

Message from Bartholomew I, ecumenical patriarch

His holiness the ecumenical patriarch Bartholomew

Monastery of Bose, 4-7 September 2013

XXI International Ecumenical Conference

The disciple of Christ is committed to an ascetic journey from the seeds of baptism to the maturity of holiness

XXI International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox Spirituality

in collaboration with the Orthodox Churches

THE AGES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Monastery of Bose, 4-7 September 2013

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate,
August 29, 2013

Beloved Brother Enzo and members of the Bose Community,
Dear conference speakers and participants,

It is a great delight to communicate this message to you from the Holy and Apostolic See of St. Andrew and Mother Church of Constantinople in light of your XXI international gathering on Orthodox spirituality, which this year will address "The ages of the spiritual life."

We still retain with vividness the fond memories of our recent visit to Bose, where once again we witnessed the genuine hospitality and inspirational worship of the brothers and sisters of your blessed community. It reminded us of the profound impact and powerful influence exercised by devoted people in prayer.

This is precisely why the subject of your conference is crucial. For it will provide an opportunity to explore the breadth and depth of the ages and stages of the spiritual life. Whether one speaks of a single stage of the "life in Christ" (as St. Paul), of three stages leading to sanctification (as in the traditional teaching of purification, illumination and deification), of seven ways of divinization through the sacraments, of numerous ways through struggle against vices and acquisition of virtues (as in the thirty rungs of the spiritual ladder), or of endless spiritual progress (as in the "epektatic" movement on earth as in heaven) - the disciple of Christ is committed to an ascetic journey from the seeds of baptism to the maturity of holiness in "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. 4.13) Such, of course, is ultimately the goal of the Christian life, which is observed intensely in the monastic life.

We wish you all a successful and stimulating conference.

Prayerfully yours,

+ Bartholomew,
archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and ecumenical patriarch

LE ETÀ DELLA VITA SPIRITUALE