

ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ
ΠΟΙΜΑΝΤΙΚΗ ΔΙΑΚΟΝΙΑ ΣΤΟΝ ΧΩΡΟ ΤΗΣ ΥΓΕΙΑΣ

PASTORAL HEALTHCARE
OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

**The Final Official Conclusions
of the
5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for
Pastoral Health Care¹**

In a world that has been wounded by a deadly Pandemic, where social unrest and the threats and consequences of wars have overshadowed everyday life, the 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care took place on the island of Rhodes between the 5th and the 9th of October 2022. With the prayers and blessings of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Conference was organized by the Patriarchal Network for Pastoral Health Care. Representing His All-Holiness was His Eminence Kyrillos, Metropolitan of Rhodes and President of the Patriarchal Network. With the generous and favorable hospitality of the Honorable Kambourakis Family, the Conference took place at the *Rodos Pallas Hotel*, where all the 200 participants were accommodated.

The participants were representatives of the Archdioceses and Metropolises of the Ecumenical Throne, the Patriarchates of Alexandria and Jerusalem, the Churches of Cyprus, Serbia, Greece and Albania. Taking part were Professors of the Theological Schools of Thessalonica, Athens and Boston, together with the Higher Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens and those of other Schools throughout the world. There were representatives from the Orthodox Academy of Crete and the Academy of Volos and of various other Institutions and Associations. Represented were also Fellowships of Orthodox Medical and Health Professionals that are associated with the *Patriarchal Network*. There were many from the area of Health and many educators that attended as independent attendees who came to participate in the endeavors of the Mother Church.

¹ “The Final Official Conclusions of the 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care” is not an official document of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and does not state its official views. The “Conclusions” attempt to capture the spirit of the Conference, as it was expressed and formulated in the presentations, the discussions and the dialogues of its participants. They are offered as a tool for further discussion regarding the topics addressed.

The theme of the Conference was *“Ministering to mankind today, we care for the mankind of tomorrow”*. This theme was chosen because, in this difficult, painful and disturbing era, a *new reality* has developed where insecurity and uncertainty predominate. This reality brings with it new challenges. The theme of the Conference hides two basic questions: where shall we now go after all that we have undergone? What type of world will we prepare for the future generations of Mankind? These are the two most crucial and diachronic questions for the society in which we live and for the Church to which we belong.²

In his opening message to the Conference participants, His All-Holiness stated there was never a period in the history of Mankind where idyllic conditions prevailed in totality, and there will never be such a period in the future. We, though, have the responsibility in every period of time and in every situation to minister to our fellow human beings as witnesses of the Cross and the Resurrection. *“For the Church is the place and the way where God labors to achieve the Mankind’s salvation.”* It is impossible to bear Christian witness by being an introvert or remaining indifferent to *“the human matters”* that concern the faithful.³

The responsibility to serve, to minister and to care presupposes that we do not remain observers of the events that take place around us, but that we place ourselves as eager disciples and servants before the call of Christ who says: *“pastor my sheep”*. It also presupposes that we have the willingness to face sincere, honest and strict self-criticism, to realize our drawbacks and our inadequacies. Only in this way will we be able to change and improve the way we minister to and care for the Body of Christ and every human being. As the Coordinator of the Patriarchal Network, Fr. Stavros Kofinas, stressed: *“if we do not have the flaming desire and willingness to change the circumstances that we are now living, these Conferences of the Patriarchate do not have any meaning... For the Church will remain on the sidelines of society in discord, distant from a genuine Christian Orthodox expression of Faith, rooted in the formalities of ritual and in religious absurdity, unable to respond to the existential pursuits of humans today.”*⁴

In the spirit of the Conference’s theme, which binds together the past, the present and the future, twenty-six speakers expressed constructive

² Stavros Kofinas, Protopres, *“Presentation of the aim of the Conference”*, Opening Ceremony, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

³ *Message of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, Opening Ceremony, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

⁴ Kofinas, *ibid.*

thoughts and posed questions and concerns that promoted interesting and lively discussions. These discussions took place in a free and open spirit of dialogue, bearing witness to the dialectic and unifying role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its Pastoral Network. As the Metropolitan of Rhodes stated during the Opening Ceremony of the Conference, this unifying role is much needed in these difficult times. *“The Pandemic threatened the Church Body and all of Mankind like a fire the sweeps through and devastates everything, destroying lives and livelihood. But beyond everything else, the Pandemic placed the Church’s unity and our interpersonal relationships in danger. This is the most dangerous threat of the Pandemic because it undermines every possible healing process. We should not allow the “ashes” of the Pandemic to overtake us and to disable us. We should minister to Mankind today by cultivating a spirit of unity, to care of the Mankind of tomorrow that will be firmly grounded in God’s love.”*⁵

In the effort to detect the reasons for this discord and to find way to heal it, the themes of the presentations addressed many topics that came together like interconnecting vessels.

It was first ascertained that one basic cause for this discord evolves from a *magical understanding of things*, particularly in relation to our understanding of religion and the Church. What is characteristic of this phenomenon is that many attribute their hardships and their difficulties to magical or superstitious reasons. Unfortunately, this is often cultivated by many within the ecclesiastical community, particularly in the way the Church’s liturgical life and holy objects are taken out of its Eucharistic and sacred context, forming a type of ecclesiastical idolatry. This magical conception does not allow humans to have an in-depth perspective of their self, to come *“to know”* their self. Such a conception undermines every effort toward reconciliation and distorts the meaning of love and Divine Grace.⁶ *“The person who practices religion in a magical way relies on the practice of rite. The person of faith, who believes in the living God, relies on the affirmation that God Himself has given; that He will always remain faithful to the testament He has made with His people. This way of believing inspires a person’s freedom and annuls all magical qualities of faith.”*⁷

⁵ Kyrillos, Metropolitan of Rhodes, Representative of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and President of the Patriarchal Network, *Official Opening of the Conference*, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

⁶ Athanasios Papathanasiou, *“Can today’s discord be healed?”*, Opening Presentation, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

⁷ Ibid.

Unfortunately, this *magical perspective* becomes even more complex when it is projected onto a Christ who is an inhumane and hateful despot, a magician that performs miracles, who spreads fear, and who approaches human situations with ethical severity. He is a God “*who wants to offend human beings by first imposing upon them that they must abandon all of the basic components that characterizes their human nature.*”⁸ He creates and regenerates an ethical type of religiosity, a systemic hypocrisy. Therefore, he projects a pseudo-philanthropy which eliminates the mystery of relationships, of meeting one another, and that of the final union that will allow our entrance into the *Paradise of Communion*. This God deforms the meaning of demons and the true meaning of healing, as it appears in the New Testament.⁹

Unfortunately, those that cultivate and promote this sick way of thinking and who contribute to this confusion and discord are many clergy and “pious faithful” that associate themselves directly with a particular type of religiosity. There are also many who are not associated with “the inner church center” that also cultivate such a magical religiosity and often mix it in with other religiosities and “spiritualities” as well. This phenomenon engenders different spiritual and psychological pathologies and averts any type of constructive dialogue.

A major origin of this phenomena is the problematic and inadequate formation of the pastor. The Conference highlighted that many enter the priesthood out of mere enthusiasm or out of the desire to mimic a clerical prototype they have instilled in their mind; from a narcissistic need to elevate themselves over others to gain respect; for reason of sheer vanity; to situate themselves into a profitable profession so as to live a comfortable life. Furthermore, many enter the priesthood hoping to avoid the responsibilities of life by entering a “protective” environment, which they consider to be the Church. It is obvious that such motivations make clergy inadequate to take on the required pastoral responsibilities needed in this critical and complex world. It indicates an underlying pathology that many times is not obvious to others. *What makes this most serious is that, in the finale, if someone who has the responsibility*

⁸ Chrysostomos Stamoulis, “*A inhumane and hateful Christ: pastoral implications of a misinterpreted theology*”, 1st Sessoin, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

⁹ Christos Karakolis, “*Healing and demons in the New Testament*”, 2nd Sessoin, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

*of caring for others and suffers from a psychological pathology, he or she can be dangerous to others to the point of death.*¹⁰

A principle of pastoral formation is to examine the motivations and the maturity of the pastor and of those that desire to serve as clergy to verify: 1) his spiritual and psychological health; 2) his willingness, zeal, right-mindedness and capability to minister to the multiple needs and demands of the flock of Christ and the wider community; 3) his personhood, as a living bearer of the joy of the Gospel, which radiates hope for the salvation of the world with love and genuine philanthropy.¹¹

Pastoral formation is a diachronic journey, an “excursion” that leads to spiritual and psychological maturity, founded upon self-knowledge and spiritual depth into the mystery of Divine Economy (*Oeconomia*) as it was revealed in the Incarnation of Christ and at Pentecost. In this journey, one will be able to recognize the talents that have been granted to him by the Lord and to use them in a valuable way throughout one’s ministry. In this journey, one will also develop a clear discretion that will help him encounter every person he encounters in a proper way. The Conference stressed that the pastor, and all who care for their fellow men and women, need to continually remain informed on how to handle the spiritual and psychological dimensions of physical, psychological and spiritual ailments, so as to prevent them from practicing any wrongdoing.¹²

The Conference discussed the existing difficulties and the need for closer cooperation between Medical Science and the Church. There is a gap between Medical Science and the Church, which can only be bridged by way of honest dialogue that will pose the existing assumptions that impede cooperation. This dialogue must have a common aim: to help and heal those

¹⁰ Vasileios Thermos, Protopres, “*Difficulties in pastoral formation*”, 4th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

¹¹ Arnaldo Pangrazzi, Fr., “*Difficulties in pastoral formation*”, 4th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

¹² Vasileios Thermos, Protopres, Arnaldo Pangrazzi, Fr., “*Difficulties in pastoral formation*”, 4th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

who suffer and are ill.¹³ This was revealed through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, who came into the world to heal Mankind in its entire entity.¹⁴

An obstacle in this dialogue and cooperation is the increasing “commercialization” of health care and a strong tendency toward a *biopolitical* view regarding health where the State determines and solves all the issues regarding Health. In such a system, medical doctors and other health care providers lose their personal entity and their ability to practice their profession self-consciously. They are demoted to mere employees that must satisfy the objectives of the policies of a Health System. Even more, the ill person exists only as an object of exploitation. Such a strategy alienates the patient physically, psychologically and spiritually, and creates many obstacles for one to be healed in his and her entire entity as a person.¹⁵

The Conference recognized that, during the Pandemic, many were those that served in the area of Health that offered care and philanthropy with open hearts, self-denial and love, exceeding human limits under difficult circumstances so as to save the lives of those that suffered hardships. Because of this, those that attended the Conference and serve in healthcare stressed their need to find spiritual support within the Church on a universal level. Reference was made to the need to offer special support to women that serve in the field of medicine, as they face many difficulties.

The participants discussed how the Church can offer this support and constitute an open dialogue with those in healthcare. It was ratified that this can be done by forming alliances with local Churches, medical and nursing associations, and strengthening the initiative in creating fellowships for Orthodox Christian Medical Professionals and Health Care Providers that will be associated with the Patriarchal Network.¹⁶

If we want to minister to the Mankind of tomorrow, we need to focus on certain basic areas that will be decisive for the future. With this in mind, the Conference focused on five major areas of concern: 1) the family of

¹³ Demetrios Linos, Protopres., M.D., John Kokakis, Archim. M.D., Simeon Menne, Deacon, M.D. Sister Theopveysti, M.D., Gerardo Dueñas Pérez, Fr., Kostas Zorbas, “*Medical Science and the Church: developing a working relationship*”, 4th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

¹⁴ Stamoulis, Ibid.

¹⁵ *Medical Science*, Ibid.

¹⁶ “*Patriarchal Network*”: *Planning the future together*”, 13th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

tomorrow; 2) the vision of today's youth; 3) the elderly; 4) the parish; 5) the trauma of war.

The presentations and discussions verified that the family is the foundation of society and the ecclesiastical community. The relationship between man and woman is sanctified and made holy in and through the Holy Sacrament of Marriage by Divine Grace, and it is completed "*within the communion of marriage*", as this communion is integrated into the life of the ecclesiastical community. The couple's children are also integrated into this community through the Holy Sacrament of Baptism.

It is necessary for a family to foster a stable and safe environment, to have defined roles by which its members will feel accepted and loved. Gradually, the traditional patriarchal family, which had stable ties and prototypes, is being replaced by a new type of family, where parenting is disassociated from sexuality, gender and the capability of reproduction. What predominates in these families is a confusion of parental identity, the difficulties of the role of the parent, the issue of "parental childbirth", which raises multiple ethical and deontological questions.¹⁷

The anxiety that the child and adolescent of our times experience is related to the confusion of prototypes, points of references, norms and lack of boundaries within a world which is being affected by social and cultural changes that are constantly emerging, causing great perplexities and a lack of a sense of stability. We live in a culture of "*anti-thinking*" (αντι-σκέψη). Being that one does not have the capability to anticipate, to wait for something, one cannot simulate his or her mind to engage in an inner thought process. As a result, myth is discarded, and the mind is restricted to present reality. Today, many parents live as adolescents and are unable to remain firm and consistent in placing limits. Their children behave as if they are intoxicated, "spell-bound", and are allowed to do whatever they desire. The child does not have the ability to detain his or her desires, the ability to distinguish "*the good*" (that which is healthy) from "*the bad*" (that which is life-threatening). There is no need to problematize one's "self" about matters beyond one's own being. These elements are all prerequisites for the "*opening of the mind*" – the "*ability to think*". Due to this dysfunction, the child constructs an erroneous reality with extreme phantasies regarding himself or herself and others. Confined to this pseudo-

¹⁷ Demetrios Anagnostopoulos, "*The Family in the Modern Age of Globalization*", 7th Session, "*The family of the future*", 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

reality, the child then progresses toward a pseudo-maturity that is manifested by and through extreme behaviors. What are the consequences? New psychopathologies have now been detected in adolescents, with physical and psychological components such as various types of addictions, bulimia or anorexia, panic, bodily distortion, masochistic tendencies, that are often sexualized. Yet, despite these realities, the adolescent still seeks to find his or her “self” in a relationship with the “other”, in order to attain ontological verification and completion. The crucial question is, who will be the “other” that he or she will meet? This “other” can, positively or negatively, determine the young person’s future irrevocably.¹⁸

Most family members in our times communicate in a poor and inadequate manner. The obstacles that prohibit constructive communication are mainly: 1) the absence of family members from their home environment due to responsibilities or other commitments (work, school, activities); 2) because each member prefers to remain isolated from the others, confined in his or her own “world”. The undisciplined and unrestrainable use of the internet undoubtedly feeds into this isolation. It becomes a substitute in the “meeting of the other”, and it creates a distorted virtual reality that traps each family member even more into his and her insecurities and in unhealthy dependent “internet” relationships that do not promise any positive future.¹⁹

We must fully understand these components in order to contribute and assist family members to improve and reconstruction their communication skills. It is of ultimate importance that we make every effort to create dialogue with today’s families, even though may we find their models strange, perplexing or disapproving. It is only through dialogue that we will be able help them in the difficulties they now face and will have to face tomorrow. If we leave the members of the family alone in their difficulties, that will lead to a type of psychological and spiritual death, not only for each separate member, but for the societies of the future.²⁰

This need for dialogue and communication was most emphasized during the session “*The vision of young people today*”, where four young people from different parts of the world, (U.S.A, Great Britain, Greece, Australia), took part

¹⁸ Evgenia Soumaki, M.D., “*The Adolescent – New Pathologies*”, 7th Session, “*The family of the future*”, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

¹⁹ Manolis Sfakianakis, “*Internet and socialization*”, 10th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

²⁰ Anagnostopoulos, Ibid.

via Zoom. In this most moving meeting, all four young adults clearly stated that it is imperative that young people talk to others, especially to the clergy, who will try to understand their difficulties and their concerns. They also said that many times youth need to reach the point of dismay and despair before they ask for help. Most young people want the clergy and the ecclesiastical community to accept them by offering them comforting and accepting love, without judgement or offering “ready-made solutions” to solve their problems. This is desired by those that have a close relationship with the Church and by those that are distant. They want to be recognized as existing members of the community and to take an active role in it, especially in its liturgical services. The young adults that took part in the Conference agreed that, in general, young people are worried about the extremities that are taking place in today’s societies. They feel things have to change and they anticipate a better “cosmos”. They hope that they will not be disappointed.²¹

Just as much as the future of Mankind depends on its Youth, so too is it dependent on its Elderly. As much attention as we should give the young, so too must we care after those that are increasing in age. They are *“our parents and our teachers, to whom we owe our lives and the beautiful things of life. They are the ones that fought so that we can be free. They worked to leave behind that which we continue to develop today.”*²² The way we treat and care for them today will determine how the adults of tomorrow will care for those older than themselves. It will determine the human values, their lives and the way they are related to history and our heritage, our prototypes and our social entity. If we do not respect and care for the aged, there cannot be a diachronic continuation of humanity. It was pointed out that, due to the low birth rate and the rise of life expectancy, there is an overwhelming burden on individuals, families and society at large to care for their beloved elderly. Care offered to the elderly resembles the offering of the Eucharist, where we remember all our Forefathers. In the same spirit, the Church has taken a leading role in caring for the aged by establishing many facilities for the elderly. The *Patriarchal Network* committed itself to undertake a coordinating role, providing a platform for

²¹ Nikolaos Douligieris, Protopres., Kallia Papadouli (*Hellas*), Constance Poplos (*USA*), Andreas Samoutis (*U.K*), Nathan Christopher Politis (*Australia*), “*The vision of young people today*”, 9th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

²² Kimon Volikas, “*The elderly and the future of the homes for the aging*”, 9th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

dialogue amongst these facilities to support both those that operate them and those that serve them.

The Church's main center for offering care "*in this world*" is the parish, which should function as a community that heals within the catholic love that it provides and conveys.²³ Thus, the participants of the Conference dealt with vital issues that will determine the parish's future. Where does the parish stand today and in what direction is it heading?

The parish is a place of meeting, made up of different types of people, (married, single, parents, children, youth, together with elderly). The identity of many parishes has changed as to their cultural identity due to migration, mixed marriages, newly baptized converts and a transit population that does not often reside near their church or original parish. This has affected the way we pastor, and the way parishioners relate to one another.

In the parish, the Church is experienced as an "*ecclesiastical event*". Here, parishioners meet Christ and are integrated into the Church (the Body of Christ) through the Eucharist as one united community (*koinonia*). Here, they will discover prototypes, steadfast and well-defined relationships. Here, there is a cultural reference related to the past and the present, that gives perspective to the future, which is not limited to a place or to time, but which looks toward eternity. Here, the entity of each person is designated and completed as an image of God. Here, at the Sacrificial Table, Jesus is continually incarnated. *The mystery of the Incarnation tears down the old habits of human religiosity and introduces a new testament, a new "cosmos"; an earth-shaking creation of relationships and community, resistance and change.*²⁴ Here, we are given the possibility to act as God acts, in poverty, in compassion, in humility, so that people can reconcile with one another in peace and in unity.

The question that was posed at the Conference was: does today's parish indeed fulfill these principles? Is it a true meeting point where the Incarnation is experienced in a living way through the Eucharist? Is it there that we *meet* Christ? Is it a place where we can discover and renew loving relationships, where our wounded existences as persons can be healed through repentance and the rejoining of one another in love? *The fact that most people have lost the sense of their parish as a healing community is the central cause for the*

²³ "*The parish today and tomorrow. Group discussions*". 5th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

²⁴ Stamoulis, Ibid.

*secularization of the Church.*²⁵ This is the greatest pastoral challenge we face today.

The participants of the Conference cited that the Pandemic brought to the forefront the disharmony that had for time pre-existed amongst us. The consequences of the Pandemic are that parishioners are having difficulties in re-engaging into community life as they did before the “*lock-down*”. What has deferred parishioners in coming to church services is the live-streaming of services, that appears to have replaced the physical presence and participation in the Eucharist. The pandemic has brought to the surface the lack of a pastoral support system, a “*pastoral infrastructure*, on many levels of ministry within the parish, especially in caring for the homebound, the isolated and the bereaved. A major problem is that new visiting restrictions of healthcare institutions have made it difficult for clergy and relatives to visit and give support to those hospitalized. As for the bereaved, during the peak of the Pandemic, care and bereavement itself became more complex due to funeral restrictions.

Throughout all the Conference and considering all that has been thus described, the participants emphasized the need for a new type of catechism, particularly that of the adults; a catechism that touches on people’s existential concerns and difficulties that will not remain limited to mere narrow religious education of doctrine, rites and practices. Ecclesiastical catechism needs to offer a way in fostering a life that will lead each person to an existential fulfillment and an ecclesiastical completion.²⁶

The Conference took place under the clouds of the war in the Ukraine and during a time where there is social and political unrest. That is why a special session was devoted to the trauma of war in the military and in migrants. The exceptional work done by the Orthodox Parish of St. Andrew in Ghent, Belgium, was presented. Traumatized by bombings, the migrants seek comforting motherly love and paternal warmth before the tomorrow of a unpredictable future. Along the same line, the military seek encouragement and understanding regarding the difficulties they must face in carrying out their designated responsibilities. In both cases, each of these people carry with

²⁵ Antonios Kalligeris, Protopres., “*Pastoral challenges of religious instruction today*”, 8th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

²⁶ Antonios Kalligeris, Protopres., Paraskevi (Eve) Tibbs, “*Pastoral challenges of religious instruction today*”, 8th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

them their personal life difficulties that are complicated by the tragic suffering experienced in times of war.²⁷

The Conference verified that Divine Worship is the center of all spiritual support, of both those that suffer and those that minister to them. Throughout the long history of the Church, there were special petitions and prayers written because of calamities that threatened people's well-being and that of their Land. The liturgical tradition of the Church holds a pastoral dimension in that it invites its members to pray to God, asking that He will not forsake them, that peace predominate, that evil and the influence of the devil will not influence them, and that Christ will protect the world and its people with His Divine Grace and Philanthropy.²⁸

Following this tradition and recognizing the need to offer spiritual support to those that care for the sick, the Ecumenical Patriarchate designated the celebration of the *Synaxis of the Holy Doctors*. This was decided on after a proposal made by the *Patriarchal Network*. The Feast was first celebrated in October of 2021 and will be celebrated henceforth on the Sunday of the 18th of October or that Sunday following this date.

The newly written Divine Service of this Feast was presented at the Opening Session of the Conference. The Service was eloquently and beautifully written by *His Eminence, Kyrillos Metropolitan of Rhodes*. This Service is an addition to his valuable contribution to the Church as a hymn writer. It expresses his deep faith in God's grace and his pastoral discretion in healthcare.

We decided to include a Modern Greek and English translation in this publication to allow for a better understanding of the Service and to make it useful to those who cannot comprehend the original text. The English translation was done by *His Grace, Spyridon (Kezios), Bishop of Amastris*, and the Modern Greek translation was done by the *Patriarchal Network's* very capable philologist and professor, the Honorable Andreas Moratos.

May the Holy Doctors, who have ministered and cared to all the those who suffer throughout time, intercede for all those that are ill, for those that serve in the are of Health, and for the continual presence and contribution of

²⁷ Stephan Steele, Meletios Kouraklis, Archim., Pavlos Perletti, Protopres., Tatiana Letovaltseva, "War stress trauma in the military and of refugees", 6th Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

²⁸ Chrysostom Nassis, Protopres., *The dynamics of Orthodox Liturgy in facing crises*. 3rd Session, 5th International Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care, Rhodes, 2022.

the *Patriarchal Network*, together with the prayers and blessings of His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Throne
Rev. Stavros Kofinas,
Coordinator of the
Network of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for Pastoral Health Care
November 19, 2022
Rhodes