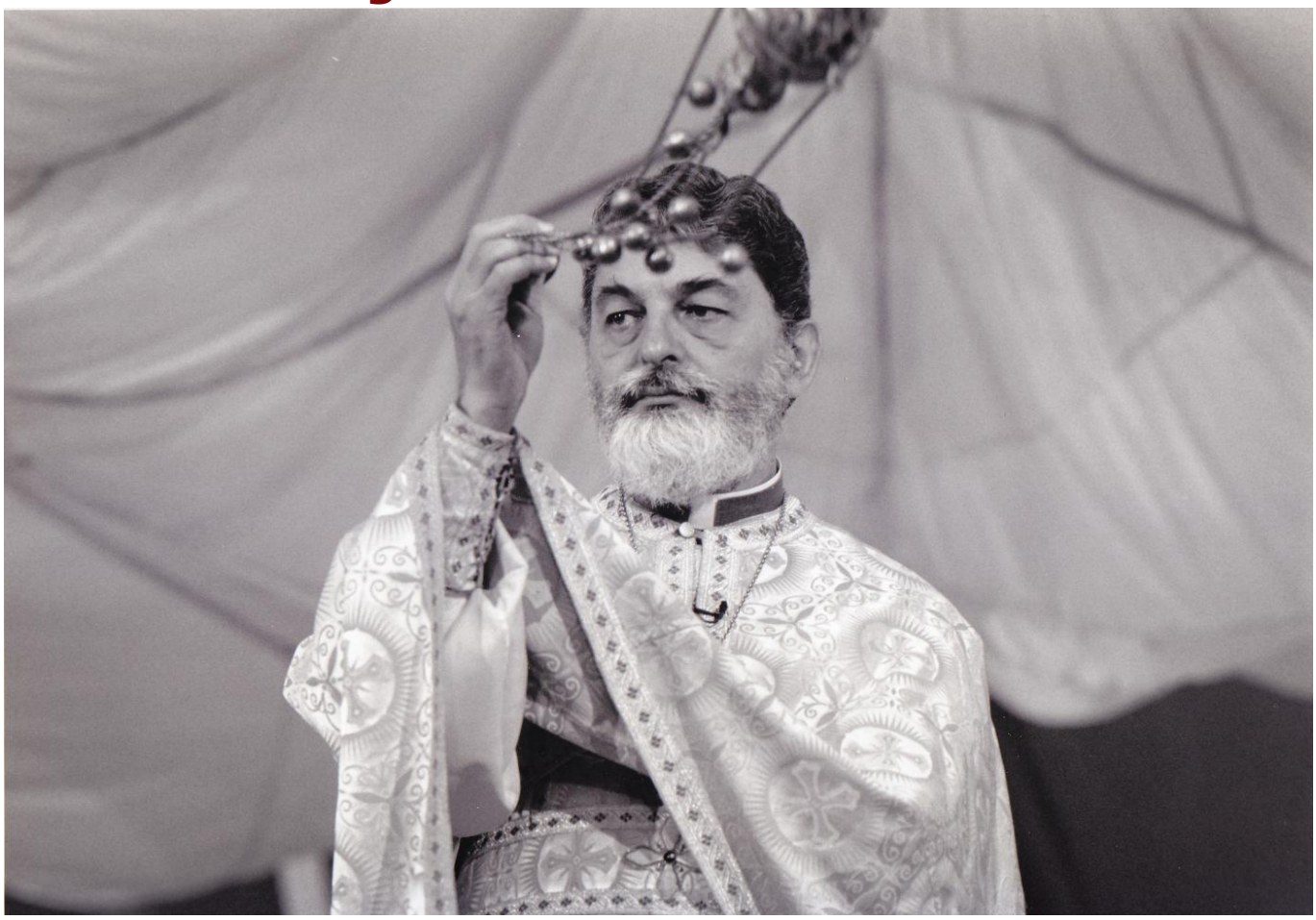
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World Council of Churches gives thanks for the life of Fr Georgios Tsetsis



The World Council of Churches (WCC) has announced with deep sorrow the passing of Fr Georgios Tsetsis, a distinguished and dedicated servant of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the ecumenical movement:

Tsetsis was the permanent representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the WCC from 1985 to 1999, while serving as a member of the WCC's central and executive committees from 1991 to 1999, having been a WCC staff member from 1965 to 1984.

"Fr Georges Tsetsis served his church, the WCC, and the wider ecumenical movement with dedication, commitment, and enthusiasm," said the WCC's general secretary, Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay.

"We give thanks to God for his life and witness and convey our sincere and profound condolences to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, his family, and his many

ecumenical friends and companions on our common pilgrimage on the road of justice, peace and unity," said Pillay.

Tsetsis joined the WCC staff in Geneva 1965 as associate secretary at the Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugees and World Services, and continued working with the commission until 1984, when he was deputy director, while also serving as the moderator of the Orthodox Task Force and a member of the WCC's staff leadership group.

He was an active member of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, which met from 1998 to 2002.

His Eminence Elder Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, said: "The late Grand Protopresbyter Georgios Tsetsis was an emblematic figure both for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Orthodox Church, as well as for the ecumenical movement in general. His profound contribution to the WCC and to the inter-Christian and inter-faith dialogues for decades as a theologian and academic scholar will be greatly missed. We fervently pray for the repose of his soul. May his memory be eternal!"

Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, who served as the WCC's acting general secretary from 2020 to 2023 and worked for the WCC since 1994 described Tsetsis as a respected, trusted, and appreciated colleague.

"Having spent more than three decades at the WCC and its offices at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, he will be remembered by his colleagues and friends for his openness, his commitment to the ecumenical movement, his sensitivity to sisters and brothers from all over the world, and his readiness to serve all at all times," said Sauca, who comes from the Romanian Orthodox Church.

"For us, the Orthodox staff in the WCC, he was a powerful example, a landmark of integrity, and an encouraging guide on how to remain faithful and to witness to one's faith in the dialogue and the search for Christian unity," said Sauca.

Tsetsis was one of the co-editors of the third volume of the History of the Ecumenical Movement, published in 2004, and wrote several books and more than 60 articles on theological, liturgical, ecumenical, historical issues, as well as questions of society.

Church of Norway Presiding Bishop Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, who was WCC general secretary from 2010 to 2020, said: "Fr Georges Tsetsis was one of the great wise gentlemen in the ecumenical movement. I received the message of his death with

both sadness and gratitude. He represented his church and the Orthodox churches and tradition with great competence and dedication. He was also a good advisor and a supportive friend to me and the colleagues in the WCC. May God give him eternal rest.”

Born in Istanbul (Constantinople) on 22 June 1934, Tsetsis graduated from the Halki Theological School there, as well as undertaking studies at the WCC’s Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva.

Tsetsis obtained his doctoral degree from the Theological Faculty of the University of Thessaloniki. The Theological Faculty of Athens University conferred on him the title of Doctor Honoris Causa.

From 1961 to 1964, Tsetsis was Archdeacon of the Metropolis of Princes’ Island, near Istanbul, before being ordained as a priest in August 1964 and receiving the title of Protopresbyter.

In 2001, he acted as the interim director of the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at Chambésy in Geneva and as the dean of its Institute of Post Graduate Orthodox Studies.

After his retirement in 1999, Tsetsis continued to live in Geneva.

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