

ΔΗΛΩΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΩΤΑΤΟΥ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΟΥ ΙΕΡΟΣΟΛΥΜΩΝ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΣΟΦΙΑΣ

Τήν Τετάρτην, 25ην Ἰουνίου/ 8^ν Ἰουλίου 2020, ἡ Α.Θ.Μ. ὁ Πατήρ ἡμῶν καί Πατριάρχης Ἱεροσολύμων κ.κ. Θεόφιλος προέβη εἰς τήν κάτωθι δήλωσιν ὑπέρ διατηρήσεως τοῦ Καθεστώτος τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας ἀγγλιστί:

Statement of His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III

on the Status of the Hagia Sophia Shrine

It is with utmost seriousness that We express Our concern over recent calls from members of the Turkish government to alter the current status of the Hagia Sophia from a museum to a mosque.

This magnificent Byzantine Church structure, which captivates the world until today, has a history stretching even farther back into Christendom than the 6th century. Over the course of generations, the region and its people have passed through challenging times that have left painful memories. However, it has been to Turkey's credit that for nearly 100 years it has administered the Hagia Sophia as a museum in order to maintain an extent of neutrality over the site. Subsequently, people from all over the world and from every background are able to enjoy its spiritual, architectural, and historical splendor.

Furthermore, museum status, i.e. indiscriminate accessibility, to Hagia Sophia has bore fruit where there otherwise could have been further contention. Hagia Sophia today remains a symbol of tolerance. Some may find spiritual refreshment within its boundaries, others may be inspired by its testament to human accomplishment, and others may view it through individual prisms of meaning. However, this array of outcomes does the best possible justice to the site, which without question was always intended to inspire awe and to glorify Almighty God.

As stewards of sacred heritage in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, for nearly 2,000 uninterrupted years, in a land over which three Abrahamic faiths lay equal claim, We strongly attest to the fact that accessibility promotes peace and mutual respect, whereas attitudes of exclusivity promote conflict and bitterness. We hope and pray, for the benefit of all people of good will, and for Turkey as a nation with the potential to influence our entire region down a path of growth and mutual co-existence, that the present status of the Hagia Sophia is respected and preserved.

THEOPHILOS III

PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

Ἡ δήλωσις αὕτη ὑπογραμμίζει ἰδιαιτέρως ἑλληνιστί ὅτι “Ἡμεῖς ὡς ἐμπεπιστευμένοι κληρονομίαν ἐπὶ δύο χιλιάδας ἔτη ἀδιακόπτως εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ τὴν Ἁγίαν Γῆν, εἰς τὴν ὁποίαν αἱ τρεῖς Μονοθεϊστικαὶ θρησκείαι ἀνάγουν τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν Πατριάρχην Ἀβραάμ καὶ ἔχουν ἴσας ἀξιώσεις, ἐπιμαρτυροῦμεν τὸ γεγονός ὅτι ἡ προσβασιμότης προάγει τὴν εἰρήνην καὶ τὸν ἀμοιβαῖον σεβασμόν, ἐν ᾧ ἡ ἀποκλειστικότης προάγει τὴν ἔριδα καὶ τὴν πικρίαν.

Προσευχόμεθα διὰ τὸ ὄφελος ὅλων τῶν ἀνθρώπων καλῆς θελήσεως καὶ διὰ τὴν Τουρκίαν ὡς ἔθνος μέ τὴν δυνατότητα νὰ ἐπηρεάσῃ ὁλόκληρον τὴν περιφέρειαν ἡμῶν πρὸς τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς ἀυξήσεως καὶ τῆς ἀμοιβαίας συνυπάρξεως διὰ τοῦ σεβασμοῦ καὶ τῆς διατηρήσεως τοῦ ἐπικρατοῦντος καθεστῶτος τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας.

Ἐκ τῆς Ἀρχιγραμματείας