

The following letter was signed by Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rom and Ecumenical Patriarch and sent to Village Road Show Pictures.....

It is with sincere pleasure that we applaud *Politiki Kouzina*. Our attitudes toward food (preparing, eating, drinking and sharing a meal) form a microcosm of our attitudes about life. Sweets and spices reflect our understanding of existence; food and drink affect our concept of society.

Centuries of secularism have failed to reduce eating and drinking into a simple act. We see this in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. We also observe it in the rite of a meal, whether fasting or feasting. A meal is not only material; it is also profoundly spiritual. It does not only fill a biological need; but reveals a theological worldview.

Sharing a meal underlines the fact that one of the purposes of food is communion. It has been said that: "Man is what he eats." And, while this philosophy has largely determined a secular lifestyle, it nevertheless conceals an essential truth about humanity. The Bible defines human beings as hungry for God's grace. The image of a joyful banquet remains a central aspect of life, "until we eat and drink at God's table in the Kingdom."

All that exists is a gift of God's love. And all that exists looks for communion with God. The entire world is divine love shared as food and drink, so that we may "taste and see that the Lord is good." Man is called to receive this divine gift, and to return the blessing to God.

This film however, has a two-fold mission. On the one hand, it celebrates the sacred rituals of Constantinople, the historical See of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and a city steeped in spiritual traditions and treasures. But on the other hand, this film refers to all the difficulties and the problems that the Greek population of our City had to face for centuries, even to our days. And it is these problems that so much reduced and downsized the number of our minority here.

With the hope and constant prayer for a better tomorrow, bestowing upon all of you our patriarchal blessings and paternal prayers, we invoke upon you the abundant grace of Almighty God, the Great Host.

At the Patriarchate, 21 August 2004