

MESSAGE

by His All-Holiness

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

to the International and Interdisciplinary Conference:

“Envisioning the Greek Landscape: From Thera to Climate Change”

(Athens, October 19–21, 2023)

Dear organizers, speakers, and participants,

It is indeed a special joy to communicate with you in response to Dr. Katerina Lagos Tsakopoulos, who asked for a personal message on the occasion of the conference organized by the Simon Fraser University, the University of California (Los Angeles), Sacramento State University, and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens on the subject of “Envisioning the Greek Landscape: From Thera to Climate Change” from October 19 to 21, 2023.

First, we are delighted that you are discussing such a vital issue at such a critical time, when much like the rest of the world, which has experienced the repercussions of climate change making daily news—temperature records in seas and cities, melting of the Arctic Sea and Antarctic ice, and extreme droughts—Greece too has endured severe floods and forest fires with their respective loss of lives and economic damage.

Second, we are gratified that you are considering the spiritual dimensions of climate change and creation care. We have repeatedly stated that the protection of the natural environment is not merely a scientific, technological, or political challenge. It is primarily a result of how we perceive the world. The fundamental question is: Do we envisage this planet as a sacred gift from God? Or do we reduce its resources

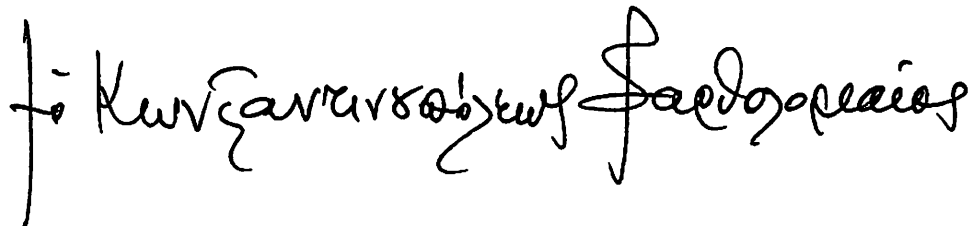
simply to an object for our use and abuse, for experimentation and exploitation?

And finally, we are pleased that you are exploring this theme from an international and inter-disciplinary approach, bringing together scholars and scientists, as well as corporate and civic leaders. Moreover, four distinguished academic institutions have jointly decided to address this most crucial contemporary challenge, which will eclipse every other major problem of our time. This is why even the World Economic Forum has appealed for “a great reset” of capitalism, arguing that sustainability will only be achieved through drastic lifestyle changes. The response to and reversal of climate change can only occur when all segments of society and all disciplines of science work in a committed and collaborative way.

Therefore, we take this opportunity to wish all of you a successful conference. And we look forward to hearing about your deliberations and conclusions.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, on October 15, 2023

Prayerfully yours,



+ BARTHOLOMEW

*Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch*