local, and personal levels. We reiterate once again that the cultivation of ecological responsibility is a “categorical imperative” for humanity as it confronts the greatest threat it has ever been called to face throughout the entire course of its history.

It is abundantly clear that, so long as the dominant anthropological model is represented by the “foolish rich man” of the Gospel (Luke 12:17–21), with his declaration, “I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there I will store all my crops and my goods,” and his words, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry,” humanity will continue to undermine its future and annihilate its own “home.” The “sins of modernity” have created—and continue to create—new divisions and ruptures between humanity and nature. The contemporary “man-god” persists in genocide, disregarding every measure and limit in the name of geopolitical designs and economic interests, of consumerism and of the satisfaction of essentially insatiable needs, but also, on a deeper level, because of an overturning of inner lived experience and values. The consequences of the global dominance of the desire to manipulate, instrumentalize, and exploit nature will prove to be tragic for life on our planet.

The growing acceptance and official establishment of 1 September as the Day for the Protection of the Natural Environment throughout the Christian world bears particular significance today as a symbol and practical promotion of the unity of Christians. Moreover, the glorification of the “Fashioner of all creation” at the beginning of the Indiction in our liturgical tradition constitutes a precious inheritance, as an invitation and exhortation to respect creation, which suffers the consequences of an unseemly, human-caused assault.

Most Honourable Brethren and dearly beloved children,

Respect for the core pillars of ecological civilization can restrain environmentally destructive tendencies and open the “sole ecological path,” that of sustainable development. More broadly, humanity needs to reach agreement upon a body of common fundamental values which, in a world marked by conflict and polarization, will serve as a compass for the journey towards the future. We regard the principle of solidarity as the central axis of this body of values: solidarity as a source of shared responsibility, dialogue, and sincere reciprocity, together with collective responsibility for the protection of the natural environment. Respect in practice for the sacredness of the human person and care for the integrity of creation are, from a Christian perspective, vital manifestations of the eucharistic realisation of the Church and of human being’s call to become the “priest” of creation.

In this spirit, as we pray that the new ecclesiastical year may be favourable and fruitful in works that are good and pleasing to God, we invoke upon all of you, through the intercessions and mediation of the Most-Holy Theotokos Pammakaristos—whose most sacred icon we reverently keep in the Venerable Patriarchal Church and embrace “with mouth and heart and will”—the grace and mercy of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Whose All-Holy Name be blessed and glorified, now and ever, and unto the endless ages. Amen!

1 September 2026
† Bartholomew of Constantinople
Your fervent suppliant before God

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ΕΛΕΩι ΘΕΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ
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ΑΠΟ ΤΟΝ ΔΗΜΙΟΥΡΓΟ ΠΑΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΚΤΙΣΕΩΣ
ΚΥΡΙΟ ΚΑΙ ΘΕΟ ΚΑΙ ΣΩΤΗΡΑ ΜΑΣ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟ
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Τερώτατοι καὶ Θεοφιλέστατοι ἀδελφοὶ Ἱεράρχες καὶ τέκνα ἐν Κυρίῳ
εὐλογημένα,

Μὲ τὴ χάρη τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ ὁποῖος μᾶς δίνει κάθε ἀγαθό, εἰσερχόμαστε σήμερα
στὸ νέο ἐκκλησιαστικὸ ἔτος, τιμώντας καὶ ἐορτάζοντας κατὰ τὴν ἑναρξή του μὲ
ψαλμοὺς καὶ ὕμνους καὶ ᾠδὲς πνευματικὲς τὴν «Ἡμέρα προσευχῆς ὑπὲρ τῆς
προστασίας τοῦ φυσικοῦ περιβάλλοντος».

Ἡ πολυδιάστατη σύγχρονη οἰκολογικὴ κρίση εἶναι κρίση τῆς ἐλευθερίας τοῦ
ἀνθρώπου, τῆς θρησκείας καὶ τῆς φιλοσοφίας του, τοῦ ἥθους καὶ τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ του.
Προηγεῖται ἡ «κακὴ ἀλλοίωση» τῆς ἐλευθερίας μας, ἡ ἀποκοπὴ καὶ ἡ ἀλλοτρίωσή
μας ἀπὸ τὴν Πηγὴ τῆς Ζωῆς, καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ἡ καταστροφικὴ γιὰ τὸ φυσικὸ
περιβάλλον συμπεροφορά. Αἰσθανόμαστε βαθειὰ εὐγνωμοσύνη γιὰ τὸ γεγονὸς ὅτι
οἱ πρωτοποριακὲς πρωτοβουλίες καὶ παρεμβάσεις τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου,
ἀδιάλειπτα ἀπὸ τὸ ἔτος 1989 μέχρι σήμερα, ὅχι μόνο ἀποκάλυψαν τὶς πνευματικὲς
παραμέτρους τοῦ οἰκολογικοῦ προβλήματος, ἀλλὰ διάνοιξαν νέους δρόμους καὶ
προοπτικὲς γιὰ τὴν ἀντιμετώπισή του. Τὰ οἰκολογικὰ συνέδρια, οἱ σχετικοὶ
διαχριστιανικοὶ καὶ διαθρησκευτικοὶ διάλογοι, οἱ συγκεκριμένους προτάσεις τῆς
Μεγάλης Ἐκκλησίας ἐπὶ περιβαλλοντικῶν θεμάτων, ἡ ἀναφορὰ στὶς κοινωνικὲς
διαστάσεις καὶ συνέπειες τῆς οἰκολογικῆς κρίσης καὶ ἄλλα παρόμοια, συγκροτοῦν
μία ρωμαλέα περιβαλλοντολογικὴ πρόταση, μὲ ἔμφαση στὴν ἀδήριτη ἀνάγκη
«κοπερνίκειας στροφῆς» στὴν κατανόηση τῆς ιδέας τῆς προόδου καὶ στὴ στάση τῆς
ἀνθρωπότητας ἀπέναντι στὴ φύση, καθὼς καὶ στὸν τρόπο δράσης τῶν παραγόντων
τῆς πολιτικῆς, τῆς οἰκονομίας καὶ τῆς κοινωνικῆς ζωῆς, τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ τῶν
θρησκειῶν, τῆς ἐπιστήμης καὶ τῆς τεχνολογίας καὶ τῆς παιδείας τῆς νέας γενεᾶς.

Θὰ συνεχίσουμε, μὲ ἔργα καὶ μὲ λόγια, τὴν προβολὴ τῆς οἰκολογικῆς
πρότασης τῆς Ἀγίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ Μεγάλης Ἐκκλησίας, τὸν οἰκοφιλικὸ δυναμισμό τῆς
εὐχαριστιακῆς, ἀσκητικῆς καὶ δοξολογικῆς σχέσης μὲ τὴ δημιουργία,
ὕπογραμμίζοντας πάντοτε ὅτι ἀπαιτεῖται ἐπισταμένη θεολογικὴ ἐργασία γιὰ τὴν
ἀποσαφήνιση τοῦ αὐθεντικοῦ οἰκολογικοῦ μηνύματος τῆς Ὁρθόδοξης πίστεως καὶ
παράδοσής μας, πρὸς ὄφελος τῆς «καλῆς λΐαν» δημιουργίας.

Εἴμαστε βέβαιοι ὅτι ἡ ἀνάδειξη τῶν θρησκευτικῶν καὶ ἠθικῶν διαστάσεων τῆς
οἰκολογικῆς ἀπειλῆς θὰ ὀδηγήσει στὴ συνειδητοποίηση τῆς ἀξονικῆς σημασίας τῆς

«οικολογικῆς εὐθύνης». Ἐπιτέλους, ὁ ἄνθρωπος πρέπει νὰ παύσει νὰ δρᾷ σὰν νὰ μὴ γνῶριζε καὶ νὰ ἀποβάλλει ὀριστικὰ τὴν ψευδαίσθηση ὅτι ὁ πλανήτης γῆ μπορεῖ στὸ διηνεκές νὰ ὑπερβαίνει τὶς ἀνθρωπογενεῖς ἐπιβαρύνσεις καὶ καταστροφές, ὅτι ἡ φύση ἔχει τὴ δύναμη νὰ ἀνανεώνεται ἀφ’ ἑαυτῆς. Τὸ ἥθος τῆς εὐθύνης γιὰ τὴν προστασία τοῦ φυσικοῦ περιβάλλοντος ὀφείλει νὰ ἐκφράζεται σὲ παγκόσμιο, ἐθνικό, τοπικὸ καὶ προσωπικὸ ἐπίπεδο. Ἐπαναλαμβάνουμε καὶ πάλι, ὅτι ἡ ἀνάπτυξη οἰκολογικῆς εὐθύνης εἶναι «κατηγορικὴ προστακτικὴ» γιὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, ἐνώπιον τῆς μεγαλύτερης ἀπειλῆς, τὴν ὁποία κλήθηκε αὐτὴ νὰ ἀντιμετωπίσει σὲ ὁλόκληρη τὴ ἱστορικὴ της διαδρομὴ.

Προφανέστατα, μὲ κυρίαρχο τὸ ἀνθρωπολογικὸ πρότυπο, τὸ ὁποῖο ἐκπροσωπεῖ ὁ «ἄφρων πλούσιος» τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου (Λουκ. ιβ’, 17-21), μὲ τὸ «καθελῶ μου τὰς ἀποθήκας καὶ μείζονας οἰκοδομήσω, καὶ συνάξω ἐκεῖ πάντα τὰ γενήματά μου καὶ τὰ ἀγαθὰ μου», καὶ τὸ «ψυχὴ, ἔχεις πολλὰ ἀγαθὰ κεείμενα εἰς ἔτη πολλά· ἀναπαύου, φάγε, πῖε, εὐφραίνου», ἡ ἀνθρωπότητα ὑπονομεύει τὸ μέλλον της καὶ ἀφανίζει τὸν «οἶκο» της. Οἱ «νεωτερικὲς ἁμαρτίες» τῆς ἀνθρωπότητας δημιούργησαν, καὶ συνεχίζουν νὰ τὸ πράττουν, νέους διχασμοὺς καὶ διασπάσεις μεταξὺ ἀνθρώπου καὶ φύσης. Ὁ σύγχρονος «ἀνθρωποθεός» ἐμμένει στὴν γεωκτονία, ἀγνοεῖ μέτρα καὶ ὅρια ἐν ὀνόματι γεωπολιτικῶν σχεδιασμῶν καὶ οἰκονομικῶν συμφερόντων, τοῦ καταναλωτισμοῦ καὶ τῆς ἱκανοποίησης, οὐσιαστικὰ ἀκόρεστων, ἀναγκῶν, ἀλλὰ καί, βαθύτερα, λόγῳ ἐσωτερικῶν βιωματικῶν καὶ ἀξιακῶν ἀνατροπῶν. Οἱ ἐπιπτώσεις μίας παγκόσμιας κυριαρχίας τῆς βούλησης χειραγώγησης, ἐργαλειοποίησης καὶ ἐκμετάλλευσης τῆς φύσης θὰ ἀποβοῦν τραγικὲς γιὰ τὴ ζωὴ στὸν πλανήτη μας.

Ἡ προϋοῦσα ἀποδοχὴ καὶ ἐπίσημη καθιέρωση τῆς 1^{ης} Σεπτεμβρίου ἀπὸ τὸν χριστιανικὸ κόσμον ὡς Ἡμέρας Προστασίας τοῦ Φυσικοῦ Περιβάλλοντος ἀποκτᾷ σήμερα ἰδιαίτερη βαρύτητα ὡς σύμβολο καὶ ἔμπρακτὴ προώθηση τῆς ἐνότητας τῶν Χριστιανῶν. Ἐξάλλου, ἡ δοξολόγηση τοῦ «δημιουργοῦ πάσης τῆς κτίσεως» κατὰ τὴν Ἀρχὴ τῆς Ἰνδίκτου στὴ λειτουργικὴ παράδοσή μας, ἀποτελεῖ μίαν πολύτιμη παρακαταθήκη, ὡς πρόσκληση καὶ προτροπὴ πρὸς σεβασμὸ τῆς δημιουργίας, ἡ ὁποία ὑφίσταται τὶς συνέπειες τῆς ἀνοίκειας ἀνθρωπογενοῦς ἐπιβουλῆς.

Τιμιώτατοι ἀδελφοὶ καὶ προσφιλέστατα τέκνα,

Ὁ σεβασμὸς τῶν βασικῶν πυλῶνων τοῦ οἰκολογικοῦ πολιτισμοῦ μπορεῖ νὰ ἀνακόψει τὶς οἰκοκαταστροφικὲς τάσεις καὶ νὰ διανοίξῃ τὸν «οἰκολογικὸ μονόδρομο» τῆς βιώσιμης ἀνάπτυξης. Γενικώτερα, ἡ ἀνθρωπότητα ἔχει ἀνάγκη συναίνεσης ἐπὶ ἐνὸς κορμοῦ κοινῶν θεμελιωδῶν ἀξιῶν, ὁ ὁποῖος, ἐντὸς ἐνὸς κόσμου ρήξεων καὶ πολώσεων, θὰ λειτουργεῖ ὡς πυξίδα γιὰ τὴν πορεία πρὸς τὸ μέλλον. Ἄξονα αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀξιακοῦ συνόλου θεωροῦμε τὴ ἀρχὴ τῆς ἀλληλεγγύης, ὡς παράγοντα συνυπευθυνότητος, διαλόγου καὶ εἰλικρινοῦς ἀμοιβαιότητος, μαζὶ τὴ συλλογικὴ εὐθύνη γιὰ τὴν προστασία τοῦ φυσικοῦ περιβάλλοντος. Τόσο ὁ ἔμπρακτος σεβασμὸς τῆς ἱερότητος τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου προσώπου, ὅσο καὶ ἡ μέριμνα γιὰ τὴν ἀκεραιότητα τῆς κτίσεως, ἀποτελοῦν, ἀπὸ χριστιανικὴ ἄποψη, ζωτικὲς ἐκφάνσεις τῆς

εὐχαριστιακῆς πραγμάτωσης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῆς κλήσης τοῦ ἀνθρώπου νὰ καταστεῖ «ἱερέας» τῆς δημιουργίας.

Μὲ τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτό, εὐχόμενοι αἴσιο καὶ εὐκαρπο σὲ ἔργα ἀγαθὰ καὶ θεάρεστα τὸ νέο ἐκκλησιαστικὸ ἔτος, ἐπικαλούμαστε σὲ ὅλους σας, μὲ τὶς πρεσβεῖες καὶ τὴ μεσιτεία τῆς Παναγίας τῆς Παμμακαρίστου, τὴν πανίερη εἰκόνα τῆς ὁποίας μὲ εὐλάβεια φυλάττουμε στὸν Πάνσεπτο Πατριαρχικὸ Ναό, καὶ «στόμασι καὶ καρδίᾳ καὶ θελήματι» ἀσπαζόμαστε, τὴ χάρη καὶ τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτήρα μας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ ὁποίου τὸ ὑπεράγιο ὄνομα νὰ εἶναι εὐλογημένο καὶ δοξασμένο νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ στοὺς ἀπέραντους αἰῶνες. Ἀμήν!

2026, Σεπτεμβρίου 1^η,
+ ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Βαρθολομαῖος,
διάπυρος πρὸς Θεὸ εὐχέτης ὅλων σας