

New boat launches to transport growing number of pilgrims to Mt. Athos—250,000+ a year



The Agioritikes Grammes shipping company has had to launch a new boat to take pilgrims to Holy Mount Athos from Ouranoupolis as the number of pilgrims continues to grow.

The company's ninth ship heading to the Daphne port on Mt. Athos from Ouranoupolis launched today with a capacity for 500 passengers and trucks, company president Riginos Tsanos told the [Athens-Macedonian News Agency](#).

The new boat "is called the Panagia Guarantor and it expresses our desire to guarantee the pilgrims and monks to be transported to Mt. Athos," said Tsanos, whose company has been active in the area for 12 years.

There are more than 250,000 pilgrims to Mt. Athos annually, Tsanos said, and, unfortunately, also about 10,000 trucks due to extensive restoration that is underway across the Holy Mountain.

"In recent years we have seen a significant increase in pilgrims not only from people coming from different parts of Greece but also from abroad. For this reason and with respect to the Sacred Community and the trust that the holy Fathers have shown us, the company and the group are constantly upgrading their transportation to Mt. Athos," Tsanos explained.

There was a decline in Russian pilgrims last year, he notes, "and this was a blow, which we can say was offset by visits from Serbs, Romanians, and Bulgarians." The decline in Russian pilgrims is due to the break in communion between the Moscow and Constantinople Patriarchates, as Mt. Athos is within the canonical jurisdiction of Constantinople.

In January 2017, Abbot Elisha of Simenopetra Monastery noted that the increase of pilgrims actually puts a great strain on the monasteries.

"Another way in which the world today encroaches upon the life of the monasteries is the massive influx of pilgrims, who greatly affect the life of the monks... Today

the flow of pilgrims is the greatest problem for the monasteries of the Holy Mountain,” he wrote in a report for the 25th annual Nativity Educational Readings in Moscow.

- Source: orthochristian.com