

THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE HOLY AND GREAT SYNOD ON THURSDAY, 23 JUNE 2016

On Thursday, the 10th/23rd of June 2016, the Holy and Great Synod of Orthodoxy convened in a closed Session to discuss one of the approved texts.

The text in question was entitled “The sacrament of marriage and its hindrances”, which was specifically commented because of the significance of marriage and the problems facing it due to ideological and social positions.

During the evening session, the Holy and Great Synod looked at “The Mission of the Church in the contemporary world”.

After the Heads of Churches and the Hierarchs read and commented the text, it was referred to the Secretariat for amendments until the following day, when it was scheduled for further discussion.

From the Secretariat-General

THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE GREAT SYNOD OF ORTHODOXY ON WEDNESDAY, 22 JUNE 2016.

On Wednesday, the 9th/22nd of June 2016, the Holy and Great Synod of Orthodoxy, in the course of two sessions held in the

morning and in the evening, looked at the already approved texts on the “Autonomous”, “Orthodox Diaspora” and “The Mission of the Church in the contemporary world”, discussed the proposed completions and corrections, agreed on them and referred them to the Secretariat to be registered before signing the finalized texts.

During the same session, the proposal set forth by Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem was approved, on sending a letter of support by the Ecumenical Patriarch on behalf of the Great Synod of Orthodoxy, to His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Hussein of Jordan, for the unjust and criminal death of eight Jordan soldiers by a group of terrorists.

The message of condolences can be reached here: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2016/06/22/24618>

From the Secretariat-General

DELIBERATIONS OF THE GREAT SYNOD OF ORTHODOXY ON TUESDAY, 21 JUNE 2016

On the morning of Tuesday, the 8th/21st of June 2016, divine Liturgy was held in Arabic at the Church of the Dormition of Theotokos, Gonia, under the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The service was performed by the Spiritual Father at the Monastery of the Life-giving Spring in Dibin, Jordan, by Archimandrite Christophoros, as presbyter Issa Mousleh, the

Patriarchate's liaison with Arabic-speaking media, sang in Arabic. The Liturgy was attended by His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem, the Patriarch of Serbia, the Archbishop of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and the Entourages of the aforementioned Heads of Churches.

The service was followed by a Session of the Great Synod, during which the text entitled "The Orthodox Diaspora" was discussed. In the course of discussion, the "Bishopric Assemblies" in various countries i.e. the USA, Germany and France, hosting Orthodox Diaspora, presented their work. The presentation included the problems facing the Greek, Russian and Romanian diasporas, the presence of Orthodoxy, the accession of non-Orthodox to the Orthodox Church, interreligious marriages, school education and the education of the youth.

The comments on the situation of the national Orthodox Churches in the Diaspora and the challenges facing the competent Metropolitans and the Heads of Churches were then referred to the Secretariat for consideration and for drafting a text to be submitted to the Heads for approval and signing.

From the Secretariat-General

WHIT MONDAY DURING THE GREAT SYNOD OF ORTHODOXY

On Monday, the 7th/20th of June 2016, Monday of the Holy Spirit, the divine Liturgy was performed at the Church of Dormition of

Theotokos, led by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, with Hagiotaphite Archimandrites Christophoros and Ieronymos co-officiating. The Most Reverend Primates, Priests and laymen of the Delegation of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and of other Churches participating in the Synod concelebrated.

After the service, the opening Session of the Holy and Great Synod of Orthodoxy began in the events hall of the Orthodox Academy of Crete, in the presence of the former king of Bulgaria, Simeon, and observers from other Christian Churches.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew first addressed the Session, followed by reply-addresses from the Heads of Churches, who pointed out the necessity of this particular Synod for communication between the Orthodox Churches and for sending out a strong Christian testament to their flocks and the world.

In His address, Patriarch Theophilos remarked on the fact that participants in the deliberations of the Holy and Great Synod overcame distances, obstacles and differences in order to seal their synodic collaboration for the support and salvation of their congregations and for attesting to peace, conciliation and unity in a world tormented by economic crisis, the immigration problem and crimes of unprecedented and harsh violence, a world in need of life, namely Christ the Lord.

“The Church of Jerusalem” went on Patriarch Theophilos, *“has unwaveringly been in favour of the Synod, participating with representatives in all stages of the long preparation that included Pan-Orthodox Conventions, Inter-Orthodox Committees, Pre-Synodic Conventions and Gatherings of the Heads of Churches. So does it participate here today through Our Mediocrity and Entourage, bringing its fraternal embrace from the Holy Cave, the Horrendous Golgotha, the Most Holy Sepulchre and the Pentecost Cenacle, together with the agony of Christians in the Holy Land and the Middle East, who are*

guarded by the Most Holy Shrines”.

Patriarch Theophilos also referred to the absolutely necessary and important work of conservation, protection and restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, in collaboration with the Franciscans and the Patriarchate of the Armenians in Jerusalem, on the basis of a project conducted by the NTUA. *“Costs have been estimated to more than four million euros and are expected to be met by donations from Churches, States, Organizations and private citizens”*, Patriarch Theophilos pointed out and went on to extend wishes for the fruition of the Synod’s deliberations.

At noon, the Heads of Churches and their Entourages were hosted to lunch by the Orthodox Academy of Crete, whilst in the afternoon the Synod discussed the text entitled “The Mission of the Church in the contemporary world”.

From the Secretariat-General



SATURDAY OF THE SOULS DURING THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE GREAT SYNOD OF ORTHODOX CHURCHES

On the 5th/18th of June 2016, Saturday of the Souls, divine Liturgy was held at the Monastic Church of the Annunciation of

Theotokos, of the Bishopric of Kisamos and Selinos. The service was held together with a memorial for the repose of the souls of those who fought for our Orthodox faith and all departed Hierarchs and other clerics and laymen, members of Orthodox Churches, who have worked for the preparation and convention of the Holy and Great Synod of Orthodoxy.

The divine Liturgy and memorial service were led by His Beatitude Theodoros, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, having as concelebrants the Heads of the Orthodox Churches participating in the Synod's deliberations, namely: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem, Patriarch Daniel of Romania, Patriarch Irinej of Serbia, Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus, Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens, Archbishop Anastasios of Albania, Archbishop Savva of Poland and Archbishop Ratislav of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. On the conclusion of the divine Liturgy, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew performed a special memorial for the repose of the soul of Metropolitan Irineos Galanakis of Kisamos and Selinos, buried in the forecourt of the Church.

After being hosted to breakfast by the Bishopric of Kisamos and Selinos, the Patriarchal Entourages left for Heraklion.

There, at the Atlantis Hotel, their Holinesses the Heads of Churches and their Attendants were welcomed by the Representatives of the Holy Archbishopric of Crete, clerics and laymen, the monastic brotherhoods, the Mayoral Authorities and the faithful in front of the Apostle Titos Cathedral.

Mr Lambrinos, Mayor of Heraklion went on to address guests, upon which Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew made a reply-speech.

Doxology was then performed at the Cathedral, followed by an address by Archbishop Irineos of Crete and the Ecumenical Patriarch, and the Vespers of Pentecost, led by Patriarch Bartholomew, having as concelebrants the Heads of the

Autocephalous Orthodox Churches.

After Vespers, the Holy Regional Synod of the Church of Crete hosted guests to dinner.

From the Secretariat-General



SECOND DAY OF THE PATRIARCHATE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE HOLY AND GREAT SYNOD OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

On Friday, the 4th/17th of June 2016, the Representation and Entourage of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, headed by His Beatitude, Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem, after venerating at the Monastery of the Dormition of Theotokos in Gonia, took part in the opening of the deliberations of the Gathering of the Heads of Churches. Each head of Church is accompanied by a Primate representing all Autocephalous Orthodox Churches with the exception of the Churches of Russia, Bulgaria, Georgia and Antioch. At the Orthodox Academy of Crete, participants discussed the draft of the Message of the Holy and Great Synod which upon completion and circulation to the press will be posted here for all interested parties. The programme of deliberations is posted in Greek here: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/gr/2016/06/17/36588>

THE PATRIARCHATE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE GREAT SYNOD OF ORTHODOX CHURCHES – ARRIVAL IN CHANIA

Following the initial announcement for the participation of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the deliberations of the Holy and Great Synod of Orthodox Churches, the Patriarchate's website now presents in detail Patriarch Theophilos' Entourage:

Delegation:

1. H.B. Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem
2. Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia
3. Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina
4. Archbishop Theophylaktos of Jordan
5. Archbishop Nektarios of Anthedon
6. Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella

Entourage-Advisors:

1. Archimandrite Christophoros Mousa
2. Archimandrite Damianos Panou
3. Archimandrite Nikodemos Skrettas
4. Archimandrite Chrysostomos Nasis

5. Archimandrite Ieronymos Delioglou
6. Protopresbyter Georgios Dragas
7. Professor Theodoros Yiangou

Secretariat:

1. Archdeacon Evlogios Chambas
2. Ms Rodi Kratsa
3. Mr Kamel Abu-Jamber
4. Mr Halil Andraus
5. Ms Wafa Goussous
6. Mr Miltiades Matsoukas (steward)

At noon of Thursday, the 4th/16th of June 2016, their Beatitudes the Heads of Churches, namely: Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem, Patriarch Irinej of Serbia, Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and Archbishop Anastasios of Albania, their attendants, and Greek Foreign Minister Kartzias met at Athens Airport, where they boarded the Aegean Airlines Flight to Chania.

There, they were warmly welcomed by Archbishop Irineos of Crete, Metropolitan Damascene of Kydonia and Apokoronos, Metropolitan Amphilochios of Kissamos and Selinos, priests of the aforementioned Bishopricks, representatives of the Mayoralty and Prefecture and the Philarmonic Association, as well as a crowd of faithful and the Mass Media. On behalf of the Heads of Churches, the Archbishop of Athens addressed all by underlining the importance of the Synod for dealing with crucial problems facing humanity, and for the unity of Orthodox Churches.

On the evening of the aforementioned day, the Heads of Churches were hosted to dinner by His Excellency Minister Nikolaos Kartzias at the Nautical Association of Crete.

From the Secretariat-General



HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM DECORATES THE FRANCISCAN CUSTOS OF THE HOLY LAND

On the morning of Monday, the 17th/30th of May 2016, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, welcomed the Custos of the Holy Land, Rev. Fr. Pierrebattista Pizzaballa, on the occasion of the twelfth anniversary of his diaconate and his 25-year stay in the Holy Land.

At the meeting, the Custos thanked His Beatitude on the collaboration between the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Patriarchate with the Franciscan Fraternity. Patriarch Theophilos addressed f. Pierrbattista in English, see link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2016/05/31/24028>

As a token of appreciation, His Beatitude offered the Franciscan Custos the honorary distinction of Supreme Taxiarch of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

Touched, the Custos thanked Patriarch Theophilos and pledged to maintain his interest in the Holy Shrines and carry on the harmonious collaboration between the Rum Orthodox Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Franciscan Fraternity of the Roman Catholic Church, in alignment with the Lord's commandment to "love one another" and for the sake of joint testament in the Holy Land and the support of its Christian residents.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/MGzWVMSN8n8>



THIRD DAY OF PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS' OFFICIAL VISIT TO HUNGARY

On the morning of Wednesday, the 12th/25th of May 2016, Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem visited the Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma.

The Patriarch was warmly welcomed by the Abbot, Asztrik Varszegi, and his monastic Brotherhood, bearing the name of St Martin who had lived in the 4th AD.

An interesting discussion then took place on the contribution of monasticism to the Church and on how the people of God is helped by the virtuous example of clerics and monks.

His Beatitude was also informed on the origins of the Monastery, founded in the 11th century in the name of St Martin. The Monastery, which today numbers twenty monks, maintains a High School and Lyceum with three hundred and fifty students on scholarship. It is linked to Jerusalem by the fact that St Stephen the Hungarian had established a guesthouse within it. Also, a monk from the Monastery visited Jerusalem in 1217 whilst its main entrance is dedicated to the Holy Land. During the 16th century, for a period of fifty years, the Monastery closed because of the Turkish conquerors. Today, it maintains relations with the Benedictine Monastery of the Dormition of Theotokos on the hill of St Zion. Both the Ecumenical Patriarch and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow visited

the Monastery, the latter whilst being a Metropolitan.

At the meeting, His Beatitude Theophilos expressed joy over visiting Hungary for the second time, whilst praising the country's attitude on the freedom of religion, its support of Palestinian Christian students, its financial aid for the restoration of the roof of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and its interest in and contribution to the restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre. The Patriarch also spoke of the Patriarchate's work in welcoming thousands of pilgrims independent of nationality, of the missionary interest of the ever-memorable Patriarchs of Jerusalem in Russia and Ukraine, of the Dependency of the Holy Sepulchre in Moscow, the initiative to demine the Jordan river area, and the encouragement of pilgrimage tours to the Holy Land, contributing to the spiritual aid of the pilgrims and to the prosperity of Christians in the Middle East, but also of adherents to all religions.

The discussion was followed by a guided tour to the Monastery, and exchange of gifts and wishes for meeting again in Jerusalem.

On the evening of the same day, Patriarch Theophilos met with His Eminence, Cardinal Peter Erdo Esztergom, whom the Patriarch had recently met in the Holy Land. At the meeting, a discussion took place on the refugee problem and the political changes in the Middle East, particularly on how Churches collaborate towards its resolution. It was mutually agreed that it is difficult for Christians to remain in an explosive situation, i.e. in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, and that without the Christian presence in the Middle East the situation in the Holy Land will deteriorate. The Christians' protection is provided by the Holy Shrines. The conflict between Israel and Palestine is another cause of tension, just as the Gaza conflict where the Patriarchate maintains the Tomb of St Porphyrios and a Community.

The Churches of the Middle East engage in action through the Middle East Council of Churches –MECC. Reference was also made on the fact that young people emigrate from Hungary and that the country is faced with problems because of the refugees' transition through its territory.

At the end of the meeting, Patriarch Theophilos offered the Cardinal a mother-of-pearl cross, whilst the Cardinal offered a Hungarian gondola of porcelain. The Patriarch also spoke of the initiative of the Hungarian Parliament to contribute to the restoration project of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre.

This completed the third day of Patriarch Theophilos' visit to Hungary.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/lPJz-ikI5Ew>



THE SECOND DAY OF PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS' OFFICIAL VISIT TO HUNGARY

At noon of Tuesday, the 11th/24th of May 2016, Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem visited Hungary's Parliament.

The House of the National Assembly is housed at a 19th c. building of fine architecture, on both the interior and the exterior, a traditional cultural jewel of Budapest. The various sections of the building feature different periods

from the history of Hungary, as well as aspects of its political, cultural, social, rural and war life.

The building includes the semi-circular assembly hall, equipped with contemporary online tools for the sessions.

Upon entering the Parliament, His Beatitude talked to Hungary's state TV channel, saying among other things: "We have been invited by the Hungarian Government, for the second time since 2012, to bring to the Hungarian people the hopeful resurrectional message of Jerusalem. We met, yesterday, with the distinguished representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Metropolitan Arsenios of Austria-Hungary, and members of the Greek Community in Budapest. Today we have the honour of meeting with Mr Zsolt Semjen, representing Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who is unfortunately ill, and to whom we extend wishes for recuperation by the grace of the Most Holy and Life-giving Sepulchre".

"The Church of Jerusalem", said Patriarch Theophilos, "has remained through the centuries a witness of the Lord's Crucifixion and Resurrection. Today, the holy city of Jerusalem has become the apple of discord, but it can be the key to the resolution of the political problem, given that its holiness and sacred history for the three religions is respected".

"The Patriarchate of Jerusalem is recognized as the indigenous local Church by the governments of Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority".

"We recommend the exchange of pilgrimages for the spiritual strengthening of pilgrims and for the sake of peace in the Holy Land, as well as for the prosperity of its inhabitants".

The interview was followed by a guided tour of the Patriarchal Entourage along the various departments of the Parliament. Of special note, beyond the aforementioned Assembly Hall, is the restaurant featuring a large handmade carpet that depicts

scenes of fishing and hunting. The Holy Crown is kept in a special showcase at the centre of the building. According to the Hungarian tradition, the crown, said to belong to Constantine the Great, was delivered by Pope Silvester to the first Christian king of Hungary, St Stephen, a saint of the common undivided Church of the first ten centuries.

After the tour, Patriarch Theophilos met with Mr Zsolt Semjen. At the meeting, the country's deputy Prime Minister expressed joy over the Patriarch's second visit to Hungary, immediately after the signing of a special agreement between Hungary and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the first Orthodox Church, playing a coordinating role amongst the other Churches in Hungary, Russia, Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria. Metropolitan Arsenios of Austria-Hungary serves as the Ecumenical Patriarchate's official representative.

In His reply, His Beatitude underlined the peace-making role that Jerusalem can take on for the resolution of the Palestinian Problem, if viewed by political leaders in the light of its holy history.

On the occasion of this visit, His Beatitude offered Mr Semjen an icon of Panaghia Jerusalemite, and an icon for Prime Minister Urban.

Mr Semjen offered the Patriarch a replica of a 12th c. Hungarian coin.

Subsequently, the Patriarch, His Entourage and Metropolitan Arsenios sat at lunch hosted by Mr Semjen in the presence of the Hungarian ambassador to Ramallah, Mr G. Mihailyi, and the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

During lunch, an interesting discussion took place on the Churches of the Holy Land and the Middle East, and on the need to have its Christian flocks enhanced by European states. Mr Semjen talked of his country's attitude vis a vis the refugee

crisis, as well as of the adversities imposed by the Hungarian people by its different conquerors through time.

In the afternoon, Doxology was led by Patriarch Theophilos at the Chapel of the Patriarchate of Serbia in Budapest, in the presence of Metropolitan Silouan, representing the Patriarchate of Serbia, Metropolitan Lucian, representing the Patriarchate of Moscow, and a priest representing the Patriarchate of Russia. During Doxology, His Beatitude addressed guests in English, see link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2016/05/24/23929>

Doxology was followed by a guided tour at the Museum of Church Art. After a relevant question, the Patriarch also spoke of the Great Synod of Orthodoxy, scheduled to convene in Crete, as a testament to the unity of the Orthodox Churches.

This completed the second day of the official visit of the Patriarch of Jerusalem to Hungary.

From the Secretariat-General

