

17/10/2022

Washington, DC Welcomes Patriarch Theodoros II For Last Leg of Apostolic Visit to US



On Tuesday, October 11, 2022, His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria visited the St. Sophia Cathedral in Washington DC for a doxology and welcome luncheon attended by a number of civic, diplomatic, and inter-Orthodox, ecumenical and interfaith leaders.

“We thank You, Your Beatitude, for bringing the light of the inimitable Pharos of Alexandria to our Shores. Together with the beacon of the Phanar, the Orthodox world — and indeed, the entire oikoumene — will be illuminated for the common good of all mankind,” said Archbishop Elpidophoros.

“Too many Orthodox Churches have forgotten that our Kingdom is not of this world, and we must not reduce Autocephaly to mere nationalistic, or in the case of Russia, imperialistic interests,” The Archbishop said. “Your Beatitude has the perspective of an entire Continent that is as diverse as it is vast. Orthodoxy needs Your vision for a return to the values of the Gospel above all other considerations. For while Your sights are set across a continent, Your gaze is one of love for all of God’s children.” (Read His Eminence’s full welcome remarks.)

Among those in attendance were His Grace Bishop Saba (Georgian Apostolic Orthodox Church in North America), His Eminence Metropolitan Tikhon accompanied by Rev. Alessandro Margheritino (Orthodox Church in America), Rev. John El Massih (Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America), V. Rev. Protopresbyter Vasilije Vranic (Serbian Orthodox Church in North, Central and South America), His Eminence Archbishop Vicken Aykazian (Armenian Apostolic Church) and His Grace Bishop Pater (Coptic Orthodox Church) , Monsignor John Paul Pedrera and Monsignor Luca Caveada (Apostolic Nunciature in the USA), Rev. Charles A. Cortinovic (representing H.E. Cardinal Wilton Gregory, Archbishop of Washington), Rev. Walter Kedjierski (representing H.E. Archbishop José Gomez, president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops), Dr. John Borelli (Georgetown University), V. Rev. Mark Morozowich (Catholic University of America), Mr. Kyle Cristofalo (Christians for Middle East Peace), Rev. Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith

(World Council of Churches North America, President), Rev. Margaret Rose (The Episcopal Church & Religions for Peace International), Imam Saffet Catovic (Islamic Society of North America), and Dr. Kathryn M. Lohre (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America).

Their Excellencies Ambassador of Greece Alexandra Papadopoulou; Ambassador of Cyprus Marios Lysiotis; Ambassador Samuel Brownback; and Ambassador At-Large for International Religious Freedom Rashad Hussain also attended, Ms Kateryna Smaglyi (Embassy of Ukraine), Mr. Raad Elfawair (Embassy of Jordan), Mrs. Georgia Athanasopoulos (General Consul of Panama), and Ms. Melissa Rogers (Executive Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnership).

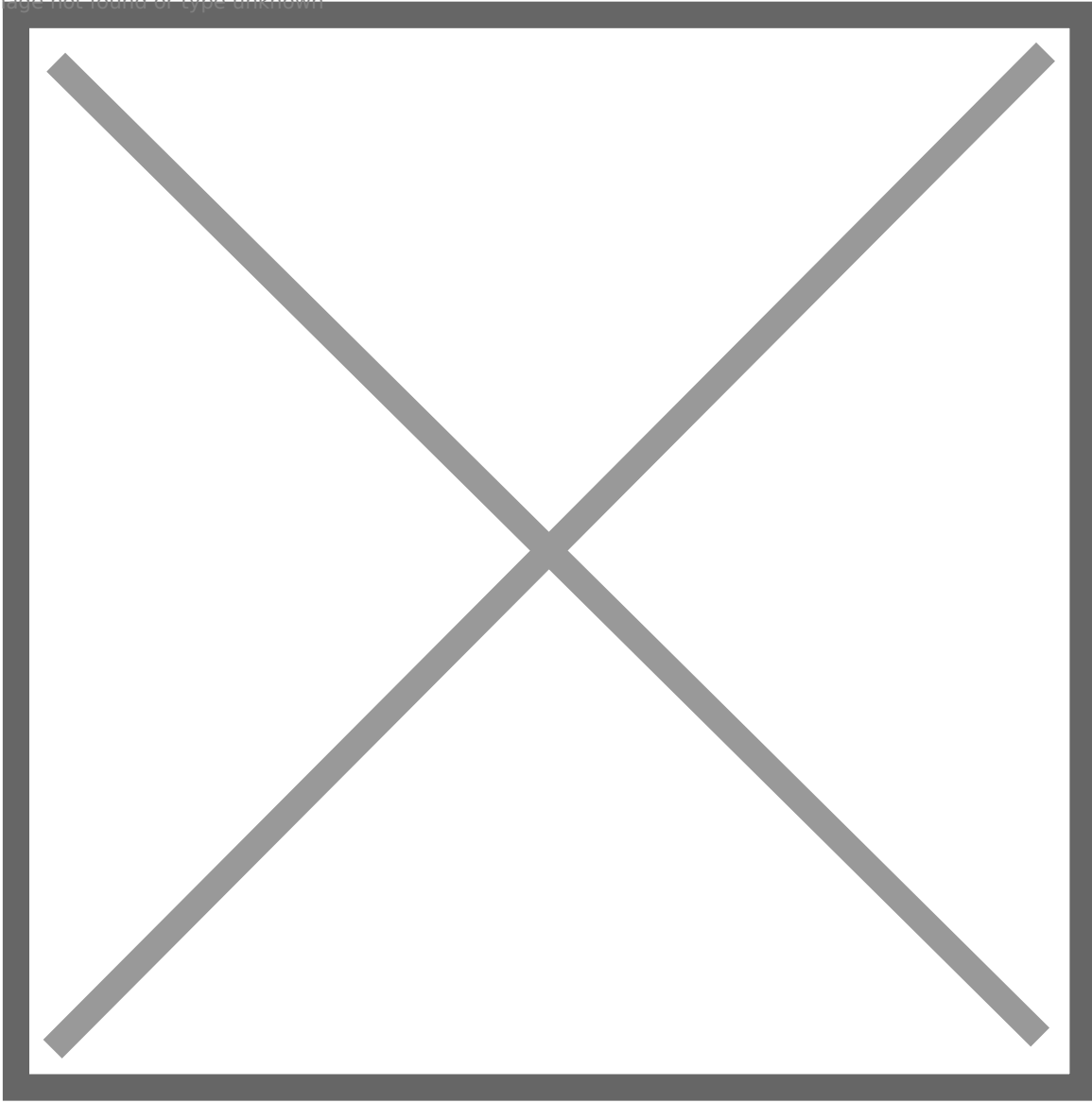
Following the luncheon, His Beatitude, together with Archbishop Elpidophoros, attended a meeting with senior officials at the White House, later joined by President Joe Biden, and afterward met with Ambassador Rashad Hussain at the State Department. (Read the full Press Release.) That evening, His Beatitude was received at the residence of the Ambassador of Greece by Her Excellency Alexandra Papadopoulou. Their Excellencies Ambassador of Egypt Motaz Zahran and Ambassador of Cyprus Marios Lysiotis were also present.

The next morning, His Beatitude visited Georgetown's Copley Crypt, where he was welcomed by Father David Pratt, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Endowed Orthodox Chaplain, and the University's Orthodox Christian students. In recent years, Copley Crypt has served as a sacred space for Orthodox students at the Jesuit school, especially after the donation of an Orthodox iconostasis and icons by Archon Michael Psaros in 2019.

Patriarch Theodoros encouraged students to work hard in their studies— because “humanity is expecting a lot from you”— and, hearkening back to the ancient intellectual legacy of Alexandria, the Patriarch noted a new conservation project at the Patriarchate's Library of Alexandria, which aims to preserve the manuscripts in its collection for scholars such as themselves. Before parting for the airport, His Beatitude promised that he would send them an icon of Saint Mark (with the seal of the Alexandrian Patriarchate, the lion) to complement the Crypt's icon of Saints Andrew and Peter.



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