



– FEATURED INSIDE –

- pg 1 Time Magazine names Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew among World's Top 100 Most Influential People
- pg 2 Archons accompany Archbishop Demetrios to the Church of Russia
- pg 3 Archons obtain 'Spiritual Renewal' during annual Lenten Retreat at St. Basil's Academy
- pg 4 Foreign Affairs Minister of Austria meets with Ecumenical Patriarch
Time 100 continued from pg 1
- pg 5 EU officials Barroso and Rehn visit Ecumenical Patriarchate
In Memoriam
- pg 6 European Parliament publishes briefing papers on Ecumenical Patriarchate and other Non-Muslim religious minorities in Turkey
- pg 7 Ecumenical Patriarch meets with Prime Minister of Greece; Receives Woodrow Wilson Award during Athens visit
- pg 8 Ecumenical Patriarch's Book, "Encountering the Mystery," is now available
Ecumenical Patriarch welcomes Archbishop of Greece to the Ecumenical Patriarchate
- pg 9 Catholics urge Turkish Government to return confiscated church
- pg 10 U.S. state legislatures continue to pass Religious Freedom resolutions for the Ecumenical Patriarchate
Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate attends National Council meeting
- pg 11 Photo Briefs
- pg 12 Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: Caring for the Environment



TIME Magazine names Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew among World's 100 Most Influential People

– NEW YORK, NY

In its fifth annual list of the world's most influential people, Time Magazine has recognized His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew among those in the category of Leaders and Revolutionaries. He joins a prominent list of people which include the Dalai Lama, President George

W. Bush, Russian President Vladimir Putin, presidential candidates Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and John McCain.

In fact, Time ranked His All Holiness as its 11th among the magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in the world. Archbishop Rowan Wil-

liams, head of the Anglican Church, offers an overview of His All Holiness' extraordinary accomplishments and his devotion toward environmental awareness. The article appears in Time's May 12th issue.

Read this article on page 4 >>



[Above] ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW – PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT: In his May trip to Greece, His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew visited a forest in Parnitha of Athens where parts of it burned in 2007. Together with members of ANIMA, an organization for the protection of animals, His All Holiness released an injured hawk back into the environment.
(Photo by N. Manginas)



Archons accompany Archbishop Demetrios to the Church of Russia

– MOSCOW, RUSSIA

Archbishop Demetrios of America, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, led a delegation from the Archdiocese on a seven-day official visit to the Patriarchate of Moscow. This first official visit of an Archbishop of America to the Church of Russia comes after the invitation of Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia. Together with the Metropolitans of Boston, Atlanta, and the Chancellor of the Archdiocese, National Commander Anthony J. Limberakis, Archons Michael Jaharis, Dr. Antoine Harovas, and Jerry Dimitriou accompanied the Archbishop together with Fr. Alex Karloutsos, Archon Spiritual Advisor, and other representatives of the Archdiocese.

Upon the first full day of the delegation in Moscow on May 23rd, Archbishop Demetrios and the members of the delegation journeyed to the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius Lavra, one of the most famous Orthodox Monasteries in the world, founded in 1340 by St. Sergius of Radonezh, the patron Saint of Russia. Archbishop Demetrios addressed seminarians of the Moscow Spiritual Academy and Theological Seminary on the theology that stands behind how the Message of the Gospel is transmitted to heal a wounded and ailing world, highlighting how SS. Cyril and Methodios brought the healing power of the Gospel to Russia through their apostolic mission from Constantinople. Following the return to Moscow, the delegation proceeded to the Greek Embassy, where Ambassador Ilias Klis greeted the delegation.

On Saturday, the feast of SS. Cyril and Methodios, Archbishop Demetrios, the hierarchs and clergy concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with Patriarch Alexy in the 14th-century Dormition Cathedral inside the Kremlin. This commemoration of Slavic Letters Day, a national and religious holiday throughout Russia, was followed with a reception at the official Patriarchal residence in-

side the Danilovsky Monastery.

On Sunday, the delegation celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the massive Christ the Savior Cathedral. At the conclusion of the Liturgy, the Archbishop spoke of the great emotion he felt returning to the cathedral after eight years, when he represented the Ecumenical Patriarchate, by leading the Patriarchal delegation that participated in its Consecration. He spoke of the remarkable progress of the Russian Orthodox Church and congratulated Patriarch Alexy for his leadership.

On Monday, the delegation visited the Central Hospital of the Moscow Patriarchate, a Church philanthropic institution restored to church own-

ership only in the last decade. Mrs. Aphrodite Skeadas, Treasurer of National Philoptochos, made a presentation of \$25,000 to the hospital and offered greetings and remarks on behalf of the 27,000 women of Philoptochos throughout the Archdiocese of America. Archbishop Demetrios personally greeted some of the patients on the neurological ward, blessing them and sharing a pastoral moment with them. The delegation's two physicians, Drs. Anthony Limberakis and Antoine Harovas joined discussions with staff relating to the healthcare system in Russia. Later in the afternoon, the Archbishop was received at the State Duma of the Russian Federation.

Before his official meeting with Pa-

triarch Alexy on Tuesday, the delegation enjoyed a private tour of the Kremlin palaces. The official meeting with Patriarch Alexy occurred at his official residence. Patriarch Alexy stressed the importance of the visit of His Eminence Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, adding "whom we wholeheartedly love." Archbishop Demetrios extended his appreciation and gratitude for the Patriarch's invitation remarking on the state of Orthodoxy in America stressing the challenges created by advanced technology and increasing secularization and relativization. His Eminence's conclusion that a byproduct of increased secularization is an increased thirst for God leading to more conversions to Orthodox Christianity became a theme that he and the Patriarch returned to throughout their meeting together.

Before departing for the United States, the Archbishop led the delegation through two visits to both the Danilov and Donskoy Monasteries.

Later reflecting on the historic visitation to the Church of Russia, Commander Limberakis remarked, "The invitation of Patriarch Alexy to our beloved Archbishop Demetrios, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is a manifestation of the mutual love and esteem that exists among the Orthodox Faithful throughout the world. The Church of Russia which received its Orthodox Christian faith from the Holy and Great Mother Church of Constantinople in the ninth century, and itself persecuted by the totalitarian communist regime for some 80 years, can be extremely supportive in the Archon religious freedom mission for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. We are very grateful to Archbishop Demetrios for inviting the Order of St. Andrew to participate in this historic visitation and to Patriarch Alexy for the gracious hospitality offered to the delegation during our stay in Russia." ■



[Top] Members of the delegation with Patriarch Alexy. [Above, top] Archbishop Demetrios presents a set of panagias to Patriarch Alexy. [Above, bottom] Archons celebrate the Divine Liturgy in Christ the Savior Cathedral. (D. Panagos)

Archons obtain 'Spiritual Renewal' during annual Lenten Retreat at St. Basil's Academy

— GARRISON, NY

"It is how we conduct our lives on this earth, how Christ-like we comport ourselves and how we serve as instruments of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior that will ultimately determine our salvation. Thus, it is the healthy and meaningful integration of our hectic daily lives into our spiritual lives that really matters," remarks National Commander Anthony Limberakis in his January announcement letter regarding the Archon Lenten Retreat. This year marked the fifth annual retreat which focused on "Spiritual Renewal" and provided Archons and their spouses an opportunity to study in greater detail the theological meaning of Holy Scripture and to participate in discussion with retreatmaster, His Grace Bishop Savas of Troas, chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

The retreat, organized by the Spirituality Committee of

the National Council of The Order of Saint Andrew, was held on April 11-12, 2008, at St. Basil's Academy in Garrison, NY. Serving as a philanthropic center for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, the academy provides a home for children in need and provides a loving Christian environment, where resident children are nurtured into adulthood.

The retreat began Friday evening with introductions in St. Basil's Chapel by Fr. Constantine Sitaras, executive director of the Academy, who provided a general history and overview of the program that the academy offers its youth. An Akathist service to the Most Holy Theotokos was later celebrated by Bishop Savas. A lenten meal followed served by the children of the academy. Dr. Limberakis later introduced His Grace who offered introductory remarks and provided an overview of the retreat itinerary.



His Grace, Bishop Savas teaches the importance of studying scripture to Archons and their spouses during the fifth annual Archon Lenten Retreat held at Saint Basil's Academy.

On Saturday, a morning prayer service was celebrated by retreat participants in the chapel, followed by breakfast. All participants received the newest edition of The Orthodox Study Bible and His Grace lectured on the remaining time in Great Lent, beginning with Lazarus Saturday through Holy Week and into the Resurrection of Our Lord. He emphasized in detail the relationship and unique perspectives each of the Evangelists wrote and how to take the lessons learned from this into our own daily spiritual lives.

Archon James Speros, chairman of the Spirituality Committee and coordinator of the retreat, concluded by thanking all Archon participants

who gathered saying, "The beautiful facilities of the St. Basil Academy provided the perfect environment for our retreat. We are very grateful to His Grace, Bishop Savas for serving as our retreat master and to Fr. Constantine Sitaras and children of St. Basil's for their hospitality during our time gathered here together. Let us take what we have learned here this weekend and apply it in our own lives, our parishes, and most importantly, in service to Christ." The retreat concluded with an evening prayer service. ■

Complete coverage is available in the photo gallery on www.archons.org/photo-gallery.



Standing in front of Saint Basil's Chapel, 50 participants marked a record attendance for this year's Lenten Retreat.

(Photos by J. Mindala II)

Foreign Affairs Minister of Austria meets with Ecumenical Patriarch

– ISTANBUL, TURKEY

On Tuesday, April 22, 2007, Mrs. Ursula Plassnik, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Austria, met with His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Phanar in Istanbul, Turkey.

At the conclusion of their meeting, Plassnik issued the following statement:

“It was important for me, from the very beginning in coming to Turkey, to meet

also His All Holiness. I have met him on a number of occasions before. He has been individually, as a person, and also from his function contributing tirelessly to the dialogue of religions, to a better understanding, to a world where people can live without fears, they can live their religion, their faith, or live even without faith. I think this is my interpretation of the freedom of religion that has to be possible in our European societies. It

is part of the standards we have in our European value system and value basis. This is also part of what we are negotiating with other countries who want to become members of the European Union.

For me it was also a gesture of personal appreciation and respect for His All Holiness also with regard to his many activities concerning the environment. He last informed me during his visit in

Vienna -this was before the Conference in Greenland. I would have like to get closer information on the results. I did, unfortunately, not have the time to follow up all the interesting subject matters of interest to both of us that could have discussed but I am confident that the link will continue, that we will continue to support him and his work, and that we'll meet again and continue to work together”. ■

TIME Magazine: 100 World's Most Influential People Leaders & Revolutionaries: Bartholomew I, by Archbishop Rowan Williams



The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople enjoys a resonant historical title but, unlike the Pope in the Roman Catholic context, has little direct executive power in the world of Eastern Orthodoxy. Patriarchs have had to earn their authority on the world stage, and, in fact, not many Patriarchs in recent centuries have done much more than maintain the form of their historic dignities.

Patriarch Bartholomew, however, has turned the relative political weakness of the office into a strength, grasping the fact that it allows him to stake out a clear moral and spiritual vision that is not tangled up in negotiation and balances of power. And

this vision is dominated by his concern for the environment. In a way that is profoundly loyal to the traditions of worship and reflection in the Eastern Orthodox Church, he has insisted that ecological questions are essentially spiritual ones. He has stressed that a world in which God the Creator uses the material stuff of the universe to communicate who he is and what he wants is one that demands reverence from human beings. Probably more than any other religious leader from any faith, Patriarch Bartholomew, 68, has kept open this spiritual dimension of environmentalism.

The title Ecumenical Patriarch historically refers to the Patriarch's pastoral responsibility for “the whole inhabited world.” This brave and visionary pastor has given a completely new sense to the ancient honorific; his work puts squarely on our agenda the question of how we express spiritual responsibility for the world we live in. ■

Williams is Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Anglican Church

EU officials Barroso and Rehn visit Ecumenical Patriarchate

– ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Senior European Union officials, Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, accompanied by Olli Rehn, Enlargement Commissioner, were welcomed by His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the Phanar in Istanbul, Friday, April 11, 2008. While no statement was made to the press concerning the content of talks between Barroso and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, it was expected that they focused their discussion on the Orthodox Theological School of Halki, which has been closed on the Princes' Islands by Turkish authorities since 1971.

A day prior to his meeting with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Barroso welcomed a recent Turkish decision to return property, such as school buildings, churches and orphanages, seized decades ago from religious minorities, such as Jewish and Christian foundations. Barroso said the move was "a welcome step forward to address the difficulties of non-Muslim religious communities". It was confirmed that a certain sluggishness continues in the various processes toward religious freedom rights.

The International Herald Tribune reported on Barroso's meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch. It can be read in its entirety below:

[EU chief visits Orthodox patriarchate in Istanbul](#)

Read this article on www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/04/11/



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew welcomes senior EU officials, Jose Manuel Barroso, Commission President, and Olli Rehn, Enlargement Commissioner, to the Phanar. (N. Manginas)

[europe/EU-GEN-Turkey-EU.php](#)

(AP) Istanbul, Turkey - The president of the European Commission met with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I in a visit to the Orthodox Patriarchate based in Istanbul on Friday. Jose Manuel Barroso is on the second day of a three-day visit to Turkey, which is vying for EU membership. On Thursday, Barroso welcomed a Turkish decision to return property, such as school buildings, churches and orphanages, seized from Jewish and Christian foundations decades ago. Barroso said the move was "a welcome step forward to address the difficulties of non-Muslim religious communities."

Turkey had seized the properties in 1974, around the same time it invaded Cyprus after a failed coup by supporters of uniting the island with Greece.

On Friday, Barroso and Bartholomew were expected to

discuss Turkey's resistance to reopen a Greek Orthodox seminary that was shut down more than two decades ago despite pressure from the EU and the U.S.

The Halki Theological School on Heybeliada Island near Istanbul was closed to new students in 1971 under a law that put religious and military training under state control in the predominantly Muslim country. The school closed its doors in 1985, when the last five students graduated.

The official argument for the seminary's closure is that a religious institution without government oversight is not compatible with secular institutions of Turkey, a country where all Muslim clerics are trained and paid by the government, and are handed scripts of Friday sermons by a state agency.

Bartholomew says Ankara refuses to open the seminary because it aims to prevent the church from raising new

leaders. The church's leader has to be a Turkish citizen, which makes it difficult for the dwindling Greek community of several thousand to produce any candidates.

Turkey's reluctance to reopen it stems from a deep mistrust many here feel toward the patriarchate because of its traditional ties with Greece, Turkey's historical regional rival.

Turkey does not recognize Bartholomew's international role as spiritual leader of hundreds of millions of Orthodox Christians worldwide. It rejects his use of the title "ecumenical," or universal, arguing instead that the patriarch is merely the spiritual leader of Istanbul's dwindling Orthodox community.

The patriarchate in Istanbul dates from the 1,100-year-old Orthodox Greek Byzantine Empire, which collapsed when Muslim Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople, today's Istanbul, in 1453. ■

In Memoriam

MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL!

Our thoughts and prayers go to the family and friends of our beloved member.

Chris C. Maletis Jr.
Primikirios
2/9/08
Portland, OR

European Parliament publishes briefing papers on Ecumenical Patriarchate and other Non-Muslim religious minorities in Turkey

– BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

A published report issued by the European Parliament stresses that Turkey's denial of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's "cultural and spiritual importance" as well as its "religious jurisdiction much beyond Turkey's borders" threatens the very "survival of the institution."

Requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, "Religious Freedom in Turkey: Situation of Religious Minorities" was compiled by a group of professors and researchers of the Center for European Studies and documents the continuing persecutions and restrictions of non-Muslim religious minorities by the Turkish government.

The manuscript, completed in late February, begins with an historical outlook on minority issues in Turkey and examines the Armenian, Jewish, and Greek Orthodox communities. It reviews the historic events which led to the decreasing population of the Greek community and closing of properties owned by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, stating:

"The Greek Church and its highest authority the patriarchate of Constantinople have also been affected from the state's suspicious stance. The Turkish state does not acknowledge the Patriarchate as a legal entity. One of the currently most discussed issues in this context is probably the Halki priest seminary which was closed in 1971. Turkish officials have made it clear that they are follow-

ing the principle of reciprocity, which means that the situation of the Greek minority has been made dependent from that of the situation of the Muslim minority in Greece."

The report then questions Turkey's position on the "Ecumenical" character of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, stating:

"Whereas the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate claims its ecumenical character, a ranking as the *primus inter pares* among the Orthodox Churches, the Turkish state has refused to acknowledge the Patriarch's spiritual leadership of the world wide Orthodoxy, but merely regards him as the head of the Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey.

"State authorities have often argued that any recognition of the ecumenical nature of the patriarchate might result in the establishment of an entity with legal international status which would then set the patriarch in a position comparable to that of a head of state. Any special status has been denied by Turkish authorities as they have seen it conflicting with the principle of secularism and as a backdoor for pro-Greek agitation and therefore as a threat to national security. Turkish nationalists have seen the patriarchate's insistence on its ecumenical character as a proof for its political orientation.

"It was also the fear that the Patriarchate might not confine itself to mere religious questions but would also act

as a political body which had driven the Turkish delegation in Lausanne (1923) to ask for the Patriarchate's removal. Whereas the treaty does not include any explicit mention of the status of the Patriarchate, it is a point of reference for advocates and opponents of its ecumenical title.

"On June 26, 2007, the Turkish Supreme Court of Appeals (Yargıtay) ruled (2007/5603) in the question of the ecumenical character of the patriarchate that the Phanar Greek Patriarchate (Fener Rum Patrikhanesi) was merely the representative of the church of the Greek minority in Turkey, that it was granted the right to remain in Turkey and that it was subject to Turkish law. The ruling stipulated that any special rights or privileges granted to a minority but denied to its own citizens would violate the constitutional principle of equality. Referring to the Treaty of Lausanne, the court declared that as there was no explicit mention of the patriarchate, there was also no legal ground for the claim for the title of an ecumenical patriarchate.

"It is the state's denial of the Patriarchate's cultural and spiritual importance and influence and its religious jurisdiction much beyond Turkey's borders which risks, in the light of a dwindling Greek Turkish minority, the survival of the institution. Considering the low numbers of Greek Turkish citizens remaining in the country, it will be increasingly difficult to meet the requirements stipulated in the decrees issued in 1923

and in 1970 laying down that not only the patriarch has to be a Turkish citizen, but also those who elect him and that they have to be carrying out ecclesiastical duties within Turkey.

"It has been the Turkish interpretation of secularism which does not provide the opportunity of legal personality for religious institutions. The Turkish state's denial of a legal personality of the Patriarchate results in the non-recognition of its ownership rights. Ownership has to be registered in foundations. However, properties might be still dispossessed when they are not used for their original purpose. The Patriarchate has no legal means to seek legal action against such infringements."

The report concludes, saying:

"The closing down of the Halki priest seminary in 1971 has virtually stopped the education of young generation clergymen for the Greek community in Turkey. The Armenian seminary was closed down in 1974. The Turkish state could be encouraged to handle this pressing issue of the clergymen of the religious communities."

The European Parliament report can be read in its entirety here:

www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/studies/download.do?file=20808 ■

Ecumenical Patriarch meets with Prime Minister of Greece; Receives Woodrow Wilson Award during Athens visit

– ATHENS, GREECE

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars of the U.S. Smithsonian Institution honored Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew during his recent visit to Greece with its Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service in recognition of his efforts on environmentalism and human rights.

The Ecumenical Patriarch arrived in Athens on May 13 for a five-day visit. His All Holiness was greeted at the Athens International Airport by the deputy foreign minister Theodoros Kassimis. Later that afternoon, His Beatitude, Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece hosted a luncheon in honor of the Ecumenical Patriarch's visit.

U.S. Ambassador to Greece, Daniel Speckhard met with His All Holiness on Wednesday offering his support for the re-opening of the Halki Seminary and religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. His All Holiness expressed his satisfaction with the meeting saying that both the United States and the Ecumenical Patriarchate “serve the same ideals of justice, freedom and all the supreme moral values that exist over time and universally, and because of this, we share many common positions.”

The U.S. envoy praised Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for his international efforts to promote environmental awareness as well as advancing inter-faith dialogue and the spiritual health of the world's citizens and acknowledged His All Holi-



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew meets with the Prime Minister of Greece Costas Karamanlis at the government's headquarters for a discussion during his trip to Athens, Greece.

ness' most recent appearance in Time Magazine's issue of the World's 100 Most Influential People in the category of Leaders and Revolutionaries.

The Ecumenical Patriarch later made a two-day visit to Larissa in which he was made honorary citizen and presented with the city's gold key by

its mayor, who emphasized that the city is welcoming the head of the Orthodox Church for the first time in 18 centuries. The following morning, His All Holiness celebrated the Divine Liturgy with Archbishop Ieronymos along with hierarchs and clergy of the

Greek Orthodox Church for the Feast of St. Achillios.

At a special reception on Thursday evening, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was presented with the Woodrow Wilson Public Service Award in recognition of “his commitments to the en-

vironment, to international peace and human rights, and to eradicating racism”. In his address, His All Holiness cited the concerns of people around the world over a possible environmental catastrophe, saying, “In his unbridled race for material prosperity alone, man risks destroying the beauty of our planet”. Even in the “so-called civil world that calls itself Christian . . . there persists a frenetic race aimed at the environmental destruction of our planet”.

At the conclusion of his visit, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew met with Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis at the government's headquarters in Athens on Friday, in the presence of Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis. ■

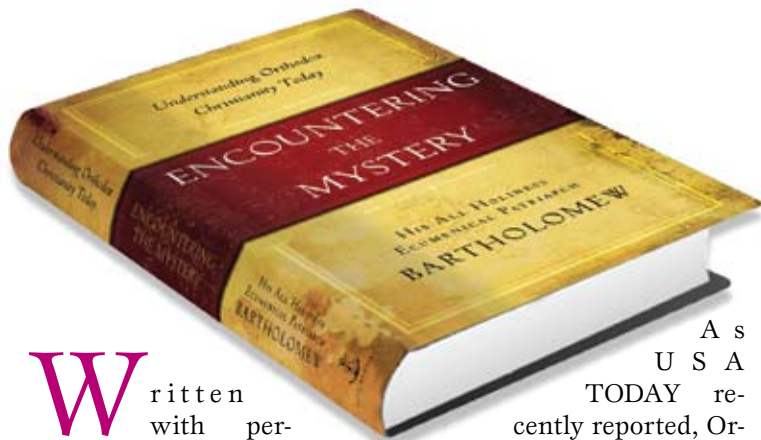


His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is presented with the Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service for his efforts on environmentalism and human rights.

(Photos by N. Manginas)

Ecumenical Patriarch's Book, "Encountering the Mystery," is now available

ORTHODOXMARKETPLACE.COM



Written with personal warmth and knowledge, His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew illuminates the rich culture and soul of Orthodox Christianity in his new book, "Encountering the Mystery," which is now available.

The Ecumenical Patriarch traces the roots of Orthodox Christianity to its founding 2,000 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 a greater interest in understanding this important branch of Christianity with its close ties to the traditions of the early church.

U S A 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 and teachings. But for the general seeker, whatever their background, "Encountering the Mystery" is a rich spiritual source that draws upon the wisdom of millennia.

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, especially the Roman Catholic Church, as well as Jews, Muslims, and other religious groups.

Published by Doubleday, the 300-page, hardcover book is currently available for \$21.95 through the Orthodox Marketplace of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America at www.orthodox-marketplace.com. ■



(N. Manginas)

Ecumenical Patriarch welcomes Archbishop of Greece to the Ecumenical Patriarchate

— ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece was officially welcomed by His All Holiness Bartholomew thus initiating a new and promising period between the Mother Church of Constantinople and the Daughter Church of Greece

The meeting, which took place May 12 at the Ecumenical Patriarchate, marked the first official visit of His Beatitude to the Church of Constantinople since his election in February, following the death of his predecessor, the ever-memorable Archbishop Christodoulos.

During his three-day visit to Istanbul, Archbishop Ieronymos celebrated the Holy Eucharist with the Ecumenical Patriarch at the historic 1833 church of the Balukli Monastery for the feast of Zoodochou Pigis (The Church of the Life-Giving Font in honor of the Virgin Mary).

In an exchange of greetings following the service, the Ecumenical Patriarch referred to the close ties between the churches of

Constantinople and Greece, commenting that the acts of 1850 and 1928 that granted the Church of Greece its autocephaly "should not be seen as uprooting the branch from the original grapevine, nor falsely presenting the limits set during the ecumenical synods and agreed upon by the Fathers of the Church."

His All Holiness added that those things that "irregularly grew from the grapevine of the Church as a 'greedy offshoot' would be considered a damaging growth" and "cast into the fire for not bearing good fruit."

In response, His Beatitude said, "Conditions have ripened now and we have all understood that we should put the differences behind us. I want to assure you that I will do everything in my power together with my brothers, the archbishops, to achieve an absolute coexistence with you. Rest assured, your Holiness, that from today, we will plow deeply into the ecclesiastical field to cultivate the church unit, coexistence and cooperation in our common route." ■

Catholics urge Turkish Government to return confiscated church

– ISTANBUL, TURKEY

As the Ecumenical Patriarchate continues to fight the Turkish Government for property rights and religious freedom for its Orthodox communities in Turkey, the Catholic Church is now reporting similar struggles.

Turkish Daily News has reported on the ongoing efforts of Catholic leaders who demand tolerance for Christians in Turkey. In a recent letter, Cardinal Joachim Meisner, Archbishop of Cologne, urges Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan for the reopening of a confiscated Church in Tarsus, the home city of Saint Paul. In late June, thousands of pilgrims are expected to flock to the region for the 2000th birthday of the Apostle.

Built several centuries ago, this historic church was used as an army depot for 70 years and later was turned into a museum.

The article can be read in its entirety below.

[Mosque for church bid in faith barter](#)

by Cinar Kiper / Istanbul-Turkish Daily News

Read this article on www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?newsid=104040

German bishops calling for the rededication of a former church in Tarsus feel that it would be very helpful

toward the acceptance of Turks in Germany if a sign of acceptance of Christians were to be seen in Turkey. Yet, others feel that this reciprocity amounts to a veiled threat

An offer by senior Catholic clergy in Germany to help Turks deal with anti-Muslim sentiment in Europe has come with an eyebrow-raising clause. German bishops are demanding tolerance for Christians in Turkey in exchange for their support for mosques in Germany.

Or more concretely: Turn-about's fair play, how about Turkey's prime minister clearing the way for opening of a Christian center in Tarsus, the hometown of Christendom's founder St. Paul?

Those Catholic leaders have been pushing to rededicate a former-church in Tarsus, the birthplace of the Apostle Paul. According to a March article in the *Kirchenzeitung: Erzbistum Koln* (Cologne's Archbishopric newspaper), the Archbishop of Cologne, Cardinal Joachim Meisner proposed in a letter to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan that Turkey rededicate a historic Tarsus church built several centuries ago - which is now functioning as an army depot-turned museum.

"Such a show of goodwill would not only gain the commendation of the

world's Christian community, it would also improve relations with the Turkish community living in Cologne," said Meisner.

But some Turkish Christians expressed discomfort at the offer, seeing in it a bit of slyness if not a veiled threat.

"As a man of God, I am against this sort of mindset," said Armenian Catholic priest Hayr Hagopos. "Christianity does not allow for this sort of precondition. Every religion is divine and all people should be allowed to worship as they see fit."

But, Ali Murat Yel, a sociologist from Fatih University disagreed. It may not conform with turn-the-other-cheek dictums of faith, but a bit of pragmatism in inter-faith diplomacy is not necessarily a bad thing, he said.

"Rightfully so, the Catholic church regularly brings up reciprocity to put pressure on other countries," he said. "The idea is itself not a part of Christianity, but rather born out of secular pragmatism." By applying soft-power to its diplomacy, the goal of a more tolerant global atmosphere is served, he said.

But matters more temporal ultimately rule. A March article in German magazine *Der Spiegel* said, "Without government approval, no religious community

can be active in Turkey. Muslim clerics must also submit their sermons to the authorities. The rule was introduced during the country's founding in an effort to keep Islam under control. The strict system is intended to guarantee the state's freedom from religious influences, but it also drastically restricts Christians' freedom to practice their faith."

Normally, the issue would be moot after this, but two new developments keep it a topic of public debate. Pope Benedict XVI has declared this the "year of St. Paul." Cardinal Walter Kasper, the president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, expects thousands of pilgrims to visit Tarsus to celebrate the 2000th birthday of the Apostle, beginning on June 28, and will be attending mass there himself. Secondly, with Turkey vying for European Union membership, it cannot afford to turn down a Christian project.

In addition, the Church, especially the German bishops, is offering something in return. The Germans have often taken a benevolent stance toward the construction of mosques in Germany, a policy they intend to continue. In return, they are demanding tolerance for Christians in Turkey, said *Der Spiegel*. ■

Photo Briefs



Archbishop Demetrios celebrates Slavic Letters Day with Patriarch Alexy in the 14th century Dormition Cathedral inside the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia.

(D. Panagos)



Patriarch Alexy presents a decorative Paschal egg to Archon Michael Jaharis at the Danilov Monastery in Moscow, Russia.

(D. Panagos)



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and His Grace Bishop Savas pray during the Divine Liturgy at the Church of St. Barbara in the village of Evlambio on the Island of Imvros, the birthplace of His All Holiness and Archbishop Iakovos of blessed memory.

(N. Manginas)



His All Holiness invites Bishop Savas to celebrate a memorial service at the graves of the parents and sister of the ever-memorable Archbishop Iakovos.

(N. Manginas)



The Federal President of Austria, Heinz Fischer met with His All Holiness at the Phanar.

(N. Manginas)



The Ecumenical Patriarch met with the former prime minister of Bulgaria, Simeon Saxe-Coburg, during the 11th Annual Eurasian Economic Summit, which was held at the Chamber of Commerce in Istanbul, Turkey.

(N. Manginas)



Two former presidents of the Republic of Romania, Ion Iliescu and Emil Constantinescu, met with His All Holiness at the Phanar.

(N. Manginas)



Students from Holy Cross Seminary visited the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in New York, NY. Archons John Halecky, Jim Fountas, and Alex Pritsos offered a presentation on the recent work of The Order of Saint Andrew to the seminarians.

(J. Mindala II)



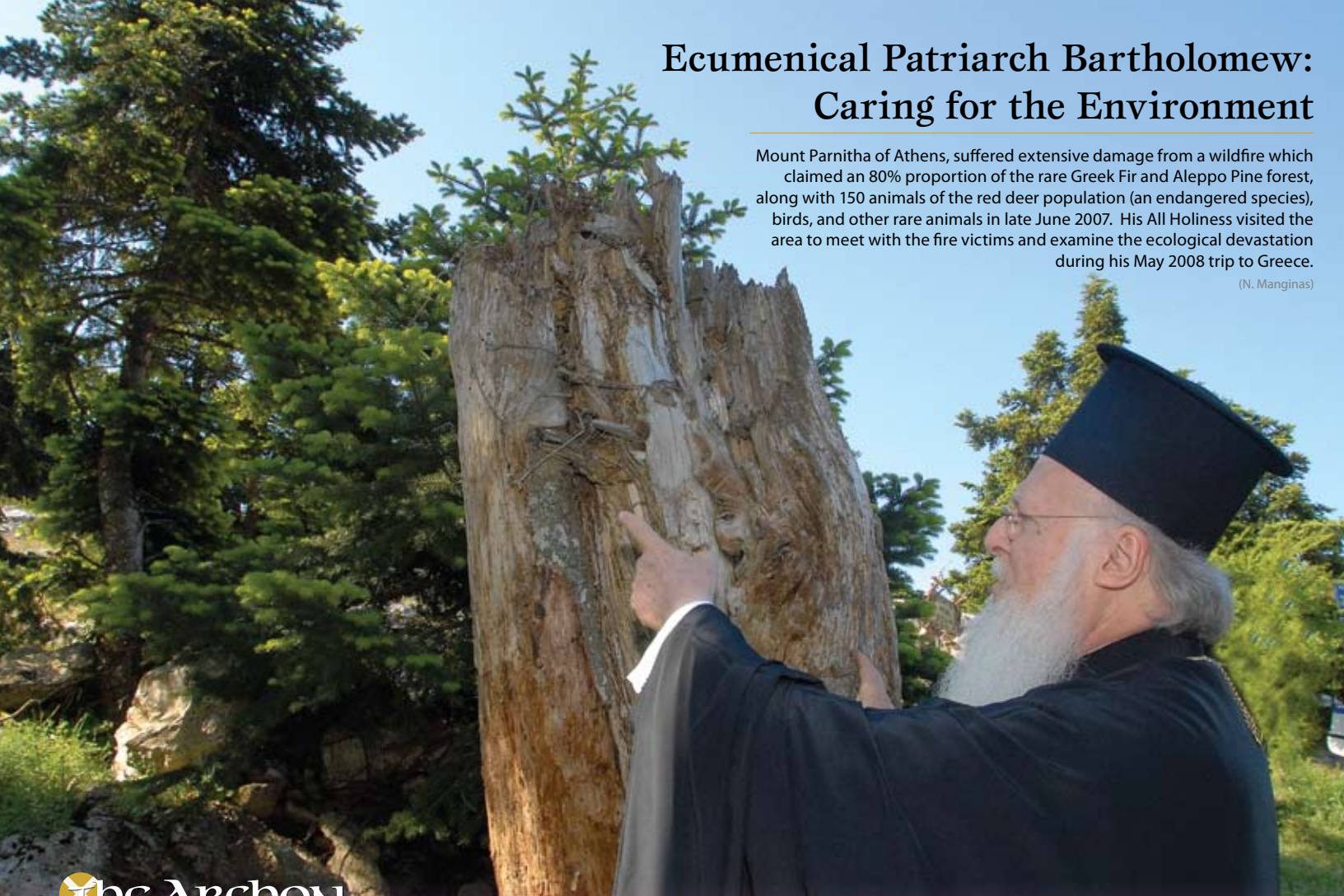
Patriarch Theophilus of Jerusalem made an unofficial visit to the Phanar and was welcomed by the Ecumenical Patriarch.

(N. Manginas)

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: Caring for the Environment

Mount Parnitha of Athens, suffered extensive damage from a wildfire which claimed an 80% proportion of the rare Greek Fir and Aleppo Pine forest, along with 150 animals of the red deer population (an endangered species), birds, and other rare animals in late June 2007. His All Holiness visited the area to meet with the fire victims and examine the ecological devastation during his May 2008 trip to Greece.

(N. Manginas)



The Archon

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