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Patriarch of Alexandria to Abbot of Esphigmenou Monastery: “You too carry a heavy cross”



On Monday, 3 November 2025, His Beatitude Pope and Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria and All Africa received in audience the Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Esphigmenou, Archimandrite Bartholomew, who was accompanied by fathers of the monastery and a large group of pilgrims from the Association of Friends of the Holy Monastery.

In his address, the Patriarch of Alexandria referred, among other matters, to the intrusion of the Russian Church within the Patriarchate of Alexandria and expressed his firm support for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

“You too carry a heavy cross,” said the Patriarch. “All this painful history of Esphigmenou Monastery that has burdened both Mount Athos and the Church… I am walking the same path, supporting our Ecumenical Patriarch, the Ecumenical Patriarchate. And you see what price I have paid for this stance. Although I lived close to them for ten years, I know their language, I know everything, and yet, when the time came, they repaid me with the bitterness of ecclesiastical intrusion into my jurisdiction…”

Patriarch Theodoros continued, saying: “I admire you, because you are fighting a great struggle, just as I am fighting to preserve canonical order within the

Patriarchate. I have never gone into another Church's territory; I always work within my canonical boundaries and respect the jurisdictions of others. I could not leave the Patriarch of Romiosyne (Hellenism) alone. If we, the Greek-speaking Patriarchates, do not stand together in solidarity, what can we expect from others?"

The Patriarch went on to add: "I admire you, Reverend Abbot, and I want you to have strength. From my post, I will do everything I can to stand by your side."

Finally, Patriarch Theodore briefly referred to the long history of the ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria and the many challenges of its missionary work across the poor and vast African continent.

Photographs: Holy Monastery of Esphigmenou







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