30/12/2024

Decisions of the Holy Synod



The Holy Synod was convened on Thursday, December 26, 2024, and was presided over by His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III.
Guided by the suggestions of His Beatitude, the Holy Synod undertook the following decisions:
1. To convene a Theological Conference in the Monastery of the Holy Cross, in memory and honour of the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in Constantinople, which denounced Arianism as a heresy and enshrined the divinity of Christ by invoking the term Homoousion (Greek: “same in being, same in essence”) in a statement of faith known as the Creed of Nicaea. For the realization of this Conference, the Holy Synod appointed a Committee headed by His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, the Chief Secretary, His Eminence Archbishop of Constantina Aristarchos, Secretary of the Holy Synod Hierodeacon Simeon, Archimandrite Reverend Father Christodoulos, Professor of the Theological School of Thessaloniki, Mr. Theodoros Giagkou and Mr. Phaedon Kidoniatis. As technical staff of this Committee were appointed Deacon Dositheos and Miss Heba Hrimat.
2. Confirmed the postponement for this year as well as the cleaning (saroma) of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem according to the decision of the Three Major Communities, due to the ongoing renovation works at the Basilica.
3. Studied at length the rights of the Greek Orthodox to put their Icon in the Holy Grotto on the Eve of their Feast of Epiphany, when it coincides Sunday or Monday with the Christmas of the Armenians and has accordingly addressed the relevant letter this year as well to the Chairman of the Church’ Status Quo Committee to the Palestinian State Minister Mr. Ramzi Khoury.
4. Studied the report of Archbishop Nektarios of Anthedonos, representative of the

Patriarchate in Constantinople about his participation in the 22nd Conference of the Universal Religious Leaders of the Traditional Religions convened in Kazakhstan on 8th October 2024. The Synod praised the report of His Eminence and was informed of the first prize of Kazakhstan granted to His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, due to His great contribution to peace in our region and internationally. His Eminence Archbishop Nectarios submitted another report about his participation in the Festivities of the Church of Bulgaria on the occasion of the anniversary of 100 years after the inauguration of the Patriarchal Cathedral of Saint Alexander Nevsky in Sofia.

5. Studied also the report of Reverend Professor George Dragas, about his participation in the dialogue together with Professor Theodoros Giagkou of the University of Thessaloniki between the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the Oriental Churches in the Coptic Patriarchal Center of Logos in the Holy Monastery of Bishoy in Egypt between 15 – 18 September 2024. The Holy Synod praised Reverend Father George Dragas for his contribution to this dialogue in its whole.

6. His Beatitude updated the Holy Synod about His participation and His speech at the Oxford “Thank you” celebration for the late Mrs. Mica Ertegun whose financial contribution towards the renovation of the Edicule of the Holy Sepulcher in 2017 was of paramount importance.

7. His Beatitude informed the members of the Holy Synod about the recent visit of the Deputy Foreign Minister of Greece Mrs. Alexandra Papadopoulou. She was briefed at length by His Beatitude and committed herself to contribute earnestly towards the solution of the problems faced by the Patriarchate, such as denying visas to members of the Patriarchate who travel abroad based on the number of years of their stay in Israel, also denial of the Israeli ID cards and non-access to students to study Priesthood in the Zion School if they are under the age of 14 years. She committed herself to be helpful to all the efforts of the Patriarchate to establish a Center of Theological Research in the Monastery of the Holy Cross.

8. His Beatitude also referred to the recent visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, His Grace Justin Welby and his advocacy and respect for the status quo of the holy places in the old city and towards the support and welfare of the Christian communities in the Holy land.

9. Read the report of Archimandrite Bartholomew, Head of the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist, which lies near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre regarding its extensive renovations both within the interior of the Church as well as the space around it, and in the underground Byzantine Church and of the payments made to the tenants to leave their illegal shops which disturbed the access to the two main entrances to the Monastery. The Holy Synod praised Archimandrite Bartholomew for his devotion to this important work.

10. The following appointments were approved by the Holy Synod in accordance with the suggestions of His Beatitude:
a. Appointment of Hierodeacon Eulogios in the Nativity Church of Bethlehem.
b. The ordination of the chanter Efstathios Tsoumanis as a married Deacon.
c. Approval of the monastic tonsure of Christos Sakellariou as a monk of the Brotherhood, who already serves at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
d. Confirmation of the appointment of Monk Prodromos in the Nativity Church of Bethlehem.
11. The Holy Synod agreed with the suggestion of His Beatitude, that the room which is being used by the Copts opposite the western side of the Holy Edicule, shall be repaired by the Three Major Communities.
12. Finally, confirmed the suggestion of His Beatitude that every Monastery or Parish Church will have only one seal, which shall be used only by the Superior of the Monasteries or by the Head Priest of the Parishes.

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