Then.... Now.... and Forever

Our Jubilee Year
18  ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW AND POPE FRANCIS MEET WITH REFUGEES

Pope Francis accepted an invitation from His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Lesvos to meet with the refugees fleeing the war-torn Syria and Iraq.

21  ARCHON ECONOMIDIS NAMED RECIPIENT OF NICHOLAS J. BOURAS AWARD FOR EXTRAORDINARY ARCHON STEWARDSHIP

The Order of Saint Andrew is pleased to announce this worthy recipient from the Metropolis of San Francisco will receive this great honor on Friday, October 14 during the Order’s annual three-day assembly.

12  THE HOLY AND GREAT COUNCIL

“He called all to unity.” The Primates of the Orthodox Church arrived in Crete on June 16–26, 2016, to carry out their sacred mission, the convocation of the Holy and Great Council.

26  JAY ALAN SEKULOW, PHD, JD SPEAKS ON CHRISTIAN GENOCIDE

The Archons of South Florida in conjunction with Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church participated in a religious freedom symposium in Naples in which past Athenagoras Human Rights recipient Jay Alan Sekulow, PhD, JD was keynote speaker.

Cover page: National Commander Dr. Anthony G. Borden with Archons visiting Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, and then, Metropolitan Bartholomew of Philadelphia–now Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.
The Order of St. Andrew of the Ecumenical Patriarchate was organized on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 10, 1966 when His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos of blessed memory conferred upon thirty outstanding laymen of the Church the various Offikia or Offices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on behalf of His All Holiness Patriarch Athenagoras of blessed memory. They were honored because of their love, loyalty and support of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The Offikia for the Order of St. Andrew derive from some of the most prestigious offices of the ancient world. Originating in the Ancient Greek City-States, these civic offices were transformed when the Roman Empire embraced the Christian faith during the fourth century. As a consequence of this transition, not only were the office-holders important leaders of the Christian community, the offices themselves took on specific religious responsibilities for the service and promotion of the faith in the Roman Empire. The ancient order of Archons is, in fact, the oldest and most prestigious honor that can be bestowed upon a layman in the entire Christian world. The Order, under the supervision of its historian will be publishing an official, scholarly academic reference book on the Archon Offikia, including their derivation and historical development which will be released during Archon Weekend, October 14 ~ 16, 2016.

On the occasion of our 50th Anniversary, we take this opportunity to recommit ourselves as Defenders of the Faith to the Spiritual Center of the entire Christian world. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, the highest spiritual authority in Orthodoxy, under the extraordinary leadership of His All-Holiness Bartholomew, who observes his 25th Anniversary as Ecumenical Patriarch on November 2, 2016. We recommit ourselves to fighting for religious freedom and the vitality of Saint Andrew’s See, notwithstanding the oppressive environment where it is located and where religious freedom does not exist in that entire part of the world.

The Order is looking forward to support the efforts of His All-Holiness as he convenes the Holy and Great Council this June in Crete, the first such assembly of Orthodox prelates since 787 AD, the Seventh Ecumenical Council that took place in Nicaea, as well as all his initiatives from protecting the environment to promoting reconciliation among warring factions to unity among all Christians.

On this our 50th Anniversary, the Archons of America under the inspired leadership of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios Geron of America, express our profound love and respect to His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, our worldwide spiritual father, now for 25 years and with the anticipation that he will continue for many, many more years his pious, intrepid and Christ-like spiritual leadership.

A Tribute in honor of our 50th Anniversary
By National Commander Anthony J. Limberakis, MD
Archon Aktouarios

Tribute image credit: GOA Archives
Pierre De Mets (Panagiotis DeMetreou) was the first National Commander of the Order of Saint Andrew, then known as the Knights of St. Andrew. He and Patriarch Athenagoras of blessed memory together envisioned an Order of outstanding laymen in the Archdiocese of the Americas, and in 1966 this dream was realized. Pierre De Mets was appointed for life as the Grand Commander by His All Holiness Patriarch Athenagoras.

A longstanding and respected churchman in Philadelphia, Dr. Anthony G. Borden succeeded Pierre DeMets as National Commander in 1976 when he was appointed by Archbishop Iakovos of blessed memory. Born and raised in Heraklion, Crete and having served as a decorated WWII veteran in the army of the Hellenic Republic as a physician, Doctor Borden furthered his medical training in the field of radiology in the United States at Harvard University, Bellevue Hospital, NY and the University of Pennsylvania, before entering private practice in Philadelphia. Along with his wife Lillian, they raised two children (Maria, a family physician married to current National Commander Anthony J. Limberakis, MD and George, a practicing attorney in Washington, DC). During his tenure as National Commander, the religious freedom persecution perpetrated by Turkey and constricting the Ecumenical Patriarchate was publicized in the United States for the first time by the Order. In addition, the inaugural Athenagoras Human Rights Award was established which provided an extraordinary instrument to honor individuals and organizations in the field of human rights, while simultaneously focusing on the religious freedom crisis asphyxiating the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In 1989 Dr. Borden himself received the Athenagoras Human Rights Award for his visionary contributions.

Dr. Chris Philip, respected and distinguished churchman from Tenafly, New Jersey succeeded Doctor Borden in 1989 as National Commander. A graduate of New York University and NYU College of Dentistry, he received his postgraduate training in the field of Orthodontics from Colombia University. After graduating from Dental school he was commissioned as Captain in the U.S. Air Force Dental Corps. Doctor Philip was a professor of Orthodontics at Fairleigh Dickinson University’s graduate department, and served as Director of the Cranio-Facial Anomalies and Cleft Palate Programs and was Chairman of the department of Orthodontics. Doctor Philip was Vice Commander prior to his appointment as National Commander by Archbishop Iakovos of blessed memory. Among the highlights of his tenure were the sponsorship of the New York Philharmonic Benefit Concert at Lincoln Center highlighting the Ecumenical Patriarchate (1992) and the PBS production of “The Concert for Peace” featuring Nana Mouskouri (1997) that took place during the Holy Visitation of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the United States, a concert which was broadcast throughout the United States. Beloved husband of Irene for 59 years, the devoted father of Katherine and husband Dr. Chris Kojanis and son Chris Philip Jr., Doctor Philip fell asleep in the Lord in last year.

Anthony J. Limberakis, MD, an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate since 1987 and a member of the National Council since 1988 succeeded Doctor Philip in 1998 with his appointment by former Archbishop Spyridon. Having served as a United States Senator’s Page from 1969 to 1971 while in high school, he graduated the University of Pennsylvania in 1975 with BA and MA degrees in Political Science. In 1978 Doctor Limberakis graduated Duke University School of Medicine, where he served in various leadership capacities while a student and later as an alumnus. After graduating medical school, he completed an Internal Medicine internship followed by his residency in Diagnostic Radiology at the Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in 1983. The son of a priest who had served the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese for over 60 years, the church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate have always been integral in his life. With the blessings and guidance of Archbishop Demetrios Geron of America, a dynamic, multifaceted domestic and international religious freedom strategy was developed by the Order. During the tenure of Doctor Limberakis, working side by side with Spiritual Advisor Fr. Alexander Karloutsos and the officers and members of the National Council, the Regional Commanders and brother Archons, the Order’s religious freedom strategy included focusing Anchor efforts at the White House, Department of State, US Congress, US Commission on International Religious Freedom, each of the 50 States of the United States, the European Court of Human Rights, the European Union, the OSCE and the government of the Republic of Turkey itself, in Ankara. He is married to Dr. Maria A. (Borden) Limberakis, a family practice physician and together have three adult children (John, Anthony [Kathryn] and Elizabeth) and two grandsons (Dakota and Anthony).
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Visits to The Ecumenical Patriarchate

National Commander †Anthony Borden (left) and National Commander Anthony J. Limberakis (right) pray with clergy and faithful at the grave of the ever memorable Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras at Balıklı Monastery.

The Balıklı Hospital

During trips to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, frequent visits were made to the patients at the Balıklı Hospital and Home for the Aged in Constantinople. The Balıklı Hospital is a health care institution established in the 18th century and continues its service under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Executive Committee

National Commander †Anthony Borden (left) and National Commander Anthony J. Limberakis (right) pray during the Divine Liturgy at the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity with members of the National Council’s Executive Committee.
In 1986 the National Council of the Order of Saint Andrew, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America established The Athenagoras Human Rights Award. The Award is presented every year at the Annual Banquet of the Order 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. The Award was named after one of the Great Church Leaders of the 20th Century, the late Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras I.

Past Recipients of The Athenagoras Human Rights Award

2015: Vice President Joe Biden
2014: Jay Alan Sekulow, PhD, JD
2013: 60 Minutes
2012: Stavros Niarchos Foundation
2011: Admiral James G. Stavridis
2010: Theodore Cardinal McCarrick
2009: Anthony J. Limberakis, MD
2008: Rabbi Arthur Schneier
2007: Archbishop Demetrios of America
2006: Nicholas J. Bouras
2005: Mikhail Gorbachev

2004: Alex G. Spanos
2003: IOCC and OCMC
2002: President George H. W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush
2001: Archbishop Anastasios of Albania
2000: Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu
1999: Elie Wiesel
1998: Nana Mouskouri
1997: Reverend Clergy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese

1996: Order of AHEPA
1995: Hon. Edward Derwinski
1994: Hon. Paul S. Sarbanes
1993: George Douris
1992: Ladies Philoptochos
1991: Andrew A. Athens
1990: Hon. John Brademas
1989: Anthony G. Borden, MD
1988: Mother Theresa
1987: President Jimmy Carter
1986: Archbishop Iakovos

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Axios! Axios! Axios!
Fighting for Religious Freedom

Members of the Executive Committee of the Knights of St. Andrew meet together.

Then....

Archbishop Iakovos with members of the Order of Saint Andrew

Then....
Members of the Executive Committee and National Council at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America on March 22, 2016.

Now

Archbishop Demetrios and Metropolitan Emmanuel with Archons during an Archon Religious Freedom Summit in January 2015.
ToGod,"thefatherofmerciesandall comfort,"weaddressahymnofthanksgivingandpraiseforhavingenabledustogatherduringtheweekofPentecost(18-26 June2016)onCrete,wheretheApostle PaulandhisdiscipleTituspreachedthe Gospelintheearlyyearsofthelifeofthe Church.wegivethanks totheTrinuGod who was well pleased that in one accord weshouldbringtoaclosurethework oftheHolyandGreatCouncilthatwas convedbyHisAllHolinessEcumenical Patriarch.Bartholomewbythecommon willoftheirBeatitudesthеPrimatesofthe localOrthodoxAutocephalousChurches. Faithfullyfollowingtheexampleofthe ApostlesandourgodbearingsFatherswe haveonceagainstudiedtheGospeloffreedom"forwhichChristhassetusfree"(Gal. 5:1).Thefoundationofourtheological disussionswasthecertaintythattheChurch doesnotliveforherself.She transmitsthe witnessoftheGospelofgraceandtruth andoffers tothewholeworldthegiftsof God:love,peace,justice,reconciliation, thepoweroftheCrossandoftheResurrection andtheexpectationofeternallife.

1) The key priority of the Council was to proclaim the unity of the Orthodox Church. Founded on the Eucharist and the Apostolic Succession of her Bishops, the existing unity needs to be strengthened and to bear new fruits. The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is a divine-human communion, a foretaste and experience of the eschaton within the Holy Eucharist. As a continuous Pentecost, she is a prophetic voice that cannot be silenced, the presence of and witness to the Kingdom of the God of love. The Orthodox Church, faithful to the unanimous Apostolic Tradition and her sacramental experience, is the authentic continuation of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church as confessed in the Creed and confirmed by the teaching of the Church Fathers. Our Church lives out the mystery of the Divine Economy in her sacramental life, with the Holy Eucharist at its center. The Orthodox Church expresses her unity and catholicity "in Council". Conciliarity pervades her organization, the way decisions are taken and determines her path. The Orthodox Autocephalous Churches do not constitute a federation of Churches, but the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Each local Church as she offers the holy Eucharist is the local presence and manifestation of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. In regard to the Orthodox Diaspora in various countries of the world, it was decided to continue with the institution of Episcopal Assemblies until such time as canonical rigor can be implemented. These assemblies are composed of the canonical bishops appointed by each Autocephalous Church and these bishops continue to remain subject to their respective Churches. The due function of these Episcopal Assemblies guarantees respect for the Orthodox principle of conciliarity. During the deliberations of the Holy and Great Council the importance of the Synaxes of the Primates which had taken place was emphasized and the proposal was made for the Holy and Great Council to
become a regular Institution to be convened every seven or ten years.

2) Participating in the Holy Eucharist and praying for the whole world, we must con-
tinue the 'liturgy after the Divine Liturgy' and give the witness of faith to those near and
those far off, in accordance with the Lord’s
clear command before His ascension, “And
you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and
in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of
the earth (Ac. 1: 8). The re-evangelization of
God’s people in modern, secularized soci-
eties and the evangelization of those who
have still not come to know Christ remain an
unceasing obligation for the Church.

3) In response to her obligation to wit-
ness to the truth and her apostolic faith,
our Church attaches great importance to
dialogue, primarily with non Orthodox
Christians. In this way the remainder of
the Christian world comes to know more
precisely the authenticiy of the Orthodox
Tradition, the value of patristic teaching and
the liturgical life and faith of the Orthodox.
The dialogues conducted by the Orthodox
Church never imply a compromise in mat-
ters of faith.

4) The explosions of fundamentalism
observed within various religions represent
an expression of morbid religiosity. Sober
inter-religious dialogue helps significa-
cantly to promote mutual trust, peace and
reconciliation. The oil of religious experience
must be used to heal wounds and not to
rekindle the fire of military conflicts. The
Orthodox Church unequivocally condemn
the extension of military violence, persecu-
tions, the expulsion and murder of members
of religious minorities, forced conversions,
the trafficking of refugees, the abductions,
torture and abhorrent executions. She
denounces the destruction of churches,
religious symbols and cultural monuments.
Very particularly, she expresses her deep
concern about the situation of Christians
and of all the persecuted minorities in the
Middle East. She calls on the governments
in the region to protect the indigenous
Orthodox and other Christians and all the
populations who have an inalienable right
to remain in their countries as citizens with
equal rights. Our Council appeals to all
parties involved to make systematic efforts
without delay to bring to an end the military
conflicts in the Middle East and wherever
armed hostilities persist and to enable all
those displaced to return to their homes.

We address our appeal particularly to those
in positions of power to act so that peace and
justice may prevail in the countries of origin
of the refugees. We urge the civil authorities,
the citizens and the Orthodox Christians in the
countries in which the persecuted are taking
refuge to continue to offer help to the limit or
even beyond the limit of their abilities.

5) Modern secularisation seeks the
autonomy of man (anthropos) from Christ
and from the spiritual influence of the
Church, which it arbitrarily identifies with
conservatism. Western civilization, however,
bears the indelible mark of the diachronic
contribution of Christianity. The Church,
moreover, highlights the saving significance
of Christ, the God-man, and of His Body,
as the place and mode of life in freedom.

6) In contrast to the contemporary ap-
proach to marriage, the Orthodox Church
regards the indissoluble loving relationship
of man and woman as "a great mystery... of
Christ and the Church". Similarly, she
calls the family which springs from this and
which constitutes the only guarantee for
the upbringing of children a "little church".
The Church has always emphasised the
value of self-restraint. Christian asceti-
cism, however, differs radically from every
dualistic asceticism which severs man from
life and from his fellow man. On the contrary,
she connects this with the sacramental
life of the Church. Self-restraint does not
concern only the monastic life. The ascetic
ethos is a characteristic of Christian life in
all its manifestations.

Apart from the specific topics about
which it decided, the Holy and Great Council
notes in brief the following important con-
temporary issues:

7) In regard to the matter of the relations
between Christian faith and the natural sci-
ces, the Orthodox Church avoids placing
scientific investigation under tutelage and
does not adopt a position on every scientific
question. She thanks God who gives to
scientists the gift of uncovering unknown
dimensions of divine creation. The modern
development of the natural sciences and
of technology is bringing radical changes to
our life. It brings significant benefits, such as
the facilitation of everyday life, the treatment
of serious diseases, easier communications
and space exploration, and so on. In spite
of this, however, there are many negative
consequences such as the manipulation of
freedom, the gradual loss of precious tradit-
tions, the destruction of the natural environ-
ment and the questioning of moral values.
Scientific knowledge, however swiftly it may
be advancing, does not motivate man’s will,
nor does it give answers to serious moral
and existential issues and to the search for
the meaning of life and of the world. These
matters demand a spiritual approach, which
the Orthodox Church attempts to provide
through a bioethics which is founded on
Christian ethics and Patristic teaching.
Along with her respect for the freedom of
scientific investigation, the Orthodox Church
at the same time points out the dangers
concealed in certain scientific achieve-
ments and emphasises man’s dignity and
his divine destiny.

8) It is clear that the present-day eco-
logical crisis is due to spiritual and moral
causes. Its roots are connected with greed,
avarice and egoism, which lead to the
thoughtless use of natural resources, the
filling of the atmosphere with damaging
pollutants, and to climate change. The
Christian response to the problem demands
repentance for the abuses, an ascetic frame
of mind as an antidote to overconsumption,
and at the same time a cultivation of the
consciousness that man is a “steward” and
not a possessor of creation. The Church
never ceases to emphasise that future gen-
erations also have a right to the natural
resources that the Creator has given us.
For this reason, the Orthodox Church takes
an active part in the various international
ecological initiatives and has ordained the
1st September as a day of prayer for the
protection of the natural environment.

9) Against the levelling and impersonal
standardization that is promoted in so many
ways, Orthodoxy proposes respect for the
particular characteristics of individuals
peoples. It is also opposed the making of the
economy into something autonomous
from basic human needs and turning it into
an end in itself. The progress of mankind
is not connected only with an increase in living
standards or with economic development
at the expense of spiritual values.

10) The Orthodox Church does not in-
volve herself in politics. Her voice remains
distinct, but also prophetic, as a beneficial
intervention for the sake of man. Human
rights today are at the center of politics
as a response to the social and political
crises and upheavals, and seek to protect
the citizen from the arbitrary power of the
state. Our Church also adds to this the ob-
ligations and responsibilities of the citizens
and the need for constant self-criticism on
the part of both politicians and citizens for
the improvement of society. And above all
she emphasises that the Orthodox ideal
in respect of man transcends the horizon of
established human rights and that “ greatest
of all is love”, as Christ revealed and as the
faithful who follow him have experienced.
She insists also that a fundamental human
right is the protection of religious freedom-
namely, freedom of conscience, belief, and
religion, including, alone and in community,
in private and in public, the right to freedom
of worship and practice, the right to manifest
one’s religion, as well as the right of religious
communities to religious education and to
the full function and exercise of their reli-
gious duties, without any form of direct or
indirect interference by the state.
The inaugural session of the Council commenced in the neighbouring Orthodox Academy of Crete.

11) The Orthodox Church addresses herself to young people who seek for a plenitude of life replete with freedom, justice, creativity and also love. She invites them to join themselves consciously with the Church of Him who is Truth and Life. To come, offering to the ecclesial body their vitality, their anxieties, their concerns and their expectations. Young people are not only the future, but also the dynamic and creative present of the Church, both on a local and on a world-wide level.

12) The Holy and Great Council has opened our horizon towards the contemporary diverse and multifarious world. It has emphasised our responsibility in place and in time, ever with the perspective of eternity. The Orthodox Church, preserving intact her Sacramental and Soteriological character, is sensitive to the pain, the distress and the cry for justice and peace of the peoples of the world. She “proclaims day after day the good tidings of His salvation, announcing His glory among the nations and His wonders among all peoples” (Psalm 95).

Let us pray that “the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory in Christ, will, after we have suffered a little, Himself restore, establish, and strengthen and settle us. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 5.10-11).

[Signed by the Heads of the participating Autocephalous Orthodox Churches and Delegations attending the Holy and Great Council]

During his introductory speech at the Opening Session on June 20, His All-Holiness, pictured left, expressed his joy at the eager participation of ten Churches, namely Alexandria, Jerusalem, Serbia, Romania, Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania, Czech and Slovakia. At the same time, however, he expressed his bitter disappointment at the non-participation of four Churches at the Council, even though these, namely the Churches of Antioch, Russia, Bulgaria and Georgia, had co-operated in all stages of preparation of the topics for discussion, with great willingness, and made an important contributions. Therefore, his disappointment at their absence, for no specific reason, was even greater since two of them had agreed on and signed all of the texts of the Council at the recent Synaxis of the Primates of the most Holy Local Orthodox Churches. In this spirit, at the conclusion of the deliberations of the Council on June 17 – and with the common consent of all the Primates – an invitation was sent out to the Primates of the non-participating Churches, to participate in the Concelebration of the Sunday of Pentecost, or in that of the Sunday of All Saints (June 26).
On June 26, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presides over the Orthros and Synodal Divine Liturgy and concelebrates with the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches at Saints Peter and Paul Church in Chania, Crete.
His-All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew prays before the relics of the Apostle Titus in the Church of St. Titus in Heraklion celebrated Vespers of Pentecost.
His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, top, with Metropolitan of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese.

National Commander Limberakis and National Secretary Bozonelis escort His All-Holiness, left, to a reception hosted by the Order of Saint Andrew at Firkas Fortress in Chania. Dr. Limberakis concluded his toast, above, left, saying, "For such a heroic effort that you have all put forth in these last days, led by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew who celebrates twenty-five years this year as Head of the Church of Constantinople, I humbly and with deepest respect raise my glass to all of you, the Fathers of the Holy and Great Council of the Year of the Grace of our Lord Two Thousand and Sixteen. May the Same Lord grant unto you all peace, health, and length of days, so that you may ever rightly divide and teach the Word of His Truth."

From left to right: Archon Michael Karloutsos, Archons Alexander Pritsos and Nicholas Furris, Archon Dimitrios Panagos and Archon Theo Nicolakis were all instrumental in the pre-planning, organization, communication and success of the Holy and Great Council.

National Commander Limberakis and National Secretary Hon B. Theodore Bozonelis sit in as observers on the closing session.
The significance of the joint visit to the island of Lesbos, Greece, on Saturday, April 16, 2016, by the leaders of the Christian Churches of the East and West cannot be understated. And its impact on the refugee crisis—in addition to its spiritual and symbolic dimensions, as well as its seemingly non-political and refreshingly spontaneous nature—should not be diminished.

This was the fifth time that Roman Catholic Pope Francis and Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew are meeting together and the second joint pilgrimage that they have realized together since the pope’s election in 2013. On most of these occasions—Rome (March 2013), Jerusalem (May 2014), Rome (June 2014), Istanbul (November 2014), and now Lesbos (2016)—they have declared their solidarity with people suffering from war and persecution, poverty and hunger, as well as ecological repercussions of social injustice. Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew have, from the very outset of their relations, demonstrated that they understand the role of the church. They know what matters, or at least what should matter, in the church; and they understand what the responsibility, priority, and ministry of the church should be in the contemporary world.

Many of the encounters of these two remarkable men have been spontaneous. For example, when the patriarch attended the inaugural mass of the pope in March 2013, it was the first time in history that this had occurred—ever. Just over a year later, when Francis invited Prime Minister Peres of Israel and President Abbas of Palestine to the Vatican in June 2014, he spontaneously asked Bartholomew to extend the invitation jointly to the two political leaders.

Finally, this latest visit to Lesbos began as a request from the Greek government to the ecumenical patriarch in February, which led Bartholomew to initiate communications with Rome in March for a possible joint visit in April to a small Greek island that had generously and graciously welcomed hundreds of thousands of refugees over the last eighteen months. And it was a way to remember and mourn the loss of thousands—among them many children—who lost their lives in the Mediterranean as they crossed by inflatable boats from Turkey to Greece.

However, this time, the meeting between Francis and Bartholomew was different. Theological dialogues and ecumenical relations are often carried out in order to gain something—whether to achieve clarity or advance toward unity. The visit by Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, accompanied by the local Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece, aimed at giving something: hope to the hundreds of detainees, thanks to the already beleaguered people of Greece, and caution to politicians to examine their hearts. Together, the three leaders declared:

We have met on the Greek island of Lesbos to demonstrate our profound concern for the tragic situation of the numerous refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers who have come to Europe fleeing from situations of conflict and, in many cases, daily threats to their survival. World opinion cannot ignore the colossal humanitarian crisis created by the spread of violence and armed conflict, the persecution and displacement of religious and ethnic minorities, and the uprooting of families from their homes, in violation of their human dignity and their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

And while the political dimensions were deliberately diminished, one of the pivotal objectives of the joint visit was to censure politicians and nations for shunning the refugees and exacerbating their crisis. As Patriarch Bartholomew boldly observed in his address at Lesbos, “the world will be judged by the way it has treated” the refugees:

We have traveled here to look into your eyes, to hear your voices, and to hold your hands. We have traveled here to tell you that we care. We have traveled here because the world has not forgotten you.

We have wept as we watched the Mediterranean Sea becoming a burial ground for your loved ones. We have wept as we witnessed the sympathy and sensitivity of the people of Lesbos and other islands. But we also wept as we saw the hard-heartedness of our fellow brothers and sisters—your fellow brothers and sisters—close borders and turn away.

Those who are afraid of you have not looked at you in the eyes. Those who are afraid of you do not see your faces. Those who are afraid of you do not see your children. They forget that dignity and freedom transcend fear and division. They forget that migration is not an issue for the Middle East and Northern Africa, for Europe and Greece, It is an issue for the world.

The world will be judged by the way it has treated you. And we will all be accountable for the way we respond to the crisis and conflict in the regions that you come from.

For his part, Pope Francis stunned the world by inviting twelve eligible Syrian refugees to board his plane and relocate to the Vatican City, a humanitarian gesture repeated countless times previously in Greece and Turkey where millions of refugees have fled.

The event in Lesbos a few days ago indicated a practical response by the churches of the East and West to a tragic crisis in our world. At the same time, it signaled a powerful reassessment of how ecumenical relations can advance human rights at a time when the world is either turning its face away from the victims of extremism and persecution or else deciding their fate on financial terms or national interests. The power of ecumenism lies in beginning to open up beyond ourselves and our own, our communities and our churches. It is learning to speak the language of care and compassion. And it is giving priority to solidarity and service.

Above: His All-Holiness, together with Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece and Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, welcome Pope Francis as he arrives at the Airport.
PATRIARCHAL NEWS

Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium calls for unity against terrorism

The Orthodox Metropolitan of Belgium, Athenagoras (Ecumenical Patriarchate) has called for all religious leaders of Belgium to unite their voices and forces against terrorism. Commenting on the attacks of Tuesday morning in Brussels, Athenagoras, President of the Orthodox Episcopal Assembly of Belgium, appealed to every person of good will around the world, Christians and non, to become a shield against terrorism as well as messengers of peace.

"Terrorists today have not struck Brussels. Terrorists today struck throughout Europe. Terrorists today struck once again the whole world" he underlined in his comment.

"We call upon the whole world, Christian and not, to become a shield against terrorism. To become one body against the storm of grief that overwhelms the planet. In this war that was declared by terrorism in Europe we will become messengers of peace" he said.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew meets with Scholars at the Phanar

The Ecumenical Patriarchate hosted a meeting of thirty scholars on January 4-5, 2016. The purpose of the encounter was to establish connections with theologians and academicians working in various disciplines and ministries throughout the world in order to become better acquainted with their interests and aspirations for the church, especially in light of the Holy and Great Council.

Professor Archon George Demacopoulos and Professor Archon Aristotle Papanikolaou, co-founders of the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University, along with Dr. Elizabeth Prodrómou, Former Vice Chair, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and speaker at the 2013 Archon International Conference on Religious Freedom in Berlin, were among many of the scholars present.

"We invite the support of pious Orthodox scholars, who are concerned about the unity of our Church and its role in the public square, where there are so many competing opinions and where the word of Orthodoxy can contribute positively and constructively through dialogue. Our faith should not be regarded as stagnant or even obsolete. It must not be conveyed as verbose or perhaps artificial. And it cannot be dismissed as merely cerebral or uninspired. Our word must express the hope and joy, the light and life of the risen Lord. It must be renewed and renewing, reviving and refreshing."

– Excerpt by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the Scholars’ Meeting
Reverend Dr. Stefanos Alexopoulos leads Archon Lenten Retreat in Southampton

With the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, the Order of Saint Andrew, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America, was pleased to have Reverend Dr. Stefanos Alexopoulos as its retreat master for the 13th Annual Archon Lenten Retreat, April 15-16, 2016. The retreat was held at the Dormition of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church of the Hamptons, hosted by Father Alexander Karloutsos, Archon Spiritual Advisor and Father Constantine Lazarakis, Pastor.

Some seventy Archons, spouses and participants attended the retreat which allowed everyone to grow in their spirituality, join together in fellowship and prayer, and allowed Archons to reenergize their commitment in the pursuit of religious freedom for the Mother Church of Constantinople.

The two-day retreat focused on the topic, “The Power of Worship: Insights From Liturgical History, Liturgical Theology, & Liturgical Anthropology” outlining and dissecting the Byzantine Liturgy and offering insights from Liturgical theology and anthropology. Participants had the opportunity to engage in breakout sessions and also worship during an evening Akathist service along with a celebration of the Divine Liturgy the following morning, led by Father Constantine Lazarakis, rector, and visiting retired cleric Father Constantine Mathews.

National Commander Anthony J. Limberakis, together with Archons Peter J. Skeadas, Michael G. Psaros--co-chairs of the Spirituality Committee--and members of the National Council, thanked Fr. Stefanos at the conclusion of the retreat.
The Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle is pleased to announce that Archon Theofanis V. Economidis, Archon Ekdikos, has been designated 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 Marriott Marquis Hotel, Friday evening, Oct. 14, as part of the Order's annual three-day assembly, Oct. 14-16.

Archon George Safiol, Award Committee chairman, said, "Archon Economidis 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 the recipient of this prestigious Award in recognition of the extraordinary service exemplified by National Vice Commander Bouras."

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ARCHON REGIONAL NEWS

Archon Andrew E. Manatos receives Lifetime Achievement Award

The Alpha-Omega Council of Boston honored Archon Andrew E. Manatos with the Lifetime Achievement Award at its 33rd Annual Banquet which was held on June 4. ■

Metropolis of Chicago Archons hold first ever Archon Retreat, Kansasville, WI

The Archons of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago held their first ever Archon Retreat on May 7, 2016 at the St. Iakovos Retreat Center in Kansasville, Wisconsin. Father David Bissias of Hammond, Indiana delivered the Keynote Address entitled "Primus Inter Pares: The Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Conciliar Tradition of the Church* and centered around the upcoming Holy and Great Council. ■

Jay Alan Sekulow speaks on Christian Genocide at Religious Freedom Conference, Naples, FL

With the blessings of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, the Archons of South Florida hosted a religious freedom symposium, entitled, “Christian Rights and Freedom” on Saturday, March 19, 2016 at Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church in Naples, FL. Jay Alan Sekulow, PhD, JD, past recipient of the Athenagoras Human Rights Award and Chief Counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ), delivered a presentation on Christian Genocide. ■

Archons meet with Speaker Ryan on Religious Freedom Issues

Archon Leadership met with Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Paul Ryan to address important religious freedom issues surrounding the Ecumenical Patriarchate. ■

Presentation on Refugee Crisis and Resettlement Process, New Haven, CT

With the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, the Order of Saint Andrew co-sponsored a presentation on the refugee crisis and the resettlement process. The Jan 13th presentation, entitled, "America’s Noblest Tradition ... Welcoming Refugees to our Shores - How the Refugee Settlement Program Works in Connecticut" was delivered by Mr. Chris George, Executive Director of Immigrant Refugee Integrated Services (IRIS), a not-for-profit refugee resettlement agency based in New Haven, Connecticut. ■

Archon Symposium held on The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, Elkins Park, PA

The Church of the Annunciation in Elkins Park, PA was the setting for the Philadelphia region’s fifth Archon Symposium/Lenten Retreat on Saturday, April 2nd which focused on the upcoming historic Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, which has not occurred in 1200 years. With the blessings of His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey, the topic of the upcoming Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church was addressed by Fordham University Professor of Theology, and the Order of Saint Andrew’s Historian Archon George E. Demacopoulos, Ph.D. ■
In Memoriam: Archon Michael E. Jaharis

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America mourns the passing in the Lord of Mr. Michael E. Jaharis, 87, Archon Exarchos of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Vice-President of the Archdiocesan Council of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, businessman, philanthropist and great benefactor and faithful steward of the Church.

Mr. Jaharis passed away peacefully today, February 17, in his home in New York City with his family by his side.

Upon learning of his passing to the Lord, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios stated: “Archon Michael Jaharis was an extraordinary human being endowed by God with inexhaustible energy, amazing creativity and impressive care and love for the people, especially those in sickness, distress and suffering. He was a person fully dedicated to the Church and its sacred work, an ardent American patriot and a passionate promoter of Hellenism and its universal values. Certainly he set a brilliant example of a genuine Greek Orthodox Christian stewardship to be followed by as many as possible. May his memory be eternal.”

Archon Jaharis has been intimately involved with the Greek Orthodox Church for many years. He has served faithfully as the Vice-President of the Archdiocesan Council since 2002. He led the effort to see New York City’s St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, the sole church destroyed in the 9/11 attacks at Ground Zero, rebuilt near its original site. “When finished,” Archon Jaharis told the Archdiocesan Council in 2012, the new structure will provide “a shining spotlight on the Greek Orthodox faith and our core values of love, respect, peace, healing, and forgiveness.”

He is survived by his wife Mary Jaharis, his son Dr. Steven Jaharis (Elaine) and his daughter Kathryn Jaharis and five grandchildren.

Our Hagia Sophia — The Archetype of Our Faith

by Father Alexander Karloutsos, Archon Spiritual Advisor

As we enter into the Summer and the work at our National Shrine continues, I think it is important to pause for a moment and consider the true import of our cause. We are building the equivalent of our own Hagia Sophia for the New World.

The level of commitment and faith that this takes says a great deal about who we are and what we believe to the world at-large. Perhaps the costliest church construction project to date in our Archdiocese, but surely the most important as well. Compare what we are doing to what the Turkish government recently did in Lanham, Maryland.

On April 3, 2016 – one day before the 30th annual White House celebration of the March 25th Greek Independence Day (which celebrates the rebirth of Greece after 400 years of Ottoman occupation), the “Diyanet (religious) Center of America” was opened by the President of Turkey less than fifteen miles away from the Oval Office. To the right is a picture from the eleven-acre site, the largest in the Western Hemisphere, which cost over 100 million dollars. The central building is of course, a mosque (of more than 20,000 square feet), fashioned to resemble a 16th Century prototype, which, like all Turkish mosques – large and small – are ersatz imitations of Hagia Sofia.

In addition to the mosque, the campus features a cultural center, Ottoman style guest homes, and an underground sports complex. As an eyewitness recently remarked, “If I wandered into this average suburban neighborhood, I would think I had time traveled to Ottoman Constantinople.”

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What we are seeing with this “Religious Center” is more than the wholesale appropriation of our own Orthodox Christian tradition, a wholesale counterfeiting of our architectural tradition which commenced when the Ottomans conquered Asia Minor. What we are witnessing is the export of that appropriation to our country by taking advantage of the freedom of religion and conscience that are enshrined in the America Constitution’s Bill of Rights. The obvious irony is that Turkey regularly suppresses the rights of anyone but the state-approved version of Islam. This naked hypocrisy of the Turkish government should cause any person of real conviction a sense of outrage.

But as Greek Orthodox Christians, who as an Archdiocese publically have consistently defended the rights of Muslims and all peoples of faith, even as forces in our own government agencies tried to block the rebuilding of St. Nicholas, we press on, inspired by the true and deepest meaning of our traditions. Our creed is love, our faith is Orthodox, and our tradition is not a hollow shell but the full expression of human and Divine in the Θεάνθρωπος – the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

Above, the formworks for the stairs for St. Nicholas begin to emerge.

A Thought about the Shrine

Listen to what the a 12th century Deacon of Constantinople, Michael, writes in his Ekphrasis, describing both the physical and spiritual capacities of Hagia Sophia:

ʻως εἰς τὸ ἀναχές ὁ οἶκος ἀνέωρη, κύτους
μὲν εὐρύτητα ἔχων ὡς πολλὰς ἄν
σωμάτων μυριάδας ἐγκυμοσύνην.

“The building opens up to immensity; the breadth of its hollows is such that it could be pregnant with many thousands of bodies.”

Indeed, this powerful image conveys the image of the Church as a Mother whose womb – the Baptismal Font – give birth to us as Christians through the Mysteries. It calls to mind the idea that the Church, though inanimate in material, is alive; a ναὸς ἐμψυχός, a living temple. The Church is the liminal space where we encounter Divinity, where we all become “capax Dei,” “having the capacity to be like God.”

Writing in the 6th Century in his poem entitled, The Magnificence of Hagia Sophia, Paul the Silentiary (a court official sworn to secrecy), praises the dome of the Great Church of Christ in this way:

Above all rises into the immeasurable air the great helmet [of the dome], which, bending over, like the radiant heavens, embraces the church. And at the highest part, at the crown, was depicted the cross, the protector of the city. And wondrous it is to see how the dome gradually rises wide below, and growing less as it reaches higher. it does not however spring upwards to a sharp point, but is like the firmament which rests on air, though the dome is fixed on the strong backs of the arches.... Thus through the spaces of the great church come rays of light, expelling clouds of care, and filling the mind with joy.