

Glimmers of hope from predominately Muslim Turkey for revival of Orthodoxy



Despite an often official discrimination against indigenous Christians in Turkey, along with the latest threats by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to reconvert the emblematic Hagia Sophia into a mosque, a handful of positive news items have recently emerged from predominately Muslim country, possible glimmers of a revival of Orthodoxy and Hellenism in their ancient homelands.

Recently, Turkish authorities again issued a license for the holding of an annual Blessing of the Waters service at the historic St. Voukolos and Polycarpe Church, as well as allowing the casting of the Cross into the waters off the quay in the western coastal city of Izmir, known for centuries as ancient and celebrated Smyrna.

The casting of the Cross is conducted on the Epiphany, known as Theofania in the Orthodox Church, the commemoration of Christ's baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River.

As previously reported, the Theological School of Halki is being completely renovated, with funding provided by the Civil Governor of Mt. Athos, noted ship-

owner and philanthropist Athanassios Martinos.

In the Pontus region, along the southeast mountainous Black Sea coast, intensive restoration works are underway at the iconic Panaghia Soumela Monastery, with crews aiming have the monastery ready by May 20, 2020, on the occasion of World Museum Day, when the most important religious shrine for Pontian Hellenism will



