



THE ARCHON NEWSLETTER

FALL 2013
www.archons.org

Advocates of Religious Freedom for The Ecumenical Patriarchate

HAGIA SOPHIA

The First Great Martyr of Christian Art & Architecture



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THE ARCHON NEWSLETTER

FALL 2013 • ARCHONS.ORG

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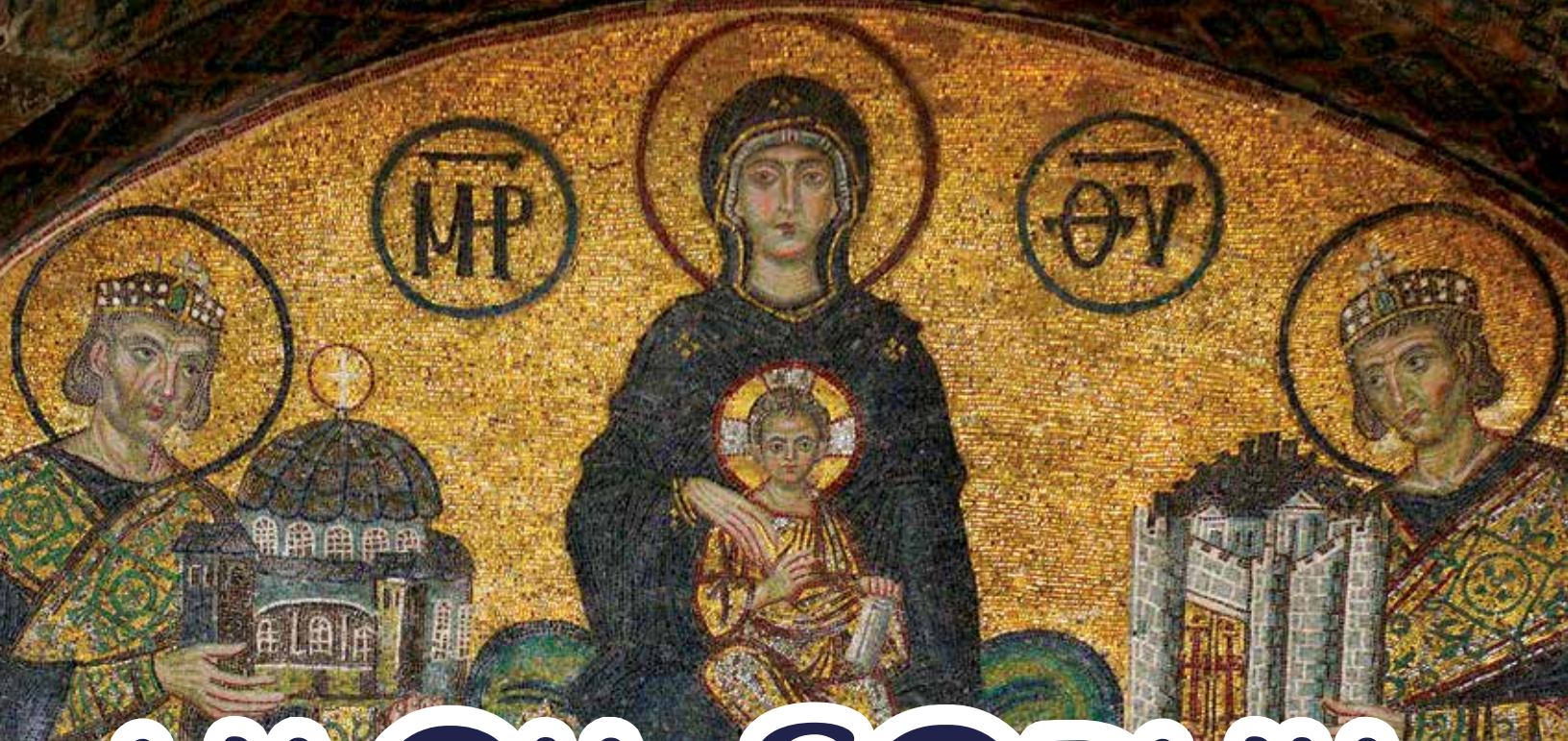
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OrderStAndrew



HAGIA SOPHIA

The First Great Martyr of Christian Art and Architecture

By Nikolaos Manginas

IT ALL STARTED

with the Church of Hagia Sophia in Nicaea. Then Hagia Sophia in Trabzon. Both of these glorious Byzantine churches – which functioned for many decades as museums – have now been turned into mosques, a harsh reminder of their forced conversion centuries ago. And this in accordance with recent sudden decisions by modern political authorities.

It is well known that following the Fall of the Byzantine Empire, numerous churches were converted to mosques by the Ottomans. With the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923, the same spaces were gradually converted into museums, which is what also occurred with the Great Church, Istanbul's Hagia Sophia, in 1934. Nevertheless, there are now indications that certain factions are endeavoring to cultivate in popular opinion the notion that Hagia Sophia of Istanbul, the symbol of Christian faith, should be turned into a mosque. A few months ago, a Turkish citizen submitted an application to the National Assembly for the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque.

An even greater surprise came from the official magazine of Turkish Airlines, *Skylife* (Issue 361, August 2013). The cover featured a lithograph of the church drawn from the period of the Ottoman Empire and entitled "Hagia Sophia: The Sultans' Mosque." The lengthy tribute – totaling twelve pages in Turkish and English – presented the history of Hagia Sophia from only an Ottoman perspective, especially highlighting the period during which it served as a mosque. This selective memory cannot remain unnoticed by anyone who knows that for one thousand years without interruption, Hagia Sophia comprised the most significant Church of Christendom. Moreover, to this day it remains a powerful symbol for all Christians, especially the Orthodox.

This article appropriates the image of Hagia Sophia to be a symbol of the Ottomans and a point of reference for the Sultans. Even though the article includes references to the construction of the church, as well as the ages of Iconoclasm and the Crusades, the claim is that the golden age of Hagia Sophia commenced in 1453 and the Fall of Constantinople.

The whole history of Hagia Sophia is then set to spin around the axis of the Sultans.

Furthermore, in this publication, art historian Prof. Semavi Eyice states: "The Hagia Sophia is statically flawed by having a central dome perched atop a long basilica structure. The building was damaged in earthquakes because the dome is unable to bear the pressure. The architect Sinan correctly identified this weakness in the Hagia Sophia and reinforced it, ensuring its survival to our day. At the same time, Sinan was impressed by the Hagia Sophia, which became an instructive model for him." Moreover, Rotterdam University of Islam Prof. Ahmet Akgunduz observes: "The Conqueror's Hagia Sophia Foundation document tells the story of the Hagia Sophia and of the building of the five great imperial mosques as well as of the properties, both movable and immovable, that belong to these complexes. At the end there are also some harsh words for those who would violate the terms of the foundation. Putting aside historic rivalries and mutual hostilities, Hagia Sophia should be restored as soon as possible to the

The Theotokos and Christ-child flanked by Justinian I (left) and Constantine the Great (right).

HAGIA SOPHIA

spiritual aura for which it yearns.”

The special tribute of Turkish Airlines, Skylife mentions the return of the building to its former “spiritual aura.” No one would disagree with such a judgment, but we would like to remind readers that the scenes depicted on the Royal Gate still await the fragrance of incense. Beneath their asbestos covering, the Icons – the unique images and mosaics of historical, spiritual and cultural value – are nostalgic for the sound of hymns. We must honestly admit once and for all that, in this structure, everything – from the slightest pebble to the dome that surpassed all expectations – happened for the glory of the Risen Christ and His Church. It all happened under Justinian, the Roman Emperor, for the Roman Empire that overcame all challenges and dimensions of this world (which in fact constantly tried to eliminate it!) and which ultimately became a universal concept, becoming, therefore, ecumenical.

Times changed. In the place of horses bearing Emperors anointed by God’s mercy, conquerors entered the Great Church. Yet, from that reality to a claim and description of Hagia Sophia as the Sultans’ Mosque, that gap cannot be bridged. The selective presentation of the Church’s true history, a history that transformed nations and cultures, is unacceptable. It is truly astonishing that not a single word was printed to even sketch those moments of history. What of the magnificent moments of the Consecration of this spectacular Church? The enthronements of Patriarchs and installations of Emperors? The singularly sublime Services? The splendid lighting of the lamps, the feasts and the festivals? What of the daily rhythm and official life of the Imperial City of Constantinople and its people, which evolved inside and around the Great Church? One such moment is precisely the reason for which the whole Slavic world boasts of its over one thousand years of Faith in Christ. Because their predecessors, the people of Rus, entered the Great Church of Christ and witnessed and attended the awe-inspiring Divine Liturgy. Not knowing whether they were standing on earth or in heaven, they asked to be baptized in the waters of this faith, which created and still creates such universal wonders.

Last February, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew provided an interview to the widely circulated Turkish newspaper



In 1453, Constantinople was conquered by the Ottoman Turks under Sultan Mehmed II, who ordered this main church of Orthodox Christianity converted into a mosque. The building was a mosque from May 29, 1453 until 1931. It was then secularized and opened as a museum on February 1, 1935.

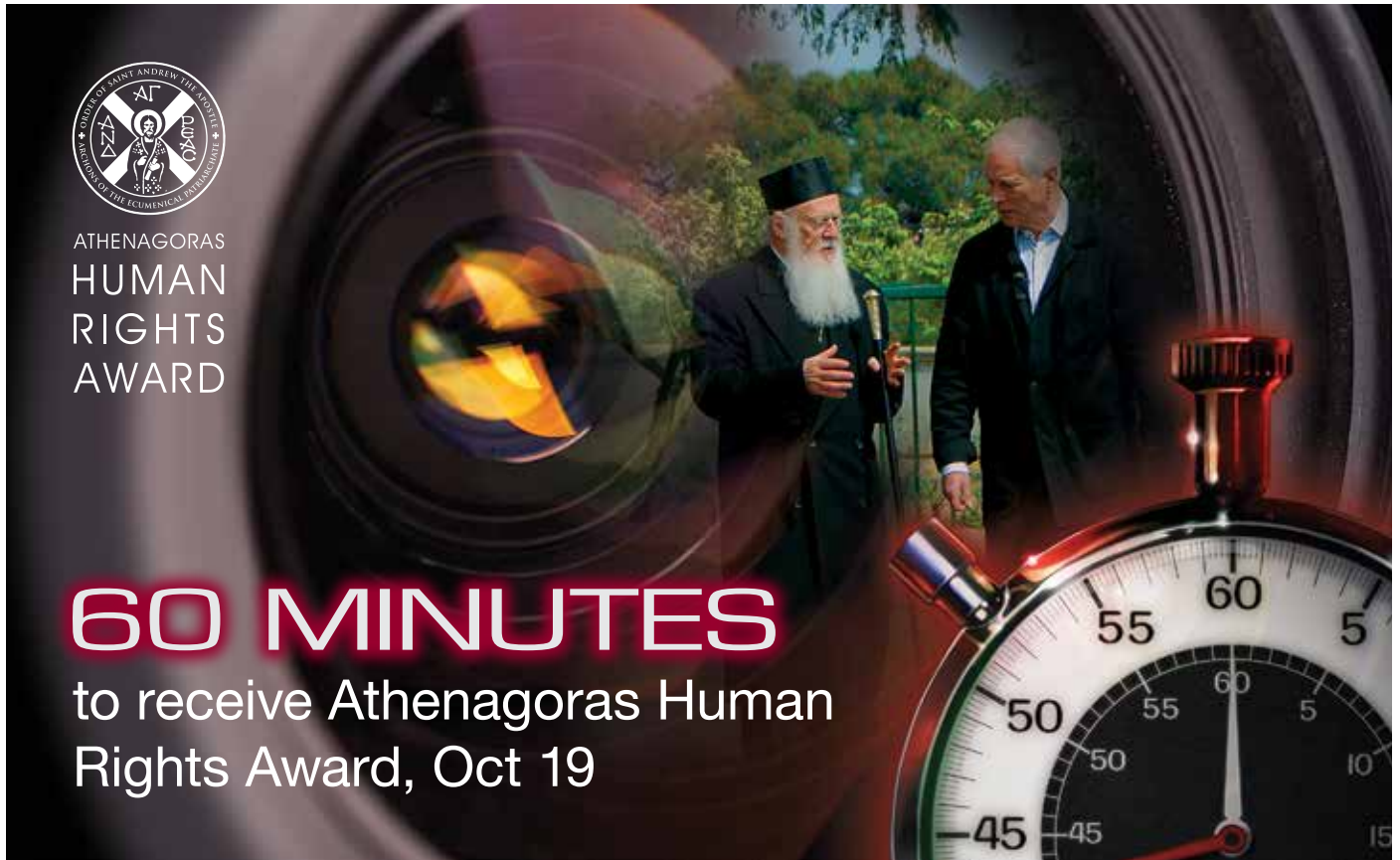
Milliyet. On being asked, among other questions, about opinions formulated by some on the reopening of Hagia Sophia as a mosque, he emphasized that it could only be reopened as a Christian church, otherwise it should remain a museum. The Ecumenical Patriarch declared: “With regard to Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, it served as a Christian church for over one thousand years. If it is to reopen as a house of worship, then it should open as a Christian church. Because it was built as a church

and not a mosque.”

Concluding our remarks, we certainly hope that this Church will return from its nostalgic silence, but only if it is to return to its original function and purpose, for which the finest and costliest materials were gathered into one location from all parts of the world “so that Justinian might conquer Solomon.” ■

Note: For historical accuracy, we should remind readers that the architect Mimar Sinan (1489-1588), who designed the largest mosque of the city, the Suleymaniye Mosque, was born of Greek Orthodox parents from the village of Sts. Anargyroi (Ağırnaz) in Cappadocia, near Caesarea, and was a victim of the forced levy and conversion of children (devşirme).

ANNUAL ARCHON WEEKEND



New York – The CBS television news program "60 Minutes" will receive this year's Athenagoras Human Rights Award presented by the Order of Saint Andrew, the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, at the organization's annual banquet Saturday, Oct. 19, at the New York Hilton Hotel in New York City.

"60 Minutes" was selected for the award because its news program on the Ecumenical Patriarchate, first broadcast in 2010, continues to bring significant attention and support to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All Holiness Bartholomew.

CBS newsman Bob Simon and producer Harry Radcliffe, the two key people behind the successful news program, continue to focus attention on religious freedom and human rights for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and other religious bodies and communities around the world.

Working in concert with Jeffrey Fager, chairman of CBS News and executive producer of "60 Minutes," and Bill Owens, executive editor of "60 Minutes," the news team has been a clarion voice for many religiously oppressed communities that continue to struggle for religious liberty

"The news team has been a clarion voice for many religiously oppressed communities that continue to struggle for religious liberty and freedom of conscience.

—National Commander Limberakis

and freedom of conscience," said Anthony J. Limberakis, M.D., National Commander of the Archons.

Mr. Fager will accept the award for CBS News at the banquet. This will not be the first award presented to Mr. Fager. The Producers Guild of America voted him best producer in non-fiction TV news four times. He also made TV Week's top 10 list of the most powerful television news executives. In 2012 as well as this year, The Hollywood Reporter named him one of the "35 most powerful people in the media."

The program was selected for the honor because it meets the goals of the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to uphold and defend the historical status of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as to emphasize the historical role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the development of both eastern and western church relations.

Past recipients of the award have included Presidents Jimmy Carter and George H. W. Bush, Mother Teresa, Elie Wiesel and Mikhail Gorbachev.

The Award is named in memory of Ecumenical Patriarchate Athenagoras, who served in that capacity from 1948 until his death in 1972. Prior to his selection as Ecumenical Patriarch, Athenagoras served as Archbishop of North and South America.

Established in 1986, the Athenagoras Human Rights Award is presented annually at the Order of Saint Andrew's grand banquet to a person or organization, which has consistently exemplified by action, purpose and dedication concern for the basic rights and religious freedom of all people. ■

ANNUAL ARCHON WEEKEND

**Friday, October 18**

4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Joint Meeting of National Council and Regional Commanders

[MURRAY HILL, 2ND FLOOR]

6:30 PM - 10:00 PM

Nicholas J. Bouras Award for Extraordinary Archon Stewardship Cocktail Reception & Dinner Dance

[RENDEZVOUS, PETIT & TRIANON BALLROOM, 3RD FLOOR]

Presentation of the 2013 Nicholas J. Bouras Award For Extraordinary Archon Stewardship to Archon Stephen J. Yallourakis, MD, DDS

*New York Hilton
1335 Avenue of the Americas
(Between 53rd and 54th Streets)
New York, NY 10019*

Saturday, October 19

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM

Archons-Elect Orientation Breakfast

[THE RENDEZVOUS TRIANON, 3RD FLOOR]

All National Council Members, Regional Commanders, Archons-Elect, and Spouses

Archons-Elect: Please Confirm Your Attendance Expediently by calling the Office at 212-570-3550 or by e-mail to archons@goarch.org

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Annual Archon General Assembly Meeting

[MERCURY SUITE, 3RD FLOOR]

All Archons, Archons-Elect, and Spouses

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Archon Fellowship Luncheon with guest speaker Harry Radcliffe, producer of *60 Minutes*

[THE RENDEZVOUS TRIANON, 3RD FLOOR]

All Archons, Archons-Elect, and Spouses

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Reception (Black Tie)

[GRAND BALLROOM FOYER, 3RD FLOOR]

All Archons and Banquet Guests

7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Archon Grand Banquet (Black Tie)

[GRAND BALLROOM, 3RD FLOOR]

Presentation of the 2013 Athenagoras Human Rights Award to *60 Minutes*

Sunday, October 20

9:00 AM

Matins

[ARCHDIOCESAN CATHEDRAL]

*Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity
319-337 East 74th Street
(Between 1st And 2nd Avenues)
New York, NY 10021
Tel: 212-288-3215*

9:00 AM

Procession of Archons and Archons-Elect

[CATHEDRAL UNDERCROFT, LOWER LEVEL]

Archons and Archons-Elect Assemble in Cathedral Undercroft, Lower Level for instructions, Photos and Procession into Cathedral. Archons should wear the Order of Saint Andrew emblems.

** Archons-Elect * Be sure you have reserved your Archon emblems and Cross of St. Andrew by contacting the National Office at 212-570-3550*

10:00 AM

Hierarchical Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, assisted by Metropolitans, Bishops and Visiting Clergy

12:00 PM

Investiture of New Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

Presentation of Offikia & Cross of St. Andrew

1:00 PM

Reception

[CATHEDRAL BALLROOM]

DEPARTED ARCHONS

May their memory be eternal!

**Hon. Monte G. Basbas**Archon Depoutatos
Concord, MA

Departed on May 25, 2013

George C. ChryssisArchon Orphanotrofos
Southborough, MA

Departed on May 31, 2013

Andre C. Dimitriadis, PhDArchon Referendarios
Malibu, CA

Departed on August 13, 2013

Eppaminondas JohnsonArchon Laosynaktis
Sacramento, CA

Departed on September 16, 2013

George A. KapposArchon Maestor
Pepper Pike, OH

Departed on August 25, 2013

Chris KarafotiasArchon Ekdikos
Skokie, IL

Departed on July 21, 2013

Cleo N. ZambetisArchon Megas Referendarios
Canfield, OH

Departed on July 18, 2013



Archon Dr. Yallourakis named 2013 recipient of Bouras Award

The Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle is pleased to announce that Archon Stephen J. Yallourakis, M.D., D.D.S., has been nominated as the recipient of this year's Nicholas J. Bouras Award for Extraordinary Archon Stewardship. A special tribute dinner dance will be held at the New York Hilton Hotel, Friday evening, Oct. 18, 2013, as part of the Order's annual three-day assembly, Oct. 18-20.

Archon George Safiol, Award Committee chairman, said, "Archon Yallourakis has exemplified tremendous stewardship of time, talent and resources in support of the Mother Church of Constantinople, the Orthodox Christian Church throughout the United States, and to the mission of the Order of Saint Andrew in which all Christians should be granted religious freedom rights. Our committee deemed it appropriate to recognize his efforts and name him as recipient of this prestigious Award in recognition of the extraordinary service exemplified by National Vice Commander Bouras."



DR. STEPHEN J. YALLOURAKIS

is one of the founding members of Holy Trinity Mission Church in Kingsport, TN. He was invested as an Archon in 2005 and conferred with the offikion, Aktourarios. He has served on the National Council since 2006.

In 2006, Dr. Yallourakis, and his wife Dr. Anna, offered donations for the restoration of the historic Transfiguration of Christ Our Savior Monastery on the island of Halki. However, on November 13, 2007, eight officials of the local Ministry of Forestry in Turkey threw away roof tile, broke all the windows and window frames of the historic monastery, which had survived numerous fires and earthquakes throughout hundreds of years. The officials threatened the residents and demanded that they abandon their homes because the houses were being demolished. In response, Drs. Yallourakis, provided additional financial support towards the vandalized monastery's renovation, remarking, "We here in the U.S. enjoy all of our freedoms and believe all people should enjoy basic unalienable rights given to us by our Creator. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, founded by the Apostle Andrew, is the Sacred See for 250 million Orthodox Christians around the world. We pray for a positive resolution to this tragic event and anxiously await the repair of the damage which has destroyed our beloved Monastery."

Serving the Church locally and nationally,

he has been a member of Leadership 100 since 2000 and, alongside his wife, spearheaded the first Leadership 100 initiation program in the State of Tennessee. He has participated in several Archon pilgrimages including, "The Return of the Relics of Saint John Chrysostom" to the Phanar in 2006 and to Rome in 2004 for the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, led by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. After a trip to the Phanar in 2004, Drs. Stephen and Anna made it their personal mission to educate the Orthodox community about the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In 2007, they set in motion the religious education publication, "First Among Equals" and in 2012 donated a national mailing of this publication to be sent to all parishes, clergy, Sunday school educators and Archons nationwide. The following year, donations were made so that the publication could be placed in nearly 160,000 issues of the Orthodox Observer.

Archon Yallourakis received his BS and DDS from Case Western Reserve University in 1985 and his MD from Vanderbilt University Medical School in 1989. He also received Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery training from Vanderbilt in 1991 and currently maintains a private practice for the last 20 years.

He and his wife Dr. Anna, have been married 23 years, and maintain dual residence in Kingsport, TN and Los Angeles, CA. They have two children, Michael Grant, 18, and Stephanie Katherine Grant, 13, who are both actively pursuing and working in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles.

Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis, National Commander of the Order, stated, "Archon Dr. Yallourakis' contribution in many capacities as an Archon of the Great Church of Christ is exemplary. His leadership donation towards the rebuilding of Transfiguration of Christ Our Savior Monastery on Halki which was destroyed by rioting workers of the Turkish Forestry Ministry; his personal commitment, along with his beloved wife Doctor Anna in the development, funding and distribution of 160,000 copies of the Zine Magazine First Among Equals to educate our faithful throughout America regarding the canonical, historical and ecclesiastical significance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and his many pilgrimages to the Mother Church in Constantinople render him a most worthy recipient of this prestigious Award. Axios! Axios! Axios!"

The Nicholas J. Bouras Award is presented annually to an individual who has demonstrated extraordinary and incomparable stewardship to the Order, enabling Archons to vigorously pursue securing religious freedom for the Mother Church of Constantinople. The Award is named after Nicholas J. Bouras, current National Vice Commander, who himself has demonstrated remarkable leadership as a faithful son of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Archon George D. Behrakis was the recipient of the inaugural Bouras Award in 2011 while Archons John Halecky, Jr. and James C. Fountas became dual-recipients the following year. ■



THE ARCHON 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

DECEMBER 4-5, 2013 · BERLIN, GERMANY

The Theodosian Walls that surrounded the Queen of Cities guarded the Ecumenical Patriarchate for over a thousand years. The remnants of those Walls still stand, but are no longer a bulwark for the Mother Church. In their place have risen up barricades and obstructions of religious liberty. But witness on the front side of this mailer the courage of those who remain, how the glory of the Resurrection shines on from the Lighthouse of the Phanar.

With the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

invite you to attend and witness the Archon Second International Conference on Religious Freedom: "Tearing Down Walls: Achieving Religious Equality in Turkey." It will take place in Berlin, Germany, December 4 and 5, 2013. This upcoming conference promises to be an extraordinary, historic and watershed event, just as the first religious freedom conference was in November 2010 at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium.

Once again, politicians, diplomats, human rights lawyers and advocates, scholars, religious leaders, journalists and members of minority communities will come together

to see how the walls of intolerance and misunderstanding can come tumbling down, and a new future for all people of goodwill can begin.

The conference is being organized and hosted by the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America in cooperation with the Patriarchal Liaison Office of the Orthodox Church to the European Union. The coordination of the local political and church partners is undertaken by the Greek Orthodox Metropolitanate of Germany with the blessings of His Eminence Metropolitan Augustinos.

DAY

1

DEC 2

Departure

Depart on Air Berlin non stop from JFK Air Berlin 7249.

Departs JFK at 5:55 pm.

Arrival

Arrive Berlin 7:30 am. Transfer airport to Berlin.

DAY

2

DEC 3

Orientation & City Tour

Orientation tour including the highlights of Berlin:

- The Berlin Wall and Museum
- Check Point Charlie
- The Brandenburg Gate

Short stop for coffee. Early check-in.

Welcome Reception

In the evening, welcome reception and dinner at the Adlon Hotel

DAY

3

DEC 4

Conference Day I

The Archon Second International Conference on Religious Freedom Day I

Lunch

Lunch at the Käfer Restaurant at the Bundestag (German Parliament)

VIP Reception

VIP evening reception at US Embassy

DAY

4

DEC 5

Conference Day II

The Archon Second International Conference on Religious Freedom Day II

Lunch

Lunch at the Adlon Hotel

Reception & Dinner

Cocktail reception and farewell dinner

DAY

5

DEC 6

Museum Island Tour

Morning half day tour of Museum Island including the Pergamum Museum, named after the ancient Greek city and housing the Acropolis of Pergamum, the Market Gate of Miletus, the Ishtar Gate of Babylon and other prized treasures, and one other art museum on the island.

Christmas Markets

Afternoon half day tour of three specialty Christmas markets.

DAY

6

DEC 7

Departure

Depart at 8:45 am on Air Berlin 6439 for Dusseldorf with arrival at 9:55 am.

Connect for Air Berlin 7450 departing Dusseldorf at 1:05 pm and arriving at JFK at 3:30 pm.



“... a photo from one of the churches of Constantinople ... which has a population of only a few and one priest who is responsible for three churches, but still has the **courage** to celebrate the Anastasi at midnight.”

– Iakovos

The Order of Saint Andrew is offering individuals a great opportunity to witness an extraordinary, historic and watershed event!

Rates include the following services:

- Round trip air JFK Berlin JFK on Air Berlin
- Early check in to Adlon Hotel on December 3
- Four nights hotel accommodation at the superior deluxe Adlon Kempinski including daily breakfast, service fees, and taxes
- All private transfers
- Private sightseeing with a deluxe motor coach and English speaking guide as follows;
- Orientation tour of Berlin including the Berlin Wall and Museum with a coffee stop
- Half day tour of Museum Island including the Pergamum Museum and one art museum
- Half day Christmas mart hopping tour with visit to three specialty Christmas Marts
- Welcome reception and dinner at the Adlon Hotel
- Participation in the Archon Second International Conference on Religious Freedom for two days at the Adlon, with Day I lunch at the Käfer Restaurant at the Bundestag (German Parliament) and Day II lunch at the Adlon.
- Reception at the US Embassy
- Farewell reception and dinner.

Double occupancy:

\$3,075 + \$515 air tax /fuel surcharge

\$3,590 (per person)

Single occupancy:

\$4,275 + \$515 air tax /fuel surcharge

\$4,790

Deposit of \$1,000 per person due by October 10, 2013 or late reservation fee of \$50 per person will apply.

Checks made payable to: **Cloud Tours**
31 09 Newtown Avenue
Long Island City, NY 11102

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stephen@cloudtours.com

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THE ARCHON 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

DECEMBER 4-5, 2013 • BERLIN, GERMANY

Religious Freedom Mission to Berlin and Phanar in preparation of Archon Conference

JUNE 26, 2013 ♦ AN UPDATE FROM NATIONAL COMMANDER LIMBERAKIS

New York—On behalf of the Order of Saint Andrew, I express deep appreciation to the members of the Religious Freedom Mission Team who just returned from Berlin, Germany and Constantinople having left Saturday, June 15 and returned with the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America. The purpose of the mission was to finalize plans and logistics for the Second International Archon Religious Freedom Conference scheduled this December in Berlin, Germany, to further our religious freedom advocacy with Turkish government officials and to pay our respects to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Hosted in Berlin by His Eminence Metropolitan Augoustinos of Germany who opened many doors for us, we had extensive and productive meetings with religious leaders, including the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Berlin H.E. Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki and the President of the Evangelical Protestant Church of Germany Dr. Nikolaus Schneider, whose members exceed 24 million faithful; leaders of respective think tanks including the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation and the Inter Dialog Institute; officials of political parties including the governing CDU/CSU party and previously with the Green Party and diplomats, including the ambassador of Greece H.E. Panagiotis Zografos, the ambassador of Cyprus H.E. Minas



Archon George C. Rockas, National Commander Anthony J. Limberakis, M.D., His All-Holiness and Archon Christopher Stratakis.

A. Hadjimichael and the ambassador of Turkey H.E. H. Avni Karslioglu. These officials were presented with Philadelphia Liberty Bell replicas symbolic of the religious liberty for which the Order is striving on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and religious minorities in Turkey.

We had an outstanding meeting with the Hon. Philip D. Murphy, the United States Ambassador to Germany on the very day President Obama arrived in Berlin last Tuesday. We received the wholehearted support of our ambassador and the Embassy for the Conference and its willingness to host a reception at the new, magnificent Embassy (and underwritten by the Order), which is located next to the Brandenburg Gate, Germany's most famous landmark. We continue to work out a multitude of details with the Conference headquarters hotel regarding conference rooms, interpreters, guest rooms, etc.

The Archon delegation traveled to Constantinople to pay our respects to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and received the blessings of His All-Holiness regarding the Conference and other Archon activities. The Order hosted a dinner meeting with His All-Holiness, Turkish EU Minister Egemen Bagis, Patriarchal Clergy and lay leaders including Archon Laki Vingas.

After close consultation with the US Ambassador to Turkey, the Hon. Francis J. Ricciardone who in his own right is an effective champion of religious freedom and strong advocate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, our planned meeting to Ankara was postponed due to local unrest and the use of teargas near the Embassy.

Finally, productive meetings were held with members of the religious minorities of Turkey who will be participating in the Conference.

It should be noted that prior to the Religious Freedom Mission, on May 15th, the Archon leadership along with Regional Commander Andrew E. Manatos had meetings at the State Department with Eric Rubin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasian Affairs; at the office of US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Ambassador Suzan Johnson Cook, at the



On Tuesday, June 18, the Archon delegation met with U.S. Ambassador Philip D. Murphy at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin.



The Archon delegation with His Eminence Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki, Archbishop of Berlin.



The delegation meeting at the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the think-tank of the governing party Christian Democratic Union (CDU) with Dr. Hans-Gert Pottering MEP, Honorary Professor and President of the European Parliament ret., Chairman of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.



The Archon delegation with Prof. Dr. Friedbert Pfluger, Undersecretary, Vice-President of the Inter Dialog Institute.

headquarters of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and its Chair Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett and at the White House Complex with Acting Senior Director for European Affairs and current Director for NATO and Western European Affairs Tara Leweling. (View photos of these meetings) At the request of Archon Congressman Gus Bilirakis Co-Chair of the Congressional Hellenic-Israel Alliance

(CHIA) Commander Limberakis made an informal presentation on the religious freedom concerns of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the CHIA Lunch Briefing on the State of Religious Freedom and Human Rights Abuses in the Eastern Mediterranean at the U.S. House of Representatives, where Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou, Former Vice-Chair of the US Commission on International Religious

Freedom (2004-2012) offered a compelling presentation.

The Religious Freedom Delegation consisted of Fr. Alexander and Presvytera Xanthi Karloutsos, Legal Counselor Archon Christopher Stratakis, Conference Chairman Archon George C. Rockas and the National Commander. ■

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

SINAI'S SAINT CATHERINE'S STARVES MONASTERY SHUTS DOWN

By Mohannad Sabry of *Al-Monitor*

In the Sinai city of St. Catherine, a few thousand people and around 800 camels have been left struggling since the first week of July, when Egyptian security authorities ordered the total shutdown of the town's 1,500-year-old monastery. Bedouin residents of the mountainous area were forced to sell their camels, which they cannot feed, to feed their families.

Over the past 50 years, St. Catherine's Monastery closed its gates twice, in 1977 when former President Anwar Sadat made his historic visit to Jerusalem, and in 1982 when the Egyptian military entered Sinai after the withdrawal of Israeli forces. This time, the shutdown, which wasn't explained by any official statements from either the Defense or Interior Ministry, was allegedly ordered after a failed attempt to kidnap a monk traveling in South Sinai in June and rising suspicions of a possible attack on the monastery.

"This is the third time we've closed since the early 1960s before the Israeli occupation. And even during the occupation, we remained open," Father Paolos, a member of the monastery's Holy Council who's been serving in St. Catherine's since 1972, told *Al-*

Monitor on Monday, Sept. 2 "After the attacks on churches around the country in the past two months, we received orders from security authorities to shut down for security reasons."

"Despite having more time to pray and practice, our priests live without crowds of visitors, we are suffering a major financial crisis, and we cannot cover the monastery's expenses and dozens of families that we constantly support," said Paolos, who wore his farming clothes covered in mud.

St. Catherine's Monastery employs 400 workers from the surrounding community at its olive groves, grape farms, honey bee farms and several processing facilities including an olive oil press. As of the beginning of September, the monastery reserves decreased to a level that is barely enough to cover two months of expenditure.

"We respect the Egyptian government, and we will continue to close if they require the closure," said Paolos, "But we will have to drastically cut down salaries and other expenditures. We are saddened to lose the income we shared with the Bedouin community."

Meanwhile, the state authorities haven't moved to help rescue the ailing community despite generating millions of dollars in revenues from hundreds of thousands of tourists who have visited St. Catherine's over the past two decades.

One example of the income generated by the state is the entrance tickets imposed by the Ministry of Environment in 2004. Since then, every single tourist is required to pay \$5 to enter the town of St. Catherine's.

The monastery's administration told *Al-Monitor* that it operated at full capacity between 2004 and 2011, receiving 4,000 visitors — mostly foreign tourists — five days a week. And even on the monastery's days off, the town received hundreds of tourists climbing Mount Sinai and venturing around the mountains on Bedouin safari trips.

"We demanded the Egyptian government allocate a portion of those profits to the development of the local community to resolve its long-standing issues, but our requests were never answered since the entrance tickets were imposed," said Paolos.

Akin to the rest of Sinai's Bedouin communities, and despite being a bustling, internationally known tourist destination, residents of St. Catherine's have no other sources of income and their infrastructure remains considerably substandard, even non-existent. Until today, potable water hasn't reached St. Catherine's houses, and those who don't have enough capital to dig wells are forced to buy water or carry their jerry cans to public taps built by other residents who have operating wells on their farms.

Since the January 2011 uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak's 30 years of dictatorship, the prosperous, tourism-dependent life St.

Catherine's Bedouins once enjoyed started dwindling as Egypt descended into political and security turmoil, but no other time was as devastating for this community as the two



Archons Stephen Cherpelis and Larry Hotzoglu participated in the 2009 Pilgrimage to Mount Sinai. Here, they stand before the 'Burning Bush,' "that burned with fire, and was not consumed" (Exodus 3:2) when God spoke to Moses for the first time. located on the grounds of Saint Catherine Monastery.

past months since the ouster of President Mohammed Morsi on July 3.

Sheikh Mousa al-Jebaly, the founder of Sheikh Mousa Lodge that was built yards from the monastery in 1982, hadn't received a single guest since the first week of July. Sipping boiled anis at his lodge yard, Jebaly spoke on behalf of his 7,000-member Jabaleyya tribe.

"Everyone is out of business since the monastery's shutdown. The lodges, the camel stables, the safari guides and even the supermarkets and restaurants," said Jebaly. "If a foreigner appears in town now, it's those living in the beach towns on the southern shore. They are not tourists, and they don't stay or shop in town."

Jebaly said that the government turned a blind eye to the town's deteriorating situation.

"The tourism sector workers in Luxor have been compensated for the losses they sustained over the past two and a half years. But here no one even paid us a visit, not even the Tourism Ministry and the Tourism Development Department."

The Jabaleyya tribe — which moved from Upper Egypt to St. Catherine's around 1,600 years ago and is committed to the protection of the Eastern Orthodox community and the monastery — is composed of four clans, known locally as quarters. A few decades ago, they imposed a system of dividing all incoming businesses among the four quarters, and each quarter organizes its members to take turns in providing the services and reaping the profits. A strict ban on monopolies is imposed by the tribal chiefs.

Ahmed Mousa, a 17-year-old Bedouin of the Jabaleyya, sat at the coffee shop in the town center. A couple of weeks prior, he sold his camel after he could no longer buy it food. His father passed away seven years earlier, and he has taken responsibility for his mother and two sisters since age 10.

"Feeding a camel costs around 600 Egyptian pounds per month (\$85). [This amount was] covered when I worked every day,



In 2009, Archons led a pilgrimage to Saint Catherine. Here, Fr. Justin Sinaites the monastery's librarian, spoke about the historic library—the oldest in the Christian world which preserves the second largest collection of early codices and manuscripts in the world (out-numbered only by the Vatican Library).

giving rides and tours to visitors of the monastery," said Mousa, who has worked tirelessly since his father's death to save extra money for his marriage. But his life and future plans were gradually destroyed by several factors: deteriorating tourism conditions since 2011, the monastery's closure last month and, finally, the sale of his only camel.

"Thanks to God, I sold the camel for a fair price," said Mousa, "but this camel was the family's only capital. Now we are spending its money to live and when tourism returns I will not be able to work."

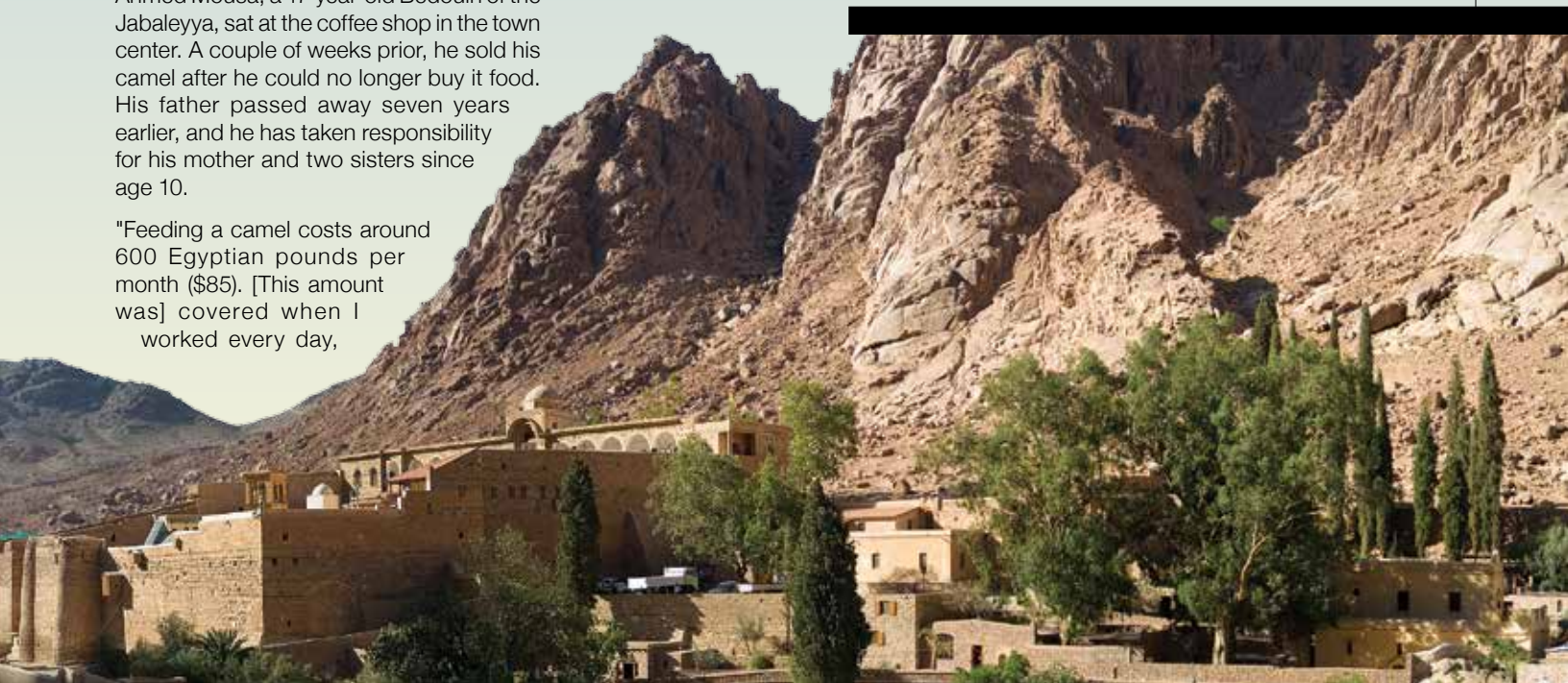
At the town's coffee shop, Mousa, as well as several others who have sold or struggled to feed their camels and a few tribal elders, agreed that the town's main request for the government is for it to provide townspeople with food for their camels, the community's most precious possession.

A simple calculation made by the Bedouin gathering proposed that one month's food for the town's 800 camels would cost the

government around \$68,000 if bought at retail prices the Bedouins normally pay, an amount equivalent to that paid by 13,600 tourists for entrance tickets, which according to the monastery's estimates was collected in less than four days until January 2011.

"We are not asking the government for millions of dollars, we are just asking it for camel food, which would cost it nothing in comparison with the fortunes it made with the help of this community," said Mousa. "We don't mind suffering until the tourism crisis is over, but selling our camels means destroying our lives permanently."

The Bedouins' calculation was made yards from the town's local grocery shop, where hundreds of residents opened account tabs to register their accumulating debts as they bought food for their houses and camels. On Monday, the debts had reached 70,000 Egyptian pounds (\$10,000) since the monastery shut down last month. ■



CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION



The mass exodus of Christians from the Muslim world

By Raymond Ibrahim

A mass exodus of Christians is currently underway. Millions of Christians are being displaced from one end of the Islamic world to the other.

We are reliving the true history of how the Islamic world, much of which prior to the Islamic conquests was almost entirely Christian, came into being.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom recently said: "The flight of Christians out of the region is unprecedented and it's increasing year by year." In our lifetime alone "Christians might disappear altogether from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Egypt."

Ongoing reports from the Islamic world certainly support this conclusion: Iraq was the earliest indicator of the fate awaiting Christians once Islamic forces are liberated from the grip of dictators.

In 2003, Iraq's Christian population was at least one million. Today fewer than 400,000 remain—the result of an anti-Christian campaign that began with the U.S. occupation of Iraq, when countless Christian churches were bombed and countless Christians killed, including by crucifixion and beheading.

The 2010 Baghdad church attack, which saw nearly 60 Christian worshippers slaughtered, is the tip of a decade-long iceberg.

Now, as the U.S. supports the jihad on Syria's secular president Assad, the same pattern has come to Syria: entire regions and towns where Christians lived for centuries before Islam came into being have now been emptied, as the opposition targets Christians for kidnapping, plundering, and beheadings, all in compliance with mosque calls telling the populace that it's a "sacred duty" to drive Christians away.

In October 2012 the last Christian in the city of Homs—which had a Christian population of some 80,000 before jihadis came—was

murdered. One teenage Syrian girl said: "We left because they were trying to kill us... because we were Christians.... Those who were our neighbors turned against us. At the end, when we ran away, we went through balconies. We did not even dare go out on the street in front of our house."

In Egypt, some 100,000 Christian Copts have fled their homeland soon after the "Arab Spring." In September 2012, the Sinai's small Christian community was attacked and evicted by Al Qaeda linked Muslims, Reuters reported. But even before that, the Coptic Orthodox Church lamented the "repeated incidents of displacement of Copts from their homes, whether by force or threat.

Displacements began in Ameriya [62 Christian families evicted], then they stretched to Dahshur [120 Christian families evicted], and today terror and threats have reached the hearts and souls of our Coptic children in Sinai."

Iraq, Syria, and Egypt are part of the Arab world. But even in "black" African and "white" European nations with Muslim majorities, Christians are fleeing.

In Mali, after a 2012 Islamic coup, as many as 200,000 Christians fled. According to reports, "the church in Mali faces being eradicated," especially in the north "where rebels want to establish an independent Islamist state and drive Christians out... there have been house to house searches for Christians who might be in hiding, churches and other Christian property have been looted or destroyed, and people tortured into revealing any Christian relatives." At least one pastor was beheaded.

Even in European Bosnia, Christians are leaving en mass "amid mounting discrimi-

nation and Islamization." Only 440,000 Catholics remain in the Balkan nation, half the prewar figure.

Problems cited are typical: "while dozens of mosques were built in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo, no building permissions [permits] were given for Christian churches." "Time is running out as there is a worrisome rise in radicalism," said one authority, who further added that the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina were "persecuted for centuries" after European powers "failed to support them in their struggle against the Ottoman Empire."

And so history repeats itself.

One can go on and on:

In Ethiopia, after a Christian was accused of desecrating a Koran, thousands of Christians were forced to flee their homes when "Muslim extremists set fire to roughly 50 churches and dozens of Christian homes."

In the Ivory Coast—where Christians have literally been crucified—Islamic rebels "massacred hundreds and displaced tens of thousands" of Christians.

In Libya, Islamic rebels forced several Christian religious orders, serving the sick and needy in the country since 1921, to flee.

To anyone following the plight of Christians under Islamic persecution, none of this is surprising. As I document in my new book, "Crucified Again: Exposing Islam's New War on Christians," all around the Islamic world—in nations that do not share the same race, language, culture, or economics, in nations that share only Islam—Christians are being persecuted into extinction. Such is the true face of extremist Islamic resurgence. ■

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

Ecumenical Patriarch and Pope Francis prayer for peace in Syria

Istanbul—The Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarchate "welcomes the appeal of our brother in Christ, Pope Francis, for a day of prayer and fasting for peace in Syria, the Middle East and the world, a prayer that has been constant since the bloody conflict started in Damascus," said the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, during an official visit to Estonia.

"The Ecumenical Patriarchate and we personally look forward to the developments of the situation in Syria, and more generally in the Middle East, praying that peace shall prevail," the patriarch said during a meeting with the speaker of the Estonian Parliament Ene Ergma.

For the Orthodox leader, only if peace wins "shall it be possible for Christians in the Middle East continue to live without any impediment in their lands."

His All-Holiness decries persecution of Christians in Middle East

Helsinki—Speaking at an ecumenical gathering during a pastoral visit to Finland, Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople decried the persecution of Christians in the Middle East.

"One of these crucial challenges is undoubtedly the rise of so-called religious fundamentalism, culminating in unjustifiable acts of violence and destruction as a result of religious hatred," said Patriarch Bartholomew, who holds a primacy of honor among the Eastern Orthodox churches.

"The image that is particularly critical and lasting in our minds

"Let us closely follow the G20 summit in St Petersburg, and let us hope that decisions taken [there] will be used to contribute to a peaceful solution to the political question in Syria."

The Church of Constantinople, the patriarch said, "welcomes Pope Francis's appeal to the Christians of the Earth to unite in prayer and fasting next Saturday so that peace may prevail in the fiery Syrian land, hoping that God might enlighten the minds of policy makers and prevent military actions that would inevitably result in the death of innocent victims."

In concluding, Bartholomew added, "We, too, shall heed the call from our brother in Christ Francis to pray next Saturday for this purpose as we have always done since the start of the bloody conflict in Syria." ■

[Source: AsiaNews]

is the example of persecution endured today by Christians, irrespective of confession, in the wider region of the Middle East, where even the simple admission of Christian identity places the very existence of our faithful in daily threat," he added. "These exceptionally extreme and expansive occurrences of violence and persecution against Christians cannot leave the rest of us – who are blessed to leave peacefully and in some sense of security – indifferent and inactive."

[Source: Catholic Culture]

REGIONAL NEWS



ACLJ's Ekonomou and Foreign Language Professor Karavasilis featured speakers at Metropolis of Atlanta meeting

Atlanta—With the blessings of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, the Archons of the Metropolis of Atlanta held their annual Spring Meeting and Banquet, April 6-7, 2013 focusing on religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the remembrance of the 90th anniversary of the Destruction of Smyrna. The meeting was coordinated by Regional Commander Dr. Manuel N. Tissura.

Dr. Andrew Ekonomou, Senior Counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, provided a preview to the Archon's Second International Conference on Religious Freedom, recapping events from the 2010 Brussels Conference, which took place in the European Parliament.

Father George Tsahakis, Chancellor of The Metropolis

Archon in attendance: Dr. Manuel N. Tissura, Dr. George S. Kleris, Les George, Anthony Stefanis, Nick H. Katapodis, Nick Moraitakis, Steven Doulaveris, John Kalinoglou, Ron Canakaris, George Skoufis, Harry Cavalaris, John C. Scourtis; Andrew Kampiziones, Kostantinos Kozakos, George Donkar; Chris Mandaleris and James Arakas.

of Atlanta, mentioned the need to have a local public event in Atlanta to continue the emphasis on a Call to Action, saying, "We are not going to go away and a constant message must be sent to our government as well as to Turkey."

Dr. Niki Karavasilis, author and professor of Foreign Languages, gave a memorable presentation on the 90th anniversary of the Destruction of Smyrna during an evening banquet. The presentation offered an account of the horrific destruction of Smyrna emphasizing the year 1922 as the year of Christian ethnic cleansing at the hands of the Turks. Her book *The Whispering Voices of Smyrna*, features accounts compiled by the families of the survivors. ■

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM NEWS

THE HOPE

An End To The Religious Freedom Chasm In Turkey

Archon Dr. Cary J. Limberakis, Regional Commander of the Philadelphia region, recently provided the following update on the Religious Freedom Crisis in Turkey and the current status of the reopening of the Theological School of Halki at the request of National Philoptochos, who wished to publish it on their blog [<http://philanthropybyphiloptochos.blogspot.com>]. National Philoptochos Board members led by its President Mrs. Aphrodite Skeadas recently returned from a Philoptochos Pilgrimage to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Emblematic of the longstanding and pernicious religious freedom deficit in Turkey, the Halki School of Theology was forcibly shut down over 42 years ago by the Turkish authorities and has been shuttered ever since. Despite innumerable raised-then-dashed hopes over the ensuing decades, it appears we are no closer to the actual reopening of the only local Orthodox Seminary of the Ecumenical Patriarchate than we were when it first closed, although that could change.



The Seminary, located on one of the beautiful Princes' Islands in the Sea of Marmara off the coast of Constantinople and specifically on the grounds of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity founded by Saint Photios the Great in the ninth century, has graduated numerous Orthodox luminaries since 1844 when it formally opened including Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, +Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, +Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America and Saint Chrysostomos of Smyrna. However, today, the classrooms remain empty and the library consisting of an extraordinary collection of theological manuscripts and books remains little used.

On his very first trip abroad, the newly inaugurated President Barack Obama on April 6, 2009 stated "For democracies cannot be static -- they must move forward. Freedom of religion and expression lead to a strong and vibrant civil society that only strengthens the state, which is why steps like reopening Halki Seminary will send such an important signal inside Turkey and beyond (emphasis added)." Prior to that, Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton at the very highest levels of American diplomacy sought to have the Seminary reopened. Most recently, Secretary of State John Kerry has brought the issue up on his several visits to Turkey.

The Archons of America under the leadership of Archbishop

Demetrios have formulated a multifaceted domestic and international strategy to reopen Halki, as well as address the other specific components that comprise the religious freedom deficit* that has raised the international consciousness of the religious freedom crisis in Turkey, but thus far has not been successful in opening the hallowed doors of Halki. Archon presentations before the White House, Congress, the State Department, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, each of the 50 State Legislatures in the United States, the European Union, the European Court of Human Rights, at Europe's largest human rights meetings at

the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and with Turkish government leaders including Prime Minister Erdogan have not even cracked the doors open.

Yet, as Orthodox Christians, we remain optimistic that the religious freedom chasm that exists in Turkey will be addressed and we are beginning to see some signs of that: the confiscated Patriarchal Orphanage has been returned to the Ecumenical Patriarchate by the government complying to a unanimous decision handed down by the European Court of Human Rights. Other properties are beginning to be returned back to the Church and other religious minorities via a laborious and time consuming administrative process. However, as we have been accustomed to observe, whenever the Turkish government takes a small positive step, often times it is offset by a negative step, and in this case by the ongoing attempts of some Turkish parliamentarians to reopen Hagia Sophia as a practicing mosque.

The Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate will never, never give up its struggle to seek complete and unfettered religious freedom for the Holy and Great Mother Church of Constantinople, until the day the bells freedom can be heard around the world emanating from the Saint George Patriarchal Cathedral located at the Phanar. ■

Published on Thursday, July 4, 2013. The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc. is an organization of women whose collective drive, dedication and heart help those who need it most. Philoptochos is Compassion. Philoptochos is Love. Philoptochos is Strength. For over eighty years, Philoptochos has been the philanthropic arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and has undertaken a multitude of philanthropic initiatives.



Archons meet with Prime Minister Samaras

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America received the Prime Minister of Greece Mr. Antonis Samaras on August 9, 2013. Several Archons participated in a luncheon held at The Metropolitan Club in New York later that afternoon.



National Commander Limberakis greets the Prime Minister.



Archons Andrew E. Manatos and Reince Priebus along with National Philoptochos President Aphrodite Skeadas offer a welcome.



Father Alexander Karloutsos, Archon Spiritual Advisor, speaks with His Excellency.



[L-R] His Eminence, His Excellency, Archon Michael and his wife Mary Jaharis and Archon Dennis Mehiel.

PHOTO BRIEFS



His All-Holiness at The Monastery of Panaghia Soumela

Trabzon – On August 15, His All-Holiness celebrated the great feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos at the historic monastery of Panaghia Soumela. This is the fourth consecutive year that His All-Holiness has led an annual pilgrimage to the historical monastery since its closure nine decades ago. The monastery was founded in 386 and functioned without interruption until 1923.



Prime Minister Andrus Ansip of Estonia

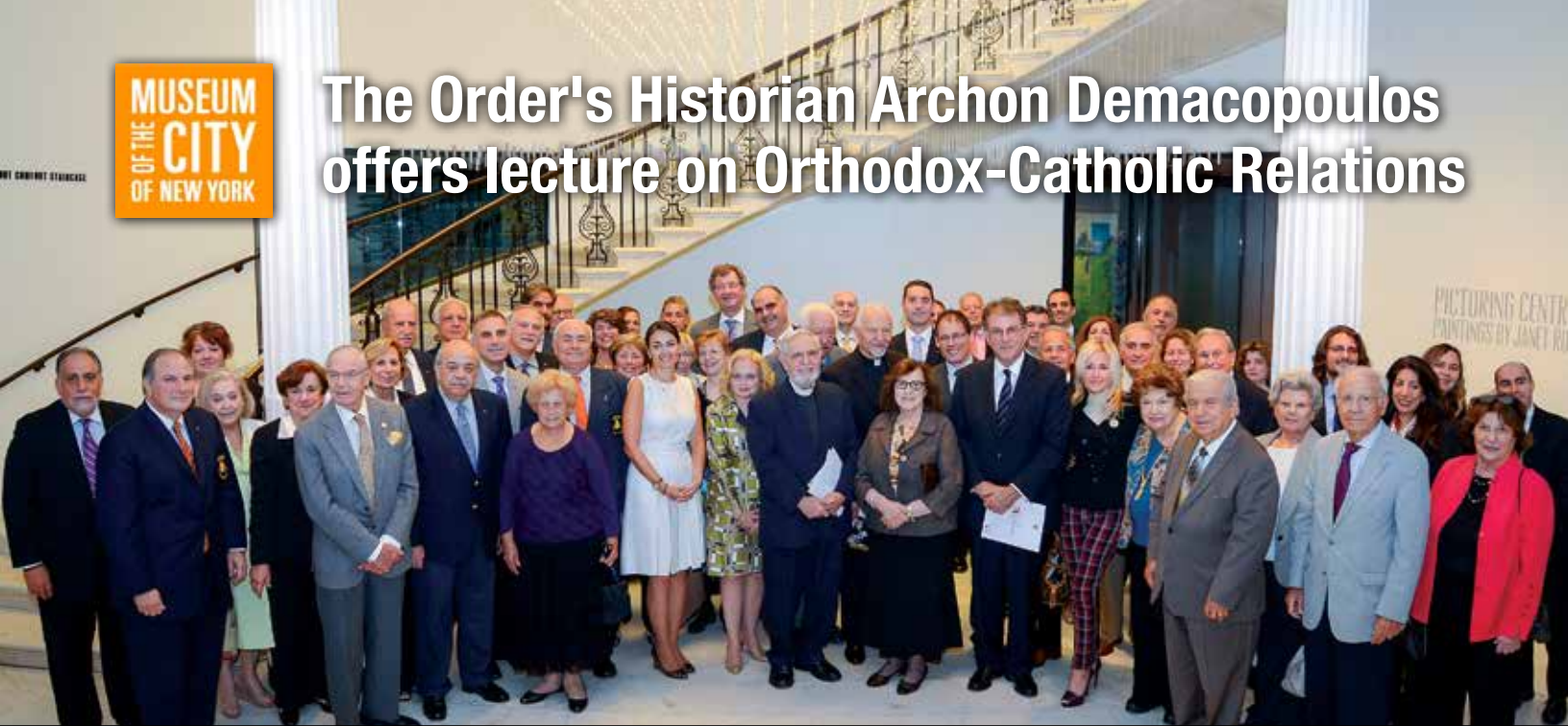
Tallinn – In response to a joint invitation by the Autonomous Church of Estonia and the President of the Republic of Estonia, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew traveled to Tallinn, Estonia, from September 4-10, in order to preside over celebrations for the 90th anniversary since the declaration of the Estonian Church as Autonomous by the Mother Church of Constantinople. He had the opportunity to meet with His Excellency Andrus Ansip, Prime Minister of Estonia, pictured here.



Patriarchal Delegation at The Vatican

The Vatican – On June 29, in accordance with the tradition of exchanging formal visitations with the Roman Catholic Church, a delegation from the Ecumenical Patriarchate attended the Patronal Feast of Saints Peter and Paul in Rome. His Eminence Metropolitan John of Pergamon, who led the delegation, conveyed the fraternal greeting of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Pope Francis. Also in the delegation were Bishop Athenagoras of Sinope from Belgium and Archimandrite Prodromos Xenakis from Crete.

The Order's Historian Archon Demacopoulos offers lecture on Orthodox-Catholic Relations



New York – A lecture, entitled, "The Papacy in Transition and the Future of Orthodox-Catholic Relations," was presented by Archon Dr. George Demacopoulos, Thursday, September 19, 2013. Dr. Demacopoulos is a professor of Historical Theology and co-founder of the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University. The lecture was held at the Museum of the City of New York and was co-sponsored by the Archons of New York, Connecticut and New Jersey from Archon Districts 1, 2 and 3 and organized principally by Regional Commander Nikiforos Mathews.



Regional Commander Nikiforos Mathews introduces Archon Dr. Demacopoulos.



Archon Dr. Demacopoulos' talk began with a demonstration of the ways that the resignation of Pope Benedict and the early actions of Pope Francis suggest that the Roman Catholic Church is moving in an unprecedented direction.



Consul General of Cyprus Koula Sophianou, Consul General of Greece Georgios Iliopoulos, Archon Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas, Father Constantine and Presbyteria Anna Mathews, Father Robert Stephanopoulos and Drs. Maria & Anthony Limberakis.



National Commander Anthony J. Limberakis, M.D. welcomes Her Excellency Koula Sophianou, Consul General of Cyprus.



8 East 79th Street, New York, NY 10075-0106

The Order of Saint Andrew's fundamental mission is to promote the religious freedom, wellbeing and advancement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate—the spiritual center of the world's 300 million Orthodox Christians. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is headquartered in Istanbul, Turkey.



THE ARCHON
2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
DECEMBER 4-5, 2013 • BERLIN, GERMANY

5 REASONS TO ATTEND THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE

1 Support the Mother Church
Attendance will demonstrate the Church in America fully supports the quest of the Mother Church for religious freedom and fundamental human rights.

2 Be part of history
The last conference was an historic event because it was the first time an international conference focused on the rights of religious minorities in Turkey that brought together all major constituencies - politicians, members of minority communities, diplomats, religious leaders, human rights lawyers and advocates, scholars, journalists and political commentators.

It also produced an historic result. Because of the conference, members of minority communities for the first time began to meet regularly and work together to address common problems.

That never happened before.

3 Witness World Class Presentations and Discussion
This conference, like the last, will feature some of the best, brightest and most renowned human rights and religious freedom lawyers, scholars and advocates in the world. It will also feature some of the most noted scholars and lawyers from Turkey who will address various aspects of the Turkish legal and political system. Be prepared for intellectual stimulation and mental captivity.

4 Berlin
As part of your trip to the conference, be sure to see the many historic sites of Berlin and its magic and beauty at Christmas time. For those wanting evening excitement, Berlin is renowned for having some of the best night life in Europe.

5 Mingle and Meet
The attendees and conference participants will be from varied backgrounds and have differing perspectives. During conference breaks and at conference receptions talk to the panelists and other attendees and be prepared to engage and be engaged. It will be rewarding and an experience of a lifetime.