

THE LETTER OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF ATHENS AND ALL GREECE IERONYMOS ABOUT THE HOLY MONASTERY OF SINAI

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem publishes the letter of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos under Protocol no. 788 and from December 21, 2022, to His Beatitude Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Ieronymos regarding the Autocephalous regime of the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine of Sinai and the canonical order in the case of the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in it, under a Bishop of other ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

This letter reads as follows:

No. Prot.

788

Your Beatitude Archbishop of Athens and all Greece and President of the Holy Synod of the Holy Church in Christ God in Greece, dear brother and co-minister of Our Mediocrity Mr Ieronymos. Embracing you in a holy kiss we humbly admonish Your Beatitude.

Through these Patriarchal fraternal Letters of Ours, we communicate in the spirit of fraternal love in Christ after Your most beloved and widely studied Beatitude, taking the occasion from this year's feast of the Holy Glorious Great Martyr Catherine the All-wise in the Holy Monastery of the

God-trodden Mount Sinai.

As you know, the long-standing canonical tradition of our Orthodox Church, witnessed in most canonical and synodical documents, (e.g. in the Canonical Letter of the Patriarch of Constantinople Gennadius Scholarios to Maximus Sophianus Hegoumen of the Monastery of Sinai, in the decisions of the Synodical Assembly in Cairo in the year 1557 under the Patriarchs Joachim of Alexandria, Joachim of Antioch and Germanos of Jerusalem, in the decision of the Holy Synod in Moscow in the year 1667, in the Patriarchal Letter of the Ecumenical Patriarch Methodius III), and also in the creeds, the confession which the Archbishops of Sinai have been giving up to the present time before the Patriarchs of Jerusalem at their ordination, as well as in the valid Constitution of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Chrysanthos, which defines this Monastery as being within the limits of the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, for centuries Autocephalous, Autonomous and Independent, administered by the Holy Synod of the Sinaitic Fathers.

This tradition and order from the days of Our election to the Patriarchal Throne, We also, conforming to the Canonical Principles, which were established by Our predecessors, including the great Sinaitic Patriarch of Jerusalem Nektarios, have totally respected, without any intervention neither in the internal administrative issues of the Monastery nor in its external activities.

These being strictly observed, however, a problem has been created recently, as it were, from the non-notification of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem by the Sinaitic Fathers, for the invitation of Hierarchs from other Ecclesiastical jurisdictions, for the purpose of the celebration of the Divine Eucharist in the Holy Monastery, in particular on the feast of Saint Catherine. Every year We send a delegation for this feast, without knowing which High Priests of other Churches we will meet there, thus making Our representatives

witnesses of canonical disorder.

At the Divine Liturgy of the feast of Saint Catherine this year, His Eminence the Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki, presided, without any knowledge on Our part, and he commemorated in the Divine Liturgy, apparently due to a misunderstanding, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece and the Archbishop of Sinai, without any mention of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, in contrast to the liturgical and canonical order that existed in the Venerable Patriarchates. We wonder if the Autonomy of the Monastery or its "Autocephalous", as the Sinai Fathers claim, annuls the order of the Diptychs and on what canonical basis is this annulment based.

We make known to Your Beatitude that through the above we do not express an intention to catalyze the "Autocephalous" character of the management of the Monastery, but on the contrary, we intend to protect its Status in everything within the framework of the normal mandates of the Fathers and Synods (35th of the Apostles, 2nd of the Second Ecumenical Council, 20th of Quinisext Council, 13th and 22nd of the Antioch Council, etc.), so we asked the Sinai Fathers to observe the normal order on this issue to ensure "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4.3).

Collocating these, we kindly request from Your Beatitude to recommend to the High Priests of the Church of Greece, any time they wish to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the Holy Monastery of the God-trodden Mount Sinai, to inform the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, like the High Priests of the Other Orthodox Churches do because the Autonomy of the Monastery does not annul the fact that the Monastery does not stand in some abstract placement but on normal grounds of the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Whence, attributing to You the embracing in the Lord from the Holy and Life-Giving Tomb of our Saviour Christ, we remain.

In the Holy City of Jerusalem, December 21, 2022

Your Beatitude's

Beloved brother in Christ

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem