



Encountering the Mystery: Understanding Orthodox Christianity Today

Patriarch Bartholomew

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Encountering the Mystery: Understanding Orthodox Christianity Today Patriarch Bartholomew
As Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew is the symbol of unity for the self-governing national and ethnic Orthodox Christian churches throughout the world. He is well known for his commitment to protecting the environment, and for opening communications with other Christians as well as with Muslims and other religious groups. His efforts for raising environmental awareness globally have earned him the title "Green Patriarch."

Written with personal warmth and great erudition, *Encountering the Mystery* illuminates the rich culture and soul of Orthodox Christianity. Bartholomew traces the roots of Orthodox Christianity to its founding two thousand years ago, explores its spirituality and doctrine, and explains its liturgy and art. More especially, in a unique and unprecedented way, he relates Orthodox Christianity to contemporary issues, such as freedom and human rights, social justice and globalization, as well as nationalism and war.

With a recent rebirth of Orthodox Christian churches (particularly in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe), there has been great interest in understanding this important branch of Christianity with its close ties to the traditions of the early Church. As *USA Today* recently reported, Orthodox Christian churches throughout the country are drawing converts attracted by the beauty of its liturgy and inspired by its enduring theology. But for the general seeker, whatever their background, *Encountering the Mystery* is a rich spiritual source that draws upon the wisdom of millennia.

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