



2008 ANNUAL REPORT



ORDER OF
SAINT ANDREW
THE APOSTLE

ARCHONS OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

Defenders of the Faith

2008 ANNUAL REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The Religious Freedom Mission of the Order of St. Andrew

Introduction

The raison d'être of The Order of St. Andrew is to promote the well being of the Holy and Great Mother Church, whenever and wherever it is necessary. Today, well into the second Millennium since the birth of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the official policies of the government of Turkey threaten the existence of the Holy See in its sacred location. The religious freedom deficit, *the abject loss of religious freedom for non-Muslims* is Turkey's greatest challenge to entry into the European Union. Thus, The Order under the inspired leadership of the Exarch, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America and members of our Holy Synod in America, has focused on this one issue, religious freedom in defense of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.



The major issues of the Religious Freedom Deficit in Turkey are as follows:

- Government interference in selection of Ecumenical Patriarch
- Lack of Legal Personality
- Non-recognition of Ecumenical title
- Property confiscation
- Closure of Halki School of Theology
- Personal and institutional security of His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek Orthodox Community

The Order has developed a multifaceted strategy that has consistently, systematically and assertively been advanced contemporaneously in multiple venues to address the above issues. Allow me to summarize the various activities that constitute the overall Religious Freedom Project undertaken by The Order.

The Archon Washington Initiative

Regional Commander Archon Andrew Manatos and his public policy team coordinate the *Archon Washington Initiative*. Between 2006 and 2007 through a comprehensive campaign involving the hundreds of churches of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA), the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the USA, the Albanian Orthodox Diocese and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA the signatures of 75 United States Senators were affixed to a letter to President George W. Bush calling for religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. An unprecedented 42 of 50 Members of the House Foreign Affairs committee signed a letter to Turkey Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan urging the government to change its repressive policies which asphyxiate the *Spiritual Center of World Orthodoxy*. In follow-up to the 2008 Clergy-Laity Congress of the GOA, we are now focusing on the entire House of Representatives to help Turkey understand the importance of religious freedom vis-à-vis the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Both presidential candidates have issued statements in support of religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In addition to the Congressional programming, overt and behind the scenes efforts at the State Department are proceeding to advance the religious freedom agenda. The Order congratulates and expresses its gratitude to the Manatos team, including Archon Mike Manatos for the results obtained in the *Archon Washington Initiative* asking our own government to stop Turkey from extinguishing the flickering flame of religious freedom at the Phanar.

The Archon 50-State Plan to Enact Religious Freedom Resolutions

Archon Stephen Georgeson, Esq. is coordinating the *Archon State Legislative Religious Freedom Resolution Initiative* pro bono. The Order has identified Archons, clergy and key Orthodox Christians in all 50 states and has asked them to participate in local campaigns to enact Religious Freedom Resolutions in their state legislatures under the coordination of Archon Georgeson. Thus far, 19 Religious Freedom Resolutions have been passed in 16 states, including the most populous state in the Union, California. These Resolutions ultimately will be pre-

sented to the government of Turkey as documentary evidence reflecting the highest priority America places on religious freedom and human rights. The Order congratulates and expresses its appreciation to Archon Georgeson and his team as they proceed state by state to secure Religious Freedom Resolutions.

The Archon European Union Initiative

The Order developed *The Archon European Union Initiative* because Turkey seeks entry to the EU and this venue, in turn could extend to Turkey major incentives to induce them to abandon their repressive policies that have constricted human rights and religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. With the assistance of His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, the official representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the European Union and Archon Andonios Trakatellis, MD, PhD, Member of the European Parliament and former Vice President of the Parliament, The Order has conducted numerous meetings with key EU Commissioners, officials and staff advancing the religious freedom issue. The EU has welcomed The Order's activities in informing them of the continued violations in religious freedom experienced by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Archon leadership has met with the EU officials in Brussels, Belgium, the EU headquarters; Strasbourg, France, the home of the European Parliament, in Washington, DC and in Ankara, Turkey. These Archon visits in the international arena make a very powerful statement in the advocacy of religious freedom when Archon volunteers leave their families, businesses and security of the United States to travel abroad to seek fundamental human rights and religious freedom for the Spiritual Center of our deep seated Orthodox faith. In addition, periodically, the Archon leadership meets with officials of the rotating EU presidency promoting the religious freedom of the Mother Church.

The Archon OSCE Religious Freedom Initiative

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is the world's largest regional security organization whose 56 participating States, including the United States and Turkey, span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Every year the OSCE, whose Human Rights Division is headquartered in Warsaw, Poland conducts human rights meetings where representatives from Member States and NGO's (non-governmental organizations) gather to discuss human rights issues. Since 2005 The Order has sent representatives to these meetings (most recently, The Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw, 29 September - 10 October 2008) where Archons have offered compelling Religious Freedom presentations before the Member States. Archon Theofanis Economidis just returned from such presentations which elicited very strong reactions from other Member States.

The Archon Legal Initiative

Despite the ongoing diplomatic and political initiatives that are being conducted around the world, it may take actual judicial action to force Turkey to change its asphyxiating policies that threaten the survival of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Archon Legal Counselor Christopher Stratakis leads a team of top Archon attorneys in the United States, including Emanuel G. Demos, George C. Rockas, John Zavitsanos, Tom Constance, Michael Jaharis, Ted Theophilos and a number of non-attorneys. The charge of the Archon Legal Committee is to develop a juridical strategy to redress the religious freedom and human rights issues confronting the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

An essential alliance to this end has been made with the American Center for Law and Justice and the European Centre for Law and Justice whose Chief Counsel is Jay Sekulow. Mr. Sekulow and his distinguished law firms and attorneys have successfully brought litigation before the US Supreme Court and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg, France on cases regarding religious liberties and human rights. The ECLJ was very helpful in Strasbourg this past November during oral arguments before the ECHR when the Ecumenical Patriarchate brought an action against Turkey for the government's confiscation of the Patriarchal Orphanage on the Island of Pringipos (Buyukada). The Archon Legal Committee participated

in these oral arguments and accompanied Archbishop Demetrios, Metropolitan Meliton of Philadelphia and Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, the hierarchy representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The subsequent decision of the court was unanimous, 7-0, in vindicating the position of the Ecumenical Patriarchate requiring Turkey to return the illegally confiscated property or offer appropriate compensation. Included in this Annual Report is a succinct discussion by Archon George C. Rockas, Esq. on the significance on this landmark ECHR decision.

The Order looks forward to the continued assistance and cooperation of the ACLJ and ECLJ and its attorneys including Dr. Andrew Ekonomou and Michael Lambros, as we seek legal redress of the religious freedom crisis.

The 2008 Annual Report

In the subsequent pages the reader is offered a pictorial highlight of the Archon activities of the past year beginning with the 2007 Athenagoras Human Rights Award presented to His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America. You will see the extraordinary spiritual leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarch in the very first page calling the Patriarchs, primates and representatives of all the Patriarchal and Autocephalous Orthodox Churches to the Phanar for a historical Synaxis; you will witness the following salient events of the past year including the following:

- The vandalism of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Halki by government workers;
- Archon meetings in Ankara and Geneva fighting for religious freedom;
- Local meetings of regional Archons obtaining updates on the various Archon initiatives;
- TIME Magazine naming His All Holiness one of the world's 100 most influential people;
- Archons accompanying His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America to the Church of Russia and meetings with Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia;
- The Annual Archon Lenten Retreat at St. Basil's Academy in Garrison, NY;
- Holy Cross Seminarians visiting the National Office of The Order of St. Andrew;
- Archons accompanying Archbishop Demetrios to join Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Rome and
- The Archon activities at the 39th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress of the GOA.

As I conclude this Executive Summary, on behalf of The Order we extend our heartfelt appreciation to retiring Archon Depoutatos Konstantine L. Vellios, who has served on the National Council for decades and is now stepping down. Archon Konstantine was a leading figure in the development of the Athenagoras Human Rights Award in 1986 and has been a vital resource over the subsequent 22 years. We wish him well in his retirement.

Respectfully Submitted,
In the Service of the Ecumenical Patriarchate



Archon Aktouarios
National Commander

New York City
October 25, 2008

2008 ANNUAL REPORT



HIS ALL HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW WITH PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES AND REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL THE PATRIARCHAL AND AUTOCEPHALOUS ORTHODOX CHURCHES AT THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE, OCTOBER 10-12, 2008.

It is with the greatest respect and humility that we offer the 2008 Annual Report to our beloved spiritual fathers His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, and to the Holy Eparchial Synod in the United States, as well as to our brother Archons of the Great Church of Christ.

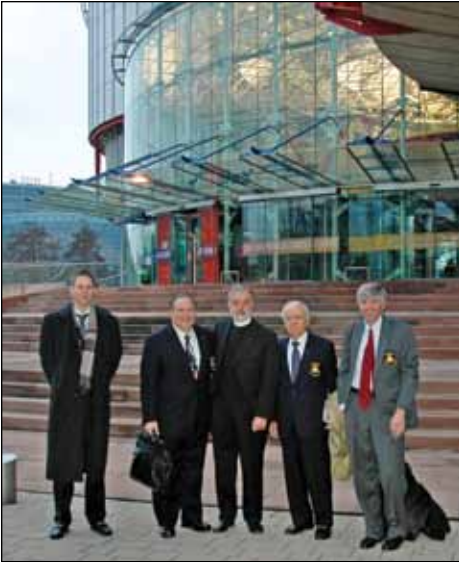
2007/2008 Archon Highlights



ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS OF AMERICA HONORED WITH 2007 ATHENAGORAS HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

“His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America exemplifies the very elements that constitute the Athenagoras Human Rights Award - humanity, humility, holiness, compassion and leadership. We will never forget his extraordinary pastoral care in the tragic aftermath of the 9-11 terrorist attacks. On the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of his ordination to the Episcopacy and eighth year as Archbishop of America, we honor him for his exemplary service to humankind as an Orthodox hierarch, theologian, statesman and biblical scholar.” National Vice Commander Nicholas J. Bouras, as in years past and Archon Michael Jaharis were Banquet Co-Underwriters.





ARCHONS SUPPORT MOTHER CHURCH AT EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, STRASBOURG, FRANCE

On November 27, 2007, Archbishop Demetrios, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate led a delegation of Archons of The Order of Saint Andrew, to support the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg, France. The oral argument regarding the confiscation of the Patriarchal Orphanage located in Buyukada Island (Pringipos) near Istanbul, took place before a seven judge panel made up of judges from San Marino, Turkey, Hungary, Belgium, Portugal, Georgia, and Lithuania, with alternate judges from Italy and Serbia. On July 8, 2008 the Court in a unanimous 7-0 decision

handed down a decision in favor of the Ecumenical Patriarchate vindicating its property rights. The property served as the Patriarchal Orphanage from 1903 to 1964 and is located atop a majestic hill overlooking the Sea of Marmara.

TURKISH FORESTRY OFFICIALS VANDALIZE HISTORIC CHURCH

In response to unlawful destruction of an historic Orthodox Christian Monastery by eight officials of the Ministry of Forestry in Halki, Turkey, His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew sent an official letter to Mevlut Kurban, the District Elder of the Princes' Islands, expressing his "strong disappointment and shock." The Ecumenical Patriarch emphasized that Holy Transfiguration Monastery "had survived numerous fires and earthquakes throughout hundreds of years. It is uncivil to brutalize a sacred building that carries so much cultural history, and unjust to destroy it, especially when Istanbul has been picked to be the capital of civilized Europe in 2010." The Monastery, which was undergoing renovation due to a generous grant from National Council member Archon Dr. Stephen and Dr. Anna Yallourakis of Kingsport, TN, was vandalized on Tuesday, November 13, 2007. Local government officials removed and threw away roof tile, broke all the windows and destroyed the window frames.



ARCHON DELEGATION CONDUCTS MEETINGS WITH TURKISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN ANKARA & ISTANBUL FIGHTING FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

An Archon delegation travelled to Ankara, Turkey November 27, 2007 to meet with officials of the government of Turkey to discuss religious freedom issues on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Accompanied by US Ambassador to Turkey Ross Wilson and other embassy officers, the delegation met with officials from the Foreign Ministry, Religious Affairs Directorate, European Commission Delegation and the ruling AK Party.

On November 30, 2007 the delegation met with Fikeret Kasapoglu, the Deputy Governor of Istanbul for Religious Minorities protesting the unprovoked illegal vandalism perpetrated by eight employees of the Forestry Ministry.



ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS PRESIDES AT THE INVESTITURE OF TWENTY-FOUR NEW ARCHONS CLASS OF 2007



The Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios presided at the Investiture of twenty-four new Archons, from throughout the United States, following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, October 28, 2007, at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity.

During the solemn Archon Investiture Service Archbishop Demetrios presented each Archon with the Cross of St. Andrew along with the official Patriarchal Certificate specifying the offikion designated for each Archon by His All Holiness.



ARCHONS HOST HIS BEATITUDE PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS III OF JERUSALEM, WASHINGTON, D.C.

On November 8, 2007, The Order of Saint Andrew, hosted a luncheon and reception in honor of His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem. National Commander, Archon Aktouarios Dr. Anthony Limberakis was joined by Archon Ekdikos John Halecky, Jr. and Archon Depoutatos Andrew Manatos in hosting a private luncheon for the Patriarch, together with Father Alexander Karloutsos, the Spiritual Advisor to the Order of St. Andrew, Ambassador Archon Referendarios Patrick Theros and Father Mark Arey, Ecumenical Officer of the Archdiocese.



WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY, HIS ALL HOLINESS OFFERS KEY-NOTE ADDRESS IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND; ARCHON DELEGATION CONSULTS WITH THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH AT ORTHODOX INSTITUTE OF CHAMBESY

The Legal Committee under the chairmanship Archon Christopher Stratakis has been working with great diligence on the complex issues confronting the Ecumenical Patriarchate developing a strategy for juridical recourse. The alliance with the European Centre for Law and Justice has been essential in developing the framework for legal redress.



OCF TEAM RENOVATES CHURCH, EXPLORES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM DURING 'REAL BREAK' TO ECUMENICAL

Fourteen Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) students, from multiple jurisdictions, recently returned from their 'Real Break' trip to Istanbul and historic visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The trip was planned in cooperation with The Order of St. Andrew the Apostle, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, who graciously provided all of the funding for the equipment and supplies. Led by His Grace, Bishop Savas of Troas, and assisted by OCF Board Chairman, Fr. Mark Leondis, and OCF Executive Director, Fr. Kevin Scherer, the group spent their Spring Break Week renovating the Church of The Dormition of the Theotokos ("Our Lady of the Heavens") in the Salmatombruk district of the city.



REGIONAL MEETING OF ARCHONS OF THE DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT – NEW ROCHELLE, NY

On Saturday, January 12, 2008, a regional meeting of Archons of the Direct Archdiocesan District of Connecticut and Westchester was held at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in New Rochelle, NY.

The opening prayer was offered by Fr. Demetrios A. Recachinas of Holy Trinity Church, Bridgeport, CT. Chairperson Tom Dushas then welcomed clergy and fellow Archons. New York State Assemblyman Michael Giannaris later spoke of the impending NYS religious freedom resolution in support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.



Regional Commander Peter Skeadas offered greetings from the National Commander Limberakis and Religious Freedom Committee Chairman John Catsimatidis. Skeadas later provided an overview of the mission goal, recommendations in support of Archon activities, a synopsis of past year's achievements, and a calendar of forthcoming events. He then introduced Andrew Manatos who spoke of the national efforts in support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.



TIME MAGAZINE NAMES ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW AMONG WORLD'S 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

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. The article appears in Time's May 12th issue.



ARCHONS ACCOMPANY ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS TO THE CHURCH OF RUSSIA, MOSCOW

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 Dr. 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.



The delegation visited the Central Hospital of the Moscow Patriarchate, a Church philanthropic institution restored to church ownership 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.

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.”

HOLY CROSS SEMINARIANS VISIT NATIONAL ARCHON OFFICE



Students from Holy Cross Seminary visited the National Office of the Order of St. Andrew at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in New York, NY. Archons John Halecky, Jim Fountas, and Alex Pritsos offered a presentation on the mission and multiple initiatives of The Order of Saint Andrew to afford the seminarians, our future priests, a better understanding of the religious freedom crisis that the Mother Church is experiencing. Every year Holy Cross sends its senior seminarians to the GOA for such an orientation of all the departments of the Archdiocese.

ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS AND ARCHONS JOIN ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW IN ROME

Archbishop Demetrios of America led a pilgrimage, under the aegis of FAITH: An Endowment for Orthodoxy and Hellenism, accompanying the official visit of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Rome for the Feast of the Chiefs of the Apostles, Peter and Paul centered on the 2000th Anniversary of the life of St. Paul, the great Evangelist and Apostle to the Gentiles.



2008 CLERGY LAITY CONGRESS OF GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA, ARCHON ACTIVITIES, WASHINGTON, DC

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America concluded its 39th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress in the Nation's Capital on July 18th, where more than 1,400 faithful, clergy and laity, representing their parishes, their local Philoptochos and young adults from across the country gathered for five fruitful days of deliberations, worship, fellowship and education. Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain, was the official representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Congress chaired by Regional Commander Archon Andrew Manatos, included the Archon Family Reception, The Archon Breakfast featuring ACLJ/

ECLJ (American Center for Law and Justice and the European Centre for Law and Justice) Chief Counsel Jay Sekulow as keynote speaker and powerful multimedia presentations on the Religious Freedom Crisis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate by National Commander Limberakis to both the Clergy Laity Congress and National Philoptochos Convention. In addition, the Archon Legal Committee deliberated with Mr. Sekulow and attorneys from the ACLJ/ECLJ during the 5-day Congress.



PATRIARCHAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Chairman Dr. Stephen Yallourakis reports that Holy Cross School of Theology now, for the first time, has a dedicated course on the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which was a major goal of the Education Committee as it worked with His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. The committee is now developing the ways and means to develop a Catechism School curriculum for all grades on the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with the anticipation that it will be translated into various languages and serve as a resource for the international church.

REGIONAL COMMANDER ANDREW MANATOS UPDATE

Through the public relations firm of Archons Andrew and Michael Manatos, Manatos and Manatos, essential religious freedom education initiatives in Washington are being executed. Key members of Congress and appropriate Congressional Committees are now more comprehensively informed regarding the religious freedom crisis confronting the Ecumenical Patriarchate due to the efforts of Archon Manatos' work for which the Order offers a monthly stipend.

ARCHONS FIGHT FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE AT OSCE (ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE; AT THE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING, EUROPE'S LARGEST HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE)

Since 2005 the Order has sent a delegation to the Annual Human Rights meetings of the OSCE held in Warsaw, Poland. This year the Order was represented by National Council member Theofanis Economidis who offered two powerfully poignant presentations which elicited strong reactions from those present.

PLANS FOR 2009 PILGRIMAGE TO CAPPADOCIA WITH HIS ALL HOLINESS

Pilgrimage Chairman Alexander Pritsos and his committee are preparing a 2009 Archon Pilgrimage itinerary to visit Cappadocia with His All Holiness next spring after Easter. The Pilgrimage may also include the Holy Land, as logistics are being developed. By early 2009 a final itinerary will be offered.

ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE ORDER

Due in large part to the work of John Mindala II who lined the Archon staff last October, communications from the Order have been exponentially enhanced. The newsletter is now released every two months. Email communications now emanate from the National Office often on a daily basis regarding any newsworthy item concerning the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The historic Patriarchal visitations to the Church of Kiev, Ukraine, to the European Parliament and elsewhere, as well as the presence of international leaders at the Phanar are now routinely broadcast emailed to all Archons, the international press and other key opinion makers. Our website, www.archons.org, is enhanced, as well.



APPRECIATION

Allow me to express my deep gratitude for the privilege and honor to serve the needs of the Holy and Great Mother Church of Constantinople, together with the Exarch, His Eminence Demetrios of America and side by side with my brother Archons. To work daily with our Spiritual Adviser Fr. Alex Karloutsos, National Vice Commander Nicholas J. Bouras, Secretary John Halecky, Jr., Treasurer James C. Fountas, Legal Counselor Christopher Stratakis, Sergeant at Arms Alex Pritsos, Religious Freedom Chairman John Catsimatidis, the entire National Council, the Regional Commanders, Archon Andrew Manatos and Archon Stephen Georgeson and the efficient Archon staff at the Archdiocese is both humbling and inspiring. To these individuals I offer my heartfelt appreciation and admiration. Let us now continue on our sacred journey to secure religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Respectfully Submitted,
In the Service of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anthony J. Aktouarios, MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Archon Aktouarios
National Commander

New York City
October 25, 2008

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE
EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS' DECISION ON
THE PATRIARCHAL ORPHANAGE CONFISCATION CASE

*by Archon Legal Committee Member
Archon Dikaiophylax, George C. Rockas, Esq.*

On July 8, 2008, the European Court of Human Rights (“ECHR”) issued a landmark decision in the case of Fener Rum Patriarchate (Ecumenical Patriarchate) v. Turkey (“Orphanage Case”) involving the seizure without compensation of an orphanage off the coast of Istanbul by the Government of Turkey (“Government”). That decision by the ECHR has debunked three myths the Government has espoused regarding the Ecumenical Patriarchate. First, the Government has long embraced the view that the Ecumenical Patriarchate lacks “legal personality.” In effect, it maintains the view that the Ecumenical Patriarchate does not exist. This would mean that it lacks basic rights, such as the right to own property. Second, the Government has refused to recognize the



[LEFT] THE PATRIARCHAL ORPHANAGE IS ONE EXAMPLE OF PROPERTY CONFISCATED BY THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT. BECAUSE THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT HAS NOT GRANTED RENOVATION BUILDING PERMITS FOR DECADES, THE ONCE GLORIOUS STRUCTURE, NOW STANDS DEVASTATED ATOP THE BEAUTIFUL ISLAND OF BUYUKADA (PRINKIPOS). [RIGHT] THE SITUATION HAD BEEN TAKEN TO THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

“Ecumenical” nature of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. At least one Turkish court has even said use of the title “Ecumenical” is a criminal offense. Third, the Government has long maintained that the Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey, including the Ecumenical Patriarchate, is not subject to the Treaty of Lausanne. The ECHR’s decision leaves no doubt that these three myths have no basis in law.

The basic facts of the case are simple. In 1902, the Ecumenical Patriarchate purchased property on the Island of Buyukada (Prinkipos) off the coast of Istanbul which consisted of land containing two buildings, one five stories and the other two stories. The Ecumenical Patriarchate used the buildings for an orphanage. In 1997, the Foundations General Directorate in effect seized the property without compensation. The Ecumenical Patriarchate unsuccessfully instituted legal proceedings in Turkey to recover the property. It then appealed the decision of the Turkish court to the ECHR. That court reversed the decision of the Turkish court, and in so doing, established a number of basic rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Specifically, the court decision debunked (i.e., rejected as false) the three myths described above.



ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS OF AMERICA, METROPOLITAN MELITON OF PHILADELPHIA, METROPOLITAN EMMANUEL OF FRANCE, WITH PATRIARCHAL ATTORNEYS AND ARCHON LEGAL COMMITTEE PRIOR TO MEETING.

1 First, the ECHR held that the Government interfered with the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s right to own property as provided for in Article 1, Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights. That article provides, in pertinent part, as follows:

Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law.

By so ruling, the ECHR recognized that the Ecumenical Patriarchate can own property. It further indicated that it would award compensation to the Ecumenical Patriarchate if the parties could not agree on a settlement. Perhaps even more important, the ECHR recognized the Ecumenical Patriarchate as a legal entity, something that the Government has long denied. An individual or entity cannot own property if that person or entity has no legal existence. By ruling that the Ecumenical Patriarchate can own property, the ECHR in effect ruled that the Ecumenical Patriarchate is indeed a legal entity entitled to protections under the European Convention on Human Rights.



METROPOLITAN MELITON, ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS, AND METROPOLITAN EMMANUEL PREPARE BEFORE THE COURT HEARING.

2 Second, the ECHR referred to the Complainant as the Ecumenical Patriarchate and described it as “an Orthodox Church in Istanbul having an honorary primate and a role of initiative and coordination throughout the Orthodox world.” The Government has long refused to recognize the “Ecumenical” nature of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, including its leading role in the Orthodox Christian Church throughout the world. Instead, it demeans Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew by calling him the “Bishop” of only the 2,000 to 3,000 Greek Orthodox Christians in Istanbul. This contention clearly has been rejected by the ECHR.



THIS HISTORIC ORPHANAGE IS THE LARGEST SINGLE-STRUCTURE WOODEN BUILDING IN EUROPE AND SECOND LARGEST IN THE WORLD HAVING SERVED AS THE PATRIARCHAL ORPHANAGE UNTIL THE 1960’s.

3 Third, at the beginning of the decision, the Court cited relevant internal law and practice, stating:
The provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) concerning the protection of ancient foundations providing public services for religious minorities state as follows:

Article 37

Turkey undertakes that the stipulations contained in articles 38 to 44 are recognized as fundamental laws, so that no law, regulation or official action shall contradict or conflict with such stipulations and that no law, regulation or official action shall prevail against them.

Article 42 § 3

The Turkish government undertakes to grant full protection to churches, synagogues, cemeteries and other minority religious establishments referred to above. Full facilities and authorisation shall be granted to religious foundations and religious and charitable establishments for the same minorities currently existing in Turkey

The citing of these provisions clearly establishes that the Ecumenical Patriarchate falls under the protection of the Treaty of Lausanne.

In sum, the decision by the ECHR established the following principles:

1. The Ecumenical Patriarchate can own property and thus has legal personality;
2. The Ecumenical Patriarchate can rightfully use the title “Ecumenical” and has a leading role throughout the Orthodox Christian world; and
3. The Treaty of Lausanne applies to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, thus providing an additional basis by which the Government must protect the basic human rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

A UNANIMOUS VERDICT
7 VOTES OUT OF 7

INCLUDING THE REPRESENTATIVE JUSTICE FROM TURKEY



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

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