

Greek Orthodox Archimandrite a noted expert in special education to overcome disabilities



The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is commemorated today around the world, after a decision by the United Nations in 1992.

The theme for this year's commemoration is "Promoting the participation of persons with disabilities and their leadership: taking action on the 2030 Development Agenda".

According to figures released by the World Health Organization, some 15 percent of the global population suffers from some form of disability, comprising the biggest minority of people in need around the world.

Orthodoxy is replete with examples of clergymen who, with self-sacrifice, support people with disabilities, whereas all of the Orthodox Metropolises in Greece have created structures to assist people with special needs.

One such example is Archimandrite Apostolos Kavaliotis, a clergyman of the Metropolis of Alexandroupolis, in extreme northeast Greece.

Fr. Apostolos holds a doctorate in special education and psychology from the University of Athens, a post-doctoral degree in juvenile education from the same institution, as well as specialized training at Harvard to deal with autism.

Fr. Apostolos is a well-known lecturer in Greece and abroad on issues dealing with – and overcoming disability, having been honored by both the Greek state and international institutions. As a UN volunteer for the past three decades, the Greek Orthodox clergyman participated in numerous humanitarian missions, including a three-year stint with Mother Teresa of Calcutta. As such, he was also honored by the Indian state.