



Ecumenical Patriarch: even amid persecution and attacks on family, the Church endures

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At a conference commemorating the 1700th anniversary of the Edict of Milan, in which Emperor Constantine decreed the toleration of Christianity in the Roman Empire, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople said that “the divinely-inspired Emperor established in action and legislation the fundamental principles on which modern Christian societies – and by extension and analogy, the entire world – are based to this day.”

“The basic human rights, for which all peoples and societies strive, but which are frequently perceived in a sense of retribution that does not resemble the spirit of the Gospel or Christianity, comprise spiritual values, which the Emperor Constantine planted within the governance and structure of his empire because he discerned and predicted that this was the only way of securing progress and preserving peace,” said Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who holds the primacy of honor among the heads of Orthodox churches.

“It is essentially the same values that the modern world has inherited, except that titles have been altered, while humanity now formally declares that it does not believe in God and the hour of Christianity has passed,” he continued. “Nevertheless, despite these cries, Christianity and the Truth are not only not outdated, but have in fact increasingly matured.”

The Ecumenical Patriarch added:

Faith is not a social phenomenon or mere ideology. It is the sanctifying grace, which descends upon us and visits us eternally and silently ... something discernible among those who obey God’s will but even recognizable among those who disobey his commandments. Despite frequent and dangerous reformations, which sometimes destroy the very foundations of society, such as a lack of



respect for the sacred institution of family and marriage, the legal recognition and regulation of serious mortal sins or unnatural conditions, contemporary state institutions are deeply permeated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the blood of the Church Martyrs.

This is why we Christians are not dragged down and do not despair. We know that people make mistakes in their judgments, thoughts, programs, ideologies and considerations. However, the Church does not; the Church is not abolished, even when Christian nations are dissolved, even when the Church lives and exists in (sometimes harsh) captivity, even when the Church is persecuted. The Church is in the world and serves the world, but it is not controlled by the world, which is the reason why evil does not affect it. The spirit conquers the flesh. Christ reigns forever. The Lord is victorious over all.

Source: [Catholic Culture](#)