Foreword

It is a great joy and honor to endorse the scholarly efforts of the eminent authors in this book, which explores the restoration of historic buildings throughout the world as a gesture of sustainable development and cultural preservation.

The distinguished editors of Seismic Assessment and Rehabilitation of Historic Structures, Professors Panagiotis Asteris and Vagelis Plevris, both of the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education in Greece, have – with the assistance and guidance of an international comprehensive board of advisors – invited and compiled the erudition and research of seventy-seven academics from sixteen countries on this significant, albeit sensitive subject.

If art is a reflection of the handiwork of the divine and architecture the revelation of heaven on earth through natural and man-made materials, then assessing the ways and means of rehabilitating historic structures is surely a sacred enterprise, whereby human minds and human hands seek to restore – perhaps we could adapt the religious language of “resurrecting” – classical edifices of magnificent beauty and lasting splendor, which have been affected by natural or other disaster.

Indeed, when it comes to architectural treasures, which have been compromised by human activity – whether willingly or unwillingly, as well as wittingly or unwittingly – our responsibility is rendered still greater.

Thus, as readers are invited to consider a range of structures – such as in the cathedral of Siena or the forum of Pompeii, the palace in Syracuse or the domes of Istanbul – they should remember that the evaluation and restoration of these buildings constitute a sacred ministry by the scientist and engineer alike. And in this noble task, we support and congratulate them wholeheartedly.

By His All-Holiness,

Bartholomew
Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch