



— FEATURED INSIDE —

- page 1 OCF Team renovates Church, explores religious freedom during 'Real Break' to Ecumenical Patriarchate
- page 2 Greek Prime Minister, referring to the plight of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, says religious freedom is Turkey's "passport" to European Union
Catholic World News reports on "EU pressing Turkey on religious freedom"
- page 3 Regional meeting of Archons of the Direct Archdiocesan District
- page 4 European Parliament member Antonios Trakatellis raises questions regarding violation of religious freedom in Turkey with European Commissioner of EU, Olli Rehn
- page 5 European Parliament member Antonios Trakatellis also expresses concern to the European Council regarding recent attacks and vandalizing of Orthodox communities in Turkey
- page 6 U.S. Report on Human Rights Practices reveals concern about Turkey's progress on religious freedom
- page 7 Foundations Law pleases neither nationalists nor minorities
Ecumenical Patriarchate receives invitation from Pope to attend World Synod of Bishops, presides at 90th Pontifical Oriental Institute
- page 8,9 Cover story continued from page 1
- page 10 World Council of Churches celebrates 60th anniversary
- page 11 Photo Briefs
- page 12 A message of appreciation from the National Commander for Pascha 2008
In Memoriam



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew visits with Bishop Savas of Troas, Fr. Mark Leondis, OCF personnel, and students who participated in the Real Break program to Constantinople.
(OCF Communications)

OCF Team renovates Church, explores religious freedom during 'Real Break' to Ecumenical Patriarchate

— ISTANBUL, TURKEY

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.

This historic Church, erected in 1778, was once the center of a prosperous community of Greek Con-

stantinopolitans. In recent decades, however, the parish has been reduced to a single octogenarian, the former president of the parish, who lives in humble quarters at the Church gate. The Church itself, a simple structure in the post-Byzantine style, was in a state of significant disrepair since having fallen out of regular use over a quarter century ago. The grounds were overgrown with weeds, vines, and thorn bushes making entrance to the

Continued on page 8 >>

Greek Prime Minister, referring to the plight of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, says religious freedom is Turkey's "passport" to European Union

– ISTANBUL, TURKEY

In a recent article published by the NY Times, Greek Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis made a historic trip to Turkey, the first in nearly fifty years. During a news conference, Karamanlis encouraged the Turkish government to re-open the Orthodox Seminary on the island of Heybeliada (Halki) and to begin recognizing religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate, signifying that this could be Turkey's "passport" into the European Union. The following day, Karamanlis met with His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Phanar.

The NY Times coverage on the Prime Minister's trip can be read here:

[In a 49-Year First, Greek Leader Visits Turkey](#)

By Sabrina Tavernise and Anthee Carassava

Published: January 24, 2008

ISTANBUL - In an effort to overcome decades of mu-



During his historic trip, Prime Minister of Greece Kostas Karamanlis, and his wife, Natasha, met with His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Phanar in Istanbul, Turkey.

(Niko Manginas)

tual distrust, Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis of Greece arrived in Turkey on Wednesday for the first official visit by a Greek leader in almost half a century.

The three-day stay is significant more for the fact that it is happening than for any agreements it is expected to produce. The visit, which began in Ankara, the capital, had been rescheduled three times since 2004.

The last Greek prime minister to visit Turkey was Mr. Karamanlis's uncle, Konstantine Karamanlis, in May 1959.

But the longstanding strains in relations between the countries, which have fought four wars since Greece won independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 1820s and still debate the status of the island of Cyprus, were

nowhere to be seen in Ankara on Wednesday.

Instead, Mr. Karamanlis walked on a red carpet with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, a marching band played the Greek and Turkish national anthems, and the leaders struck cordial tones at a news conference after meeting for more than two hours.

"I believe 2008 will offer new opportunities for our countries to improve bilateral relations," Mr. Erdogan said. "I'd like to see the period ahead of us as a window of opportunity."

Mr. Karamanlis said: "Greek people have very good feelings toward Turkish people. I believe they are looking for a new page in relations." He added, "From my response it's obvious there wouldn't be a need to wait for 49 years for the next prime minister."

Mr. Erdogan said Turkey

Continued on page 3 >>

Catholic World News reports on "EU pressing Turkey on religious freedom"

– BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Brussels, Feb. 20, 2008 (CWNews.com) - European Union officials have called upon the government of Turkey to ensure religious freedom by granting legal recognition to faiths other than Islam, the KAI news agency reports.

Religious freedom has been a pivotal concern in discus-

sions on Turkey's bid for entry into the European Union. EU officials are now asking for guarantees that minority religious groups in Turkey will have the right to train and select their own leaders, and assurance that they will not suffer discrimination based on belief or ethnicity.

Orthodox Patriarch Bartho-

lomew I of Constantinople, the most visible Christian figure in Turkey, has encouraged the EU to apply pressure on Ankara to protect religious minorities. The Turkish government has taken the stand that the Patriarch presides only over the small Orthodox community inside Turkey; the regime declines to recognize



his status as the Ecumenical Patriarch, the "first among equals" of the patriarchs in the Orthodox world. ■

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 freedom resolution in support of the Ecumenical Patri-

archate and called upon NYS Congressman Dean Skelos and NYS Archons for their support of such a resolution.

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 and international cam-

paign through the European Courts.

Questions from Archons and clergy followed the presentations with answers given by Michael Giannaris, Andrew

Manatos and Father Alex Karloutsos.

The closing prayer was offered by Fr. George G. Pasias of St. Spyridon Church, Washington Heights, NY. ■



New York State Assemblyman Michael Giannaris addresses the Archons of the Direct Archdiocesan District in New Rochelle, NY. (John J. Mindala II)

Greek Prime Minister says religious freedom is Turkey's "passport" to EU

<< *Continued from page 2*

hoped to hold negotiations on the status of Cyprus after elections there in February. The issue is one of the main obstacles to Turkey's membership in the European Union.

Cyprus has been divided since Turkey invaded in 1974 to foil an Athens-backed Greek Cypriot coup seeking to unite the island with Greece. The Greek-allied government in the south, which joined the European Union in 2004, is internationally recognized, while Turkey is the sole nation to recognize the Turkish-oriented northern government.

Mr. Karamanlis said Greece's goal was "to reach a fair and permanent resolu-

tion that would allow the unification of Cyprus."

Relations between Greece and Turkey have greatly improved since the late 1990s, when earthquakes in each country drew them together.

Now, diplomatic and military experts from both sides of the Aegean hold regular talks. A hot line between their air forces and armies has been set up, trade has boomed, and in November the two nations opened a gas pipeline linking the Caspian Sea to Greece.

Greece backs Turkey's entry

to the European Union, a position Mr. Karamanlis reiterated Wednesday.

But besides Cyprus, sticking points remain. Turkey, predominantly Muslim and less determinedly secular than in the past, will not recognize the patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church as a religious leader of global standing. It contends that doing so would encourage separatism among religious minorities in Turkey. Ecumenical Patriarch



Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in discussion. (Niko Manginas)

Bartholomew I is the spiritual leader of the world's nearly 200 million Eastern Orthodox Christians and presides over 14 autonomous Orthodox churches in Greece,

Albania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania and Russia.

Mr. Erdogan brushed off the issue of Turkey's recognition of the church's international standing but hinted that progress was possible toward reopening the last Eastern Orthodox seminary in Turkey, on the island of Heybeliada, which was closed by Turkish courts in 1972.

"We are evaluating the issue, and as we examine it we're going to make our decision," he said.

Mr. Karamanlis portrayed the church's presence in Turkey as valuable to its international standing.

"It is an important criteria for Turkey that the center of the patriarchate is here," Mr. Karamanlis said. "I would even call it a European passport." ■

European Parliament member Antonios Trakatellis raises questions regarding violation of religious freedom in Turkey with European Commissioner of EU, Olli Rehn

– BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

SUBJECT: VIOLATION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS IN TURKEY

According to recent press articles and reports, the Turkish authorities continue to violate fundamental rights, especially religious freedoms, oppressing and creating severe problems for both the Patriarchate and its churches. In particular, ahead of the forthcoming adoption of the law on religious foundations, there have been an increasing number of attacks on ‘occupied’ monasteries belonging to the Patriarchate and on property which appears to be vacant because of its ownership status. In view of this situation and the fact that the Commission appears to be incapable of dealing with the issues involved, despite repeated warnings, will the Commission answer the following?

Professor Trakatellis:

Is it aware that the Monastery of the Transfiguration of our Lord (Metamorphosis tou Sotiros, also known as the Makarios Monastery) situated at Halki and belonging to the Patriarchate, together with its surrounding outhouses, is threatened by demolition by the municipal Forestry Directorate?

Mr. Rehn:

The recent acts of violence against Christian Orthodox churches in and around Istanbul are not conducive to the establishment of an atmosphere of tolerance that is necessary for the full respect of freedom of religion in practice. The Turkish Minis-

try of Interior issued a Circular in July 2007 to address such individual criminal acts against non-Muslim places of worship. This is a positive step that needs to be translated into an improvement of the situation on the ground.

Professor Trakatellis:

Has the Commission been informed that officials from the Directorate-General for Religious Foundations went to the Holy Monastery of St. George of Karypis, carried out a survey of the property outside the monastery walls and made an additional demand for payment of rent from the Greek tenants living there?

Mr. Rehn:

The Commission follows closely the administrative processes initiated by the municipal forestry department and the Directorate General for Foundations, in particular as regards their impact on property rights and freedom of religion.

Professor Trakatellis:

Is it aware of the recent regrettable events which have befallen Greek Orthodox churches, such as the Holy Churches of Pammegiston Taxiarchon Sostheniou and Ilias Skoutareos, which have been savagely attacked as a result of the intensely nationalist climate currently prevailing in Turkey?

Mr. Rehn:

The Commission monitors issues related to religious

freedom in Turkey, in line with the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership. Specific issues are raised with the Turkish authorities in the framework of the regular political dialogue at all appropriate levels and developments are reported in the annual Commission Progress Reports. Furthermore, freedom of religion and property rights are reviewed as part of the accession negotiations, in the context of Chapter 23 - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights.

Professor Trakatellis:

How are these events and the recent acts of vandalism against Greek Orthodox churches compatible with Turkey’s European prospects, the Turkey-EU partnership and, in particular, the fact that Istanbul has been chosen to be European capital of culture in 2010? When will the Commission decide to suspend accession negotiations temporarily until Turkey guarantees, in actual practice, respect for fundamental rights and religious freedoms?

Mr. Rehn:

The accession process has been a catalyst for reforms in Turkey, and continues to play such a role to date. The principles governing accession negotiations with Turkey are set out in the Negotiating Framework of 3 October 2005. The Negotiating Framework provides that advancement of the negotiations is guided by Turkey’s progress in preparing for accession, and that progress is measured inter alia against the requirements of the Copenhagen political criteria, which include freedom of religion. ■



Professor Antonios Trakatellis, member of the European Parliament. (Dimitrios Panagos)

European Parliament member Antonios Trakatellis also expresses concern to the European Council regarding recent attacks and vandalizing of Orthodox communities in Turkey

– BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

European Parliament Member Professor Antonios Trakatellis recently inquired to the Council of the European Union on the concerns of vandalizations of Orthodox churches and monasteries of the Ecumenical Patriarchate by Turkish Government officials and questions the Council on the measures it intends to take on these perpetrators. The Council's response mentions that it is fully aware of these incidents and admits that "tangible progress is urgently needed" for freedom of religion for the ongoing reform process in Turkey. Trakatellis' inquiry and the Council's response can be read in its entirety below:

SUBJECT: ATTACKS ON CHURCHES IN ISTANBUL AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Professor Trakatellis:

Recent press reports have described the dramatic escalation of attacks on churches in Istanbul over the last few days. These attacks have caused damage to the church of Aghia Triadas of the Holy Metropolitan Chalkidon and have terrorised the sacristan; anti-minority slogans have also been daubed on the church of the Taxiarchs on the Bosphorus Straits. Bearing in mind these facts, in conjunction with the fact that the forestry service on the Island of Chalki has illegally attempted to demolish the Christ the Saviour Monastery, will the Council say:

1. Is it aware of the situation obtaining in Istanbul?
2. What actions does it intend to take to put an end to these activities and to restore respect for democratic principles, given that Turkey is a candidate country for EU accession?
3. Does it intend to take specific measures to ensure that the perpetrators are obliged to repair the serious damage they have caused as early as possible?

The European Council's reply:

A long catalogue of unfulfilled obligations in the sector of religious freedoms is imputed to Turkey by the Council of the European Union, according to the reply it provided to the relevant written question of MEP Antonios TRAKATELLIS (EPP-ED, GR). The Council, though, still retains its settled policy by repeating that the issue is regularly examined in the context of accession negotiations.

MEP Trakatellis addressed the Council on the score of gradual attacks against sacred churches in Constantinople that took place some months ago. In the reply of the Council, it is stated that it is fully aware of the incidents the MEP denounces and of the difficulties that the religious minorities and communities continue to face: difficulties which are associated with legal status, property rights and registration, training, residence rights and work permits of Turkish and non-Turkish clergy, schools and internal management, as well as the election of the Heads of some religious minority churches.

Besides, the Council underlines: "Freedom of religion is a key area where real and tangible progress is urgently needed and concrete actions are required both in adopting as well as in implementing adequate legislation, in line with the ECHR and the case-law of the ECHR, as integral parts of the EU acquis. Furthermore, social tolerance, conducive to full respect of freedom of religion in practice, also needs to be established. In this respect, the educational system plays a crucial role. In its recent conclusions of 10 December 2007 the Council stressed that the process underway to revise the Constitution should not delay long-awaited reforms, in particular in the key areas of freedom of expression and freedom of religion where Turkey needs to proceed without delay".

As it has already been mentioned, however, the reply mentions nothing new on the crucial question of MEP Trakatellis concerning the action that the Council intends to take in the subject. Thus, the latter states: "The issue of freedom of religion will continue to be closely

followed and raised on all levels as appropriate as part of the accession negotiations and of the ongoing reform process in Turkey. The issue is also regularly raised with Turkey in the context of the political dialogue and in full accordance with Turkey's Negotiating Framework. This was the case at the latest meeting of the EU-Turkey Ministerial Troika held in Brussels on 20 November".

In his declaration, MEP Trakatellis expressed his disappointment for the policy of Pontius Pilate that the Council continues to adopt, as well as the European Commission that replied to the written question, by allowing Turkey to carry on a policy that violates fundamental principles and values of the European family, member of which Turkey desires to become and by going on with the accession negotiations, without warning Turkey against their interruption, unless tangible results of progress in the field of religious freedoms are to take place soon, considering that we are already in the third year of negotiations. ■

U.S. Report on human rights practices reveals concern on Turkey's progress of religious freedom

— WASHINGTON, D.C.

Serious problems remain in the Turkish government to secure religious freedom for non-Muslim minorities. This was revealed in the 2007 Country Report, issued by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Published on March 10, 2008, the report elaborates on a number of issues facing the Turkish government in regards to their restrictions and limitations on Non-Muslim religious groups when practicing their religion openly, owning property, and training leaders. The report added that limitations on freedom of expression expanded to the Internet, as Turkish courts on several occasions ordered telecommunications providers to block access to Web sites.

Submitted to the U.S. Congress, many specifics outlined in the 2007 Country Report mention:

"The government did not recognize the ecumenical status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, acknowledging him only as the head of the country's Greek Orthodox community. As a result, the government has long maintained that only citizens of the country could become patriarch, serve



as members of the Greek Orthodox Holy Synod, and participate in patriarchal elections. Nevertheless, officials did not respond to the ecumenical patriarch's appointment of six non-Turkish metropolitans to the Holy Synod in 2004. Members of the Greek Orthodox community asserted that these restrictions threatened the survival of the patriarchate in Istanbul, because, with no more than 4,000 Greek Orthodox persons remaining in the country, the community was becoming too small to maintain the institution.

"The law restricts religious services to designated places of worship. Municipal codes mandate that only the government can designate a place of worship; if a religious group has no legal standing in the country, it may not be eligible for a designated site. Non-Muslim religious services, particularly for groups that did not own property recognized by the GDF, often took place on diplomatic property or in private apartments. Police occasionally prohibited Christians from holding services in private apartments, and prosecutors sometimes opened cases against Christians

for holding unauthorized gatherings.

"Many local officials continued to impose standards, such as minimum space requirements, on churches but not mosques.

"The Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul continued to seek to reopen the Halki seminary on the island of Heybeli in the Sea of Marmara. The government closed the seminary in 1971, when the patriarchate chose not to fulfill a government requirement for all private institutions of higher learning to nationalize.

The patriarchate found it impossible to comply with the order. Under existing restrictions, religious communities other than Sunni Muslims cannot legally train new clergy in the country for eventual leadership. Coreligionists from outside the country have been permitted to assume leadership positions in a few cases, but in general all religious community leaders, including patriarchs and chief rabbis, must be citizens.

"Numerous religious groups, particularly the Greek and Armenian Orthodox communities, have lost property to the gov-

ernment and continued to fight ongoing efforts by the government to expropriate properties. Many such properties were lost because the law allows the GDF to assume direct administration of properties that fall into disuse when the size of the local non-Muslim community drops significantly. The government expropriated other properties that were held in the name of individual community members who emigrated or died without heirs. The GDF also took control of non-Muslim foundations after the size of the non-Muslim community in a particular district dropped below the level required to elect foundation board members.

"In November Ministry of Environment and Forestry officials damaged a Greek Orthodox church on Heybeli Island as it was being restored. The officials claimed the restoration was illegal; however an investigation conducted by island authorities later determined the ministry officials acted independently and without cause."

The U.S. Department of State report can be read in its entirety here: www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100589.htm ■

Foundations Law pleases neither nationalists nor minorities

– ISTANBUL, TURKEY

The newspaper “Today’s Zaman” has reported that a law has been ratified by the Turkish Parliament to return properties confiscated by the state to non-Muslim religious minority foundations and also allow these foundations to receive financial aid from foreign countries.

The law, which is apparently designed to meet the conditions for Turkey’s membership into the European Union, is not highly admired by Turkish Nationalists. Mehmet Sandir, the deputy leader of the Nationalist Movement Party, claims that the future of Turkey was being pushed into chaos by the law saying, “This law has passed now but when we come to power we will annul this law.”

Meanwhile, while this law has passed, Turkey continues a legal battle in the European Court of Human Rights to confiscate the Patriarchal orphanage on the Island of Prinkipos (Buyukada).

The published article in Today’s Zaman can be read in its entirety on www.archons.org. ■

Ecumenical Patriarch receives invitation from Pope to attend World Synod of Bishops, presides at 90th Pontifical Oriental Institute

– VATICAN CITY

During a private conversation when in the Apostolic Palace on March 6, 2008, Pope Benedict XVI extended an invitation to His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to join in the opening of the World Synod of Catholic Bishops at the Vatican and to give an address to the assembly together with the Pope. The assembly will be held in October, focusing on “The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church.”

While the presence of representatives of other Christian Churches and confessions is a normal practice for the synod assemblies, what makes this event significant is the personal invitation extended to His All Holiness to formally address the World Synod of Catholic Bishops. The Ecumenical Patriarch also has been extended an invitation to take part in the celebration of the Feast Day of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29, in which he and the Pope will inaugurate the year dedicated to the Apostle Paul.

The invitations came prior to the Ecumenical Patriarch’s visit to the Pontifical Oriental Institute. His All Holiness, who gained his doctorate at the same institution, delivered a lecture on “theology, liturgy, and silence,” focusing on how the spiritual experience of Eastern Christianity can promote Christian unity and respond to the needs of modern men and women.

During his address to the Institute, the Ecumenical Patriarch invoked the image used by the late Pope John Paul II by describing the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, which have been separate for centuries, as the “lungs” of Christianity, urging that “the two lungs must function in harmony,” adding that “neither of the two lungs should take provocative initiatives.” He also called on the Pontifical Oriental Institute, which is celebrating the 90th anniversary of its founding, to con-

tribute to the rapprochement between East and West.

Both the Ecumenical Patriarch and Pope have made the healing of the divisions between their respective Churches a priority and demonstrated this with prayers to the Most Holy Theotokos and the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer in the Chapel of Urban VIII near the Papal Library of the Apostolic Palace. ■



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has been extended an invitation to address the World Synod of Catholic Bishops by Pope Benedict XVI in October, 2008.

(Niko Manginas)

OCF ‘Real Break’ to Constantinople

<< *Continued from page 1*

Church difficult. The building’s exterior showed signs of neglect and attempted arson. The inside was heartbreak-

ing at best. Many of the icons had been defaced either by the burning or gouging of faces and hands.

Though modest in its design and decoration, the Church was an oasis of simplicity waiting to be restored

[Left] Erected in 1778, the historic Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos was in a state of significant disrepair since having fallen out of regular use over a quarter century ago in the Salmatombuk district of Istanbul, Turkey. It suffers from years of neglect, which is evident by the overgrown weeds, vines, and thorn bushes outside of the main gate.

[Below] The OCF team applies a fresh coat of paint to the main gate of the Church. (OCF Communications)



to its former glory. This renovation took place in the beginning of Great Lent, in anticipation of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, when the Church celebrates the restoration of the Holy Icons.

“The Church that these students renovated,” said Dr. Anthony Limberakis, National Commander of the Order of Saint Andrew, “was only one example of the numerous Orthodox churches, monasteries and seminaries that have been desecrated. The religious freedom deficit in Turkey that exists today not only has resulted in the near asphyxiation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, but has led to the physical devastation of innumerable houses of worship.” Limberakis continues, “The Real Break experience was an important educational opportunity for these students to experience the Martyria of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as it projects the salvific message of Jesus Christ, despite the

overwhelming challenges it faces in its own country. It is my hope these young adults will share their Real Break experience with others upon their return to the United States. Let our young adults convey the message that the inalienable right of religious freedom shared by all member nations of the European Union and upon which our own country was founded, must now be realized in Turkey.”

The students’ first full day in Istanbul was Clean Monday, and there were an abundance of services. Throughout the day, busloads of pilgrims from Greece poured in and out of the Patriarchal Church of St. George. The students, who were housed a few hundred yards from the Patriarchate, changed back and forth between their Church clothes and work clothes in order to be faithful to the services and their renovation work.



[Left] Students clean an icon of St. John the Baptist. Several icons in the church have been defaced either by the burning or gouging of faces and hands.

[Below] A student finishes the delicate trimwork on the ornamental woodwork inside the Church.

(OCF Communications)



“I thank God that He has accounted me worthy to be a part of something that could touch the heart of His All Holiness. I believe we all felt a sense of closure knowing that the Patriarch of Constantinople celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church we restored the Sunday after we left.”

– Justin Du Bruille, OCF Gonzaga University

Under the direction of His Grace Bishop Dionysius of Synadon, in whose diocese the Church lies, and Meltem Sophia Gikas, a professional restorer, the students cleared the Church grounds of clutter and debris, pruned bushes and trees, stained and varnished woodwork, re-gilded the Royal Doors, painted the apse of the Holy Altar, and polished the silver covered icons of the iconostasis.

By the close of the first day, the transformation was already evident. Bishop Dionysios and Fr. Stylianos Zografides, one of two priests serving 12 diocesan parishes in rotation, came to the parish early on Tuesday and were visibly moved by the progress.

Tuesday and Wednesday were dedicated to the remainder of the restoration work, which included repairs to the iconostasis, replacing light fixtures and vigil lamps, patching and repairing holes and cracks in the walls and floor, and scrubbing the marble floor of the nave. On Wednesday morning, His All Holiness made a surprise visit to the Church and offered the students light snacks for the day. His All Holiness commented, “They have eaten little but offered greatly to the Mother Church.”

Thursday the students were received by His All Holiness at the Ecumenical Patriarchate. To the surprise and joy of all, the Ecumenical Patriarch announced that he would be visiting the parish on the second Sunday

of Lent and that it would be returned to active liturgical use. Following an audience with His All Holiness, he brought the students to the historic Greek High School of Fener, The Great School of the Nation, and treated them to a lunch with the students.

On Friday the group toured the many ancient holy sites of Constantinople, including Hagia Sophia, Christ the Saviour Church at Chora, Barukli Monastery and the Theodosian Walls.

Fr. Mark Leondis stated, “I’m grateful to be associated with such an energetic and selfless group of students. The results of their work were immediately evident and are indicative of the great things we can expect from their generation.”

Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) is the official campus ministry program of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). OCF works to keep students connected to the life-giving teaching and experience of the Orthodox Church. It supports over 260 local chapters throughout North America and involves thousands of college students through its programming, including the College Conference and Real Break. Additional information on all the OCF programs can be found on the OCF website, www.ocf.net, or by calling toll-free, 800-919-1623. ■



[Top, Right] Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew blesses students as they arrive at the Phanar.

[Right] Students had the opportunity to become further educated about the Ecumenical Patriarchate during a rare, private session with His All Holiness at the Phanar.

(OCF Communications)





Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew addresses delegates and guests during a Divine Liturgy held before the opening prayer service for the World Council of Churches. Archons in attendance included [front row, right] National Commander Anthony Limberakis, his wife Maria, Archon Emanuel Demos, and Archon John Halecky. (Niko Manginas)

World Council of Churches celebrates 60th anniversary

— GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew addressed the delegates from churches around the world who gathered recently in prayer and discussion in Geneva, Switzerland, during the World Council of Churches (WCC) annual central committee meeting. The WCC, which brings together 349 churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than 110 countries and territories throughout the world, marked its 60th anniversary.

As ‘Christian Today’ reports, the Ecumenical Patriarch delivered encouraging words and envisioned a future for the organization that will enable “a new generation of labourers to flourish in the ecumenical vineyard” and that retains a foundation of the “three pillars” of unity, witness, and service on which the WCC was built.

The article featured in ‘Christian Today’ can be read in its entirety below.

[World Council of Churches celebrates 60th anniversary 2/18/2008](#)

Gathered in a church dating from the 12th century, the

World Council of Churches seemed like a relative youngster as it celebrated its 60th anniversary Sunday.

But His All Holiness Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, reminded the near-capacity congregation at Geneva’s St Pierre Cathedral that the WCC has accomplished much in its six decades.

“The Council has provided an ideal platform where churches with different outlooks and belonging to a great variety of theological and ecclesiological traditions have been able to engage in dialogue and promote Christian unity, while all the time responding to the manifold needs of contemporary society,” the Orthodox leader said, speaking in French.

He acknowledged the challenges and “turbulent” periods in the Council’s life, but said that dialogue resulted from those difficulties and has paved the way forward. At the WCC’s Ninth Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, two years ago, “markers for a new stage in the life of the Council” were laid down, he said.

The Ecumenical Patriarch,

often referred to as the spiritual leader of the world’s Orthodox, said he envisioned a future that will enable “a new generation of labourers to flourish in the ecumenical vineyard” and that retains a foundation of the “three pillars” of unity, witness, and service on which the WCC was built.

The WCC, he said, has the opportunity to locate itself “at the centre of the life of the global ecumenical village” in the 21st century, and he urged it to “go forward with hope”.

Earlier, in welcoming the crowd to “this very special occasion in this very special place”, WCC President from North America Rev. Dr. Bernice Powell Jackson noted that the cathedral was an appropriate setting for marking the anniversary. It was, she said, “where the very first ecumenical service was held after World War II”, in 1946.

The 90-minute service had an international flavour. The WCC’s four working languages of English, French, German, and Spanish were all represented in music and word. The service also included a chorus in Greek, scripture readings in Swahili and Indo-

nesian, and the upbeat music of the Valihan’i Jehovah Choir a group from the ecumenical community of Madagascar based in Switzerland. Young adult stewards serving at this week’s Central Committee meetings provided leadership for the service.

The choir closed the service by singing the word “peace” in a variety of languages, concluding with the ringing of small cymbals. As guests exited, each received a small flower pot containing a candle as symbols that WCC members “are carrying the seed of peace and also the light of Christ which illuminates the world”.

Numerous other church leaders were present at the service, including Bishop Brian Farrell, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; the Venerable Colin Williams, general secretary of the Conference of European Churches; Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches; Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation; and other Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic, ecumenical, and government officials. ■

Photo Briefs

ARCHONS.ORG/PHOTO-GALLERY



Ecumenical Patriarch attends funeral of late Archbishop of Greece, Christodoulos

ATHENS, GREECE

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew arrived in Athens, Greece on Wednesday, January 30, 2008 for the funeral of the late Archbishop of Athens and Primate of the Church of Greece, Christodoulos. The Ecumenical Patriarch and His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of America attended the funeral service and procession the following day.

(Niko Manginas)



President of the Greek Parliament visits Ecumenical Patriarch

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Mr. George Sioufas, President of the Greek Parliament visited with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Phanar on Monday, February 25, 2008 in Istanbul, Turkey.

(Niko Manginas)



Cardinal Vingt-Trois of Paris meets with Ecumenical Patriarch

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Cardinal Andre Vingt-Trois, Archbishop of Paris, met with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on Thursday, February 28, 2008, at the Phanar in Istanbul, Turkey.

(Niko Manginas)



National Council conducts meeting at Greek Orthodox Archdiocese

NEW YORK, NY

On Thursday, March 6, 2008, the National Council of The Order of Saint Andrew held their monthly meeting at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in New York, NY.

(John J. Mindala II)

PRESERVING & PROTECTING THE UNWANING LIGHT OF THE PHANAR

A message from the National Commander for Pascha 2008

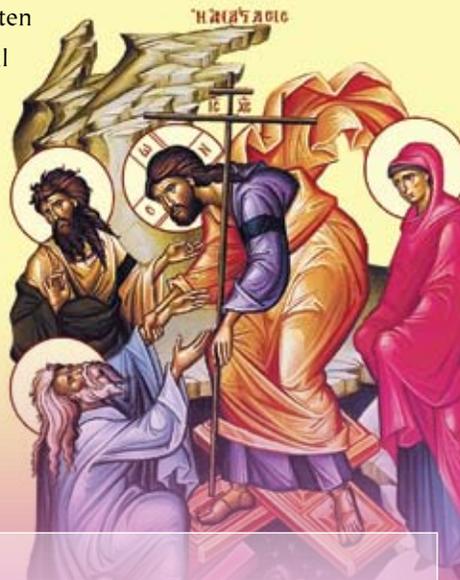
As we Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter with family and friends, sharing the Paschal light and hearing the joyful pealing of the Paschal bells, let us not forget to pray for the Mother Church of Constantinople, the spiritual source of these sacred traditions, and His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, our worldwide spiritual father.

The Order of Saint Andrew, the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America and Defenders of the Faith, with the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios and the Holy Synod, will continue to raise the resurrection banner of religious freedom for the Apostolic See of Saint Andrew so that the unwaning light of the Phanar may forever enlighten God's oikoumene and the bells of Saint George Patriarchal Cathedral may ring joyously with the good news that the Great Church of Christ is free... finally free at last to proclaim to all...

Χριστός Ανέστη Αληθώς Ανέστη

Anthony Limberakis, MD

Anthony Limberakis, MD
National Commander
Archon Aktouarios



In Memoriam MAY THEIR MEMORY BE ETERNAL!

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

Christos P. Demakes, *Exarchos*
3/19/08 Cincinnati, OH

Gus Cherevas, *Kastrinsios*
2/6/08 Flushing, NY

Steve E. Alexander Sr., *Depoutatos*
3/13/08 Atlanta, GA

Frank P. Agnost, *Notarios*
2/2/08 Pacifica, CA

The ARCHON

THE ARCHON is published bi-monthly by the Order of Saint Andrew Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Members are encouraged to submit material pertaining to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Orthodoxy. All material should be typed, signed with name, address and phone number. The editor reserves the right to edit all material submitted for publication. Send to: archons@goarch.org or to THE ARCHON, 8 East 79th Street, New York, NY 10075-0106. © 2008

John J. Mindala II,
Editor & Graphic Designer

ORDER OF SAINT ANDREW
THE APOSTLE
Archons of the
Ecumenical Patriarchate
8 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10075-0106

phone: 212 570 3550
fax: 212 774 0214
web: www.archons.org
email: archons@goarch.org

His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios
Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

Rev. Alexander Karloutsos
Spiritual Advisor

Anthony J. Limberakis, M.D.,
Aktouarios, National Commander

Nicholas J. Bouras, *Depoutatos*
National Vice Commander

John Halecky, Jr., *Ekdikos*
Secretary

James C. Fountas, *Depoutatos*
Treasurer

Christopher Stratakis, Esq., *Notarios*
Legal Counselor

Christo Daphnides, *Kastrinsios*
Historian

Alexander Pritsos, *Hieromnimon*
Sergeant-at-Arms

Executive Committee

Functionaries



The ARCHON



ORDER OF
SAINT ANDREW
the apostle
ARCHONS OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

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