

Message from Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch

Bartholomew I, patriarch of Constantinople

Bose, 8-11 September 2010

XVIII International Ecumenical Conference

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XVIII International Ecumenical Conference **on Orthodox spirituality**

Dear Prior Enzo,

Beloved, members of the Community in Bose,

Assembled conference speakers and participants,

It is with great pleasure and sincere delight that we respond to the gracious invitation of the Prior of your sacred brotherhood and sisterhood the organizers of the international gathering to address a message on the occasion of the conference entitled "Communion and Solitude in the Orthodox Tradition" to be officially presented by His Eminence Metropolitan Kallistos as our formal representative to this auspicious assembly.

As a community that is monastic in nature and ecumenical at heart, we recognize that the two elements that will be discussed at this year's annual conference are at once your experiences and expectations as you lead a life of fellowship and prayer. In many ways, your monastic life demonstrates the yearning and understanding of monks and nuns through the centuries, from the early desert fathers and mothers to the cenobitic and eremitic practitioners of the undivided Church of the first millennium, down to the priories and nunneries across confessional borders in our own day.

Moreover, your invaluable monastic contribution in our troubled age and world reflects the fourth-century definition by Evagrius of Pontus of the monk as being "apart from all, while being a part of all" (On Prayer, Chapter 1.24, On Prayer) and reveals the sixth-century exhortation of Barsanuphius and John to be "with others as if not being with them." (Letter 1.73). For solitude and silence ultimately instruct us in the proper way of relating to and being in communion with others.

This year, your community's conference on Orthodox spirituality gathers in meditation and deliberation without someone who was a regular participant and prayerful presence among you, the late Dom André Louf (1929-2010), a Trappist priest and abbot, a monastic scholar and author, as well as an ecumenical and gentle heart. May his memory be eternal!

Beloved friends, from the warm embrace of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, we extend to all of you our fervent prayers and wholehearted wishes for a successful and memorable conference.

Bartholomew I,
patriarch of Constantinople

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