

ADDRESS BY HIS ALL-HOLINESS  
THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH  
BARTHOLOMAIOS  
AT THE INAUGURATION  
OF THE NEW CONGRESS CENTRE  
OF THE ORTHODOX ACADEMY OF CRETE  
(12th November 1995)



ORTHODOX ACADEMY OF CRETE

A.K.N. - dokimi

A.K.P. - dokimi

Most holy brethren,  
Honourable and dear Dr. Alexandros Papaderos, General Director of the  
Orthodox Academy of Crete,  
Excellencies,  
Blessed children in the Lord,

The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, the Lord, which is,  
and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Let all the earth hear the testimony and revelation of Jesus Christ, given to  
John on the isle of Patmos!

May the choice of the verses, the composition of the music, and the  
performance, be a source of delight and spiritual edification for us all.

We offer our thanks to the Cretan Seminary Choir and to the Chania  
Cantors' Choir with warm appreciation for their enthusiasm and skill, and also  
to those who composed the words and music of the Ode to the Revelation. (1)

We too were recently "in the isle that is called Patmos". We then came to  
Crete for the celebration of the hundredth anniversary from the inauguration of  
the great holy Church of St. Minas in Heraklion. And now, yet another  
inaugural ceremony brings us to the Province of your dear Holiness, brother in  
Christ and co-celebrant of our Humble Self, Metropolitan of Kissamos and  
Selinos Irineos, together with our brother, His Beatitude the Patriarch of  
Alexandria Parthenios, and the members of our following.

We admire these achievements, which crown your venerable old age, dear  
brother and President of the Orthodox Academy of Crete; we are aware that  
behind all this there is your personal enthusiasm and toil, Honourable Archon of  
our Holy Great Church of Christ, and very dear Mr. Alexandros Papaderos,  
General Director of the Orthodox Academy of Crete; we sense your careful  
deliberations, honourable members of the Board of this renowned institution of  
the Church; we honour the labour of all those who worked here and of all who  
contributed in any way to the creation of this building.

We address to all the praise and appreciation of the Church, as well as our  
personal gratitude to the sponsors of the project. We trust that Mr. Georgios  
Papandreou, who as Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs is  
responsible for the institution on behalf of the government, is also proud of it, as  
are all the others who have contributed to this good and worthy cause.

You too, Most Holy Archbishop of Crete Timotheos, and all of you, my  
dear brethren in Christ, prelates of the Apostolic Church of Crete, may feel  
proud of the fact that while so many institutions decline and become abandoned

day by day, the Orthodox Academy, a pioneering organisation of the Church of Crete and of our Ecumenical Throne, has been taking great and audacious leaps forward for nearly thirty years now, and has in fact needed and was able to acquire this additional magnificent and eminently functional building, to accommodate its ever increasing activities.

Most honourable Cretan officials; most pious Priests and Monks and above all, you, the Monks of the adjacent Holy Monastery of Panagia Odigitria; most devout people of Crete: Rejoice and be glad, all of you! Not only over the new building but also over the fact that it demonstrates the vitality of the Orthodox Academy. A vitality that has met with approval from all quarters, here and abroad. This recognition is, above all, the merit of those who manage the institution wisely and those who work diligently, and of the supporters and friends of the Academy all over the world. But it also reflects on our Church, on whose behalf we acknowledge a debt of gratitude to everyone.

For, as is well known, the Orthodox Academy of Crete is an ecclesiastical Common Benefit Foundation. As a legal entity, it operates in accordance with its Statutes and within the laws of the country. But in terms of its ecclesiastical nature and mission, the Orthodox Academy was placed on solid Orthodox ecclesiological bases by its founders. Therefore, it observes its canonical reference to its appropriate Holy Metropolis of Kissamos and Selinos and to the Holy Provincial Synod of Crete, as well as to our Ecumenical Patriarchate. We are emphasising this point to make it clear that anyone supporting and doing a service to this institution of the Church does a service to the Church while any person causing difficulty to the Orthodox Academy opposes the Church itself. The latter remark is entirely hypothetical and is made for purposes of prevention only, considering the general recognition and acceptance incontestably enjoyed by the Orthodox Academy.

\* \* \* \* \*

We mentioned in the beginning that we recently visited Patmos, the island of St. John's Divine Revelation, in response to the call of God who said then and is still and always saying:

**Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be.**

Who cometh up, seeth; blessed is he that seeth.

Who cometh up, heareth; blessed is he that heareth.

Who cometh up, keepeth; blessed is he that keepeth.

It is the Church's function, willed by God and redeeming to man, to keep repeating God' call to man:

Come up, see, hear, keep!

And you will be blessed among "those which are called unto the marriage

supper of the Lamb" (Revel. 19,9).

For two thousand years now, our Church has been accomplishing this function in all possible ways. She did so in the midst of persecutions and tribulations but also in periods of glory and honour, ever "according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephes. 4,7). The Church has accomplished and is still accomplishing her function as a community of worship and hearkening to the word of God, catechising and sanctifying the people through the sacraments, through prayer and asceticism, and through life in Christ.

So it is with sorrow the Church finds that the circle of those who "come up and see and hear and keep" is becoming increasingly smaller. And she wonders: What is happening? Why did this abrupt and alarming disunity arise between the Church and the large masses of people, initially in western societies? And, regrettably moving faster towards imitation of evil than towards the "assured realities" of its own tradition and life, why has the devout nation of the Greeks succumbed to a certain extent to strong external forces, and part of it been driven to a generally unacknowledged, but nevertheless real, separation and deviation from the Church?

We are referring to the effects of so-called secularisation. And we are referring to those fellow human beings who, although not openly and directly hostile to the Church, are nevertheless still not nourished "by the true bread from heaven" (John 6,32).

One of our predecessors, the great Father of the Church John Chrysostom, whose holy memory we celebrate tomorrow, said the following about this division between believers and non-believers:

"This is where we believers differ from non-believers, namely in that we judge things differently..."

For example: "The non-believer sees the sky and worships it....because he thinks that it is God... Not we. We see the sky and admire Him who made it; for we do not believe that it is God but the work of God.....**I see things in one way and he sees them in another.**" (2)

This different vision and also this unfortunate tendency was sensed at an early stage by our brother of Kissamos and Selinos Irineos, assisted by Mr. Alexandros Papaderos, a man who is dear to us all. They were looking for a way and a place of dialogue between our Church and, principally, those fellow human beings in doubt about the faith, but also those who wander far from the Church or even turn against her.

The way of dialogue was offered by Socrates and Plato, and by the other architects of co-philosophising in dialogue, which our Lord Jesus transformed into a lofty spiritual contact of innermost personal communion when he conversed with His disciples by the lake of Galilee or with the Samaritan woman or with the archon Nicodemus and Joseph, the respected member of the Council.

The place of dialogue was provided by the first building of the Orthodox Academy. From the very beginning, the institution made clear and soon made known its identity and mission as a centre and a way of conducting dialogue. It understood and established dialogue in two main forms:

- as witness through dialogue
- as liturgical diakonia

by the Church in the world that is going and in the world that is coming. Dialogue that is on the threshold of transition of human civilisation towards the entirely new realities of an all-powerful though not always beneficial change; dialogue as a means of communication, dialogue as such, not dialogue as dialectic in the sense of controversy: hence an orthodox dialogue conducted in the Orthodox manner. The distinction between dialogue and dialectic is subtle but important and decisive. The Church does not carry on a dialectic of sophistry, of ostentatious rhetoric or of deceitful demagogy. Nor does she adhere to the principles of a dialectic view of history and human affairs, which leads eventually to dialectic materialism, the theory that so grievously afflicted human mind and life in recent years, and indeed in the largest part of our Orthodox East. Nor does the Church adopt juridical dialectic which does not aim at showing forth and ensuring prevalence of the simplest and clearest truth for the edification of human beings but looks for the strongest argument to bring about the fall of the opponant.

The base and model of the dialogue practiced in the Orthodox Academy is the Word Himself, the second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, who was "from the very beginning" of all, through whom all things were made. The Word who "was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory" (John 1,1 ff.)

The dialogue of the Church, inspired and guided by the Word of God, is a dialogue of love and truth, a dialogue of reconciliation, as the bulletin of the Academy itself is fittingly named. It is a dialogue of reconciliation and peace; a mild, lenient, charitable, direct, discrete, tolerant, broad, open, free dialogue, that is to say an orthodox dialogue. This is because it is a spiritual dialogue, bearing the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit and not only those of the human intellect, much less of human intellect seen and expressed as unmitigated

rationalism.

The Orthodox Academy of Crete has turned into practice this orthodox view and tradition of dialogue and has implemented it in an innovative, dynamic and effective way on the local, national and international level; indeed we know that more than half the congresses and other activities of the Academy are of an international and ecumenical nature. Dialogue and diakonia is practiced by the Academy without discrimination and in all directions: it embraces the human person in his entirety and his unity as well as his natural environment.

We wish to repeat what we said on this latter topic on November 10th, 1988 during the ceremony of our nomination as trustee of the Orthodox Academy:

"The work of the Academy is to be placed within the context of the work and activity of Orthodoxy in general and of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in particular; this is not limited to purely religious or ecclesiastical matters, nor indeed to broader spiritual issues alone; it embraces man as a whole psychosomatic entity and therefore the work of the Church is viewed as both divine and human, hence involving all aspects of the life of man on earth and in heaven, from earth to heaven".

We had said further that the congresses organised by the Academy are "a testimony of participation of the Church in great contemporary social problems and of her particular concern with social, economic and cultural developments of the area, a concern for an improved living standard accompanied by a genuine quality of life."(4)

We do not wish to tire you by lengthening this address. We shall touch on just two more fields of activity of the Academy, which we consider eminently significant and of great relevance for our times: the field of ecology and that of dialogue with contemporary intellectuals.

\*\*\*\*\*

It is well known that the Church now encourages and promotes dialogue on the issue of ecology, with its current alarming dimensions. The unerring poetical instinct of the ever vigilant, ever on the alert people of Crete, has sensed the implications:

How lovely you made the creation my God  
But you have also made man to destroy it!

Can it be true that man, the keeper of creation, may become Abaddon of the Revelation (9,11), the Destroyer? God forbid! Yet, vigilance and concerted

action is necessary. Our Ecumenical Throne, aware both of the substance of the problem and of the responsibilities of the Church, has undertaken the initiatives of which you are aware. The Orthodox Academy of Crete has ever since its creation taken a keen interest in a responsible and creative relationship between man and natural environment and was quick in responding to the appeal launched by the Patriarchate by establishing the **Institute of Theology and Ecology**, which we bless and urge the Authorities and Higher Institutions of Crete to support. The same goes for the Academy's other department, the **Euromediterranean Youth Centre**, which includes among its priorities the ecological education of youth on the local and international level.

The other field involves the dialogue between the Church and the intellectuals of our times.

This fundamental and pioneering aim of the Academy was included from the very first in its priorities and was subsequently pursued with zeal and diligence. Of the over 1380 local and international conferences held in the Academy (5), a large number were devoted directly or indirectly to this lofty aim. We were thus pleased, though not surprised, to hear that the Nobel Prize for Medicine (in the ending year) was awarded this year to three distinguished biologists who have been regularly attending the internationally celebrated congresses on Biology and Genetics held in this institution. And, furthermore, that the Nobel Prize for Peace was awarded in 1995 to the well-known and well-respected anti-nuclear organisation Pugwash, whose 44th Assembly was hosted here in July last, and to the president of the organisation Prof. Joseph Rotblat, who, on that occasion, planted a now-flourishing olive sapling, the primeval and biblical symbol of peace, between the old and the new building, of the Academy. The persons just mentioned were certainly not the only ones who deserved this kind of recognition among the thousands of scientists coming from every country in the world whom the Orthodox Academy has brought in contact with Crete and has given an opportunity to become acquainted with the brilliant history and civilisation of this Great Island, with the Church and with the local people.

All this demonstrates the bridge-building role that the Orthodox Academy plays between the Church and modern man, especially man as a scientist who, through knowledge, uncovers many secrets of this world and finds it difficult to accept the great mystery that God cannot be known, a mystery inciting to humility and silence.

When the highest spiritual institution in the country, the Academy of Athens, honoured the Orthodox Academy with a well-deserved award two years ago, the award was of course in respect of the overall work of the Academy; however, it concerned primarily this successful dialogue with the Greek and



international scientific community and the intellectuals generally.

The activity of the Academy also demonstrates how many important benefits to the local community, to the Church, and to the Nation, can issue from the collaboration of spiritual institutions such as this, with universities and other scientific organisations, and with distinguished scientists and scholars in Greece and abroad.

All these things are tokens of the benediction generously granted by God wherever the Church moves beyond "narrow limits" and intellectuals overcome prejudice and consent to a dialogue with the Church.

We would especially like to emphasise the dialogue carried on by the Church through the Orthodox Academy with contemporary intellectuals, and we give our paternal blessing to this difficult but God-pleasing task because we are firmly convinced that this is a special mission of Orthodoxy at the present time. Even foreigners now admit that which the Orthodox have always known and respected, namely that Orthodoxy has preserved the tradition of the great, mainly Greek, Fathers of the Church: of the men who carried the human mind to heights of reflection hard to contemplate, where a mysterious meeting took place between the upward striving mind of searching man and the downward deigning charity of the Word of God.

This meeting, accomplished in free dialogue and communion, safe-guards the Orthodox from Roman Catholic scholasticism and Protestant rationalism. In other words, it guards against those extremes which have caused the otherwise totally unjustified division between faith and intellect, this is to say, the division which is principally responsible for the most disastrous errors of mankind ever since the Renaissance and, even more so, since the Enlightenment.

We firmly believe that the orientation of mankind and the quality of life in the foreseeable future will depend on the degree to which this division may be overcome. The Orthodox Academy of Crete has shown a way which securely extends into the future, the well-tried Greek Orthodox way and spiritual experience. It is a way that both the Church and orthodox intellectuals can, and are called upon to, trust; in following that way they will testify before the contemporary world of fragmentation, divisions, and disruptions, to the innermost unity which exists in the material world by the will of God, and can be achieved in the spiritual world through communion in dialogue.

Your Beatitude, Most Holy Brothers, Honourable Participants, dear children in the Lord!

At our enthronement as Patriarch, we said that we intended to make further

use of the Institutions of the Church including the Orthodox Academy of Crete. And we are doing this to the extent possible and always in the service of our Ecumenical Patriarchate, of the Nation, of Letters and of all Orthodoxy. We are very pleased to find that this superb hall, the other facilities and the excellent equipment can now accommodate greater numbers and more demanding congresses. This greatly enhances the plans of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and of our entire Orthodox family. We are also pleased to see that the spacious library of the Academy is being completed thanks to the generosity of the distinguished American writer Robert Fulghum, whose friendly feelings towards the Academy and whose personal presence with his wife here tonight confirm what we said earlier about the creative relationship existing between contemporary intellectuals and our Church. We address cordial greetings to them both.

All this is a source of rejoicing. We thank and congratulate all those who contribute in any way to the progress of an institution like the Orthodox Academy of Crete, which enables us to say: Cretans, you may be proud! And you may praise yourselves, as the Church praises itself in the Christ: To Whom glory be!

To you, most Holy and dear President of the Academy, we wish length of days in health and in ever-creative activity. Our wishes and Patriarchal blessings go with paternal love to all those who direct and serve the Academy, to which we wish a future more brilliant than the luminous past. And may the grace, the peace and the mercy of our great God be with all of you. Amen!

(1) ODE TO THE REVELATION. Texts: Alex. K. Papaderos, Music: a)Yannis Marcopoulos. On the Sunday of Orthodoxy 1995, at the Orthodox Academy of Crete, the composer gave the first performance worldwide of parts of the Oratory ODE TO THE REVELATION, then in process, singing and playing piano himself. b)Georgios Chatzitheodorou. On the same occasion [see a)], the Chania Cantors' Choir "GEORGIOS THE CRETAN" sang passages from the Ode to music composed by G.Ch., as it did at the inaugural ceremony before the Patriarch's address.

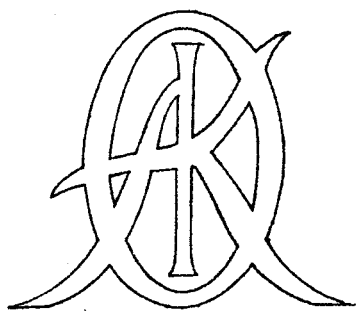
(2) Migne, P.G. 48, 1020.

(3) Address by H.E. the Metropolitan of Philadelphia Bartholomaïos at the ceremony of his nomination as Member of the Orthodox Academy of Crete, in: Alex. K. Papaderos, Orthodox Academy of Crete. The first Twenty Years. TERTIOS, Katerini 1992, 31.

(4) idem.

(5) December 2000: 1639

A.K.P. - dokimi



A.K.P. - dokimi