



MESSAGE
By His All-Holiness
Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
on the
**85th Anniversary of the
HOLODOMOR**

Beloved children in the Lord: May God's grace and peace be with you.

As every year, we are communicating with all of you with a heavy heart from the historic and martyric Mother Church of Constantinople while prayerfully commemorating the Holodomor of the Ukrainian People, the tragic and inhumane events of the years 1932-1933, when countless human beings lost their lives through deliberate and brutal famine. This tragedy inscribes itself among other atrocities against humanity and God's creation committed over the twentieth century, the most violent in history thus far.

As we pray for the repose of the victims' souls and for the healing of this painful wound in the conscience of your blessed Nation, we remind all people of goodwill that the Church does not tolerate injustice or any type of force that undermines social cohesion. Rather, it underscores the social teaching of the Christian Gospel and promotes diakonia and philanthropy. Orthodoxy's responsibility is to serve as a positive challenge for contemporary humankind, a God-inspired perspective of life and an expression of authentic freedom.

When remembering the past and learning from its tragedies, we ought to move ahead into the future with compassion and forgiveness. For, it is in the Church, the mystical Body of Christ, that we are spared from sorrow and suffering, while at the same time we find strength to forgive and love all people. Our Ecumenical Patriarchate is strong because it has a sacrificial love and acts through humility and the Cross. His story is filled with martyrdom and sacrifice for the world, for all peoples and for all nations. The Church of Constantinople, as the Mother Church, is the incarnation of the free love of Christ, who does not crucify but is crucified, who sacrifices His soul for His friends – for all men.



For this reason, it is inconceivable that the Ecumenical Throne – which according to the Holy Canons is responsible for the unity and stability of Orthodoxy – would remain indifferent when an Orthodox people, such as the Ukrainian people, suffer and seek a solution to the ecclesiastical problems that have tormented them for centuries. Therefore, we intervene by obligation – always on the basis of authentically ecclesiastical, truly universal and purely supra – national criteria – for the truth and tradition of the Church, the defense of canonical order and the identity of Orthodoxy, all for the purpose of building up the body of Christ, not for ourselves and not for demonstrating worldly strength and power. By remaining indifferent, we would be left with no excuse before God and history.

This great responsibility of the Mother Church, the Holy and Great Church of Christ, certainly has no limits. That is why, just as we have granted autocephaly to all local Churches, the Holy and Sacred Synod has similarly decided to grant autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, which is tormented in many ways, so that she, too, may join the plenitude of Orthodoxy in unity and internal peace. Only the First Throne of Orthodoxy, the Church of Constantinople, holds this high responsibility according to the Holy and Sacred Canons.

May God grant rest to the souls of all the victims of the Holodomor, and may He grant all of you, dear children, patience in trials, as well as love and forgiveness for one another. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the 24th of November, 2018

Your fervent supplicant before God,

ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Πατριάρχης

✠ BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch

1932-33

