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ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE ARCHONS IN CANADA



Defenders of the Faith

An Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is an honouree by His All Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch, for his outstanding service to the Church. He has demonstrated to a greater than average degree his commitment toward the stewardship of time, talent, and treasure, for the betterment of the Church, Parish, Metropolis, and a well known distinguished, and well-respected leader of the Greek Orthodox Community at large. They are living examples of a faith fully and zealously lived and champions of truth, freedom, and human dignity. Their sacrifice to protect and preserve our Mother Church, the Ecumenical Patriarch, and all that for which it stands, endures and proclaims.

The word "archon" comes from the Greek word meaning a leader, a ruler, a prince, a lord, an official, or anyone in a position of authority. For us today, they are leaders who have made their mark in their respective fields and professions with concomitant dignity and distinction and, therefore, "lead" by ex-

ample in the areas of business, commerce, medicine, education, science, government, and the law, to name just a few.

It is by the grace of God that the Archon has been able to offer his good works and deeds of faith. Further, the duty of each Archon is to defend and promote the Greek Orthodox faith and tradition. His special concern and interest is to serve to defend, protect and promote the well-being, its religious freedom and advancement of the Holy Patriarchate and its mission. Each Archon pledges his time, talents, and resources to this goal.

This honour, extended by the Church, carries with it significant responsibilities, deep commitments and sincere dedication that continue throughout the life of an Archon. Consequently, it is of utmost importance that this honour of obligation be bestowed upon individuals of proven Orthodox Christian character, who conform faithfully to the teachings of Christ, and the doctrines, canons, worship, discipline, and encyclicals of the Church. For their achievements, accomplishments, and commitment to defend the Ecumenical Patriarch, they have been rewarded with the ancient and venerable title of "Ar-

chon." The fundamental goal of the Order of Saint Paul the Apostle is directed at an ongoing concern for religious freedom and the mission, defense and advancement of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.



Offkion

The Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Order of St. Paul the Apostle are laymen of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada) who have been honoured for their outstanding service to the Church by having a Patriarchal title, or "Offkion," bestowed upon them by His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Those upon whom this title of the Byzantine Church has been conferred are known as "Archons of the Great Church of Christ," and the titles are personally conferred by the Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Canada, His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios.

The Offkia for the Order of Saint Paul, the Apostle derive from some of the most prestigious offices of the ancient world.

Originating in the Ancient Greek City-States, these civic offices were transformed when the Roman Empire embraced the Christian faith during the fourth

century. As a consequence of this transition, not only were the office holders important leaders of the Christian community, the offices themselves took on specific religious responsibilities for the service and promotion of the faith in the Roman Empire. The ancient order of Archons is, in fact, the oldest and most prestigious honour that can be bestowed upon a layman in the entire Christian world.



Archons in the Local Parish

Correspondingly, an Archon is entitled to be recognized by his local parish priest and Community board and be given a place of honour in the Church. On special feast days, such as the Nativity of the Lord, Holy Friday, Pascha, the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, the feast days of Saint Paul the Apostle and of his local parish, as well as on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, he must wear his emblems of office including the cross given to him at his investiture and participate with his fellow parishioners in all church services.



The Ecumenical Patriarchate and His All Holiness, Bartholomew

The title “Ecumenical Patriarch” dates to the sixth century and historically belongs to the Archbishop of Constantinople. As Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew occupies the First Throne of the world-



wide Orthodox Christian Church, presiding in historical honour and fraternal spirit as “first among equals” of all Orthodox Primate. Ecumenical Patriarch and Archbishop of Constantinople His All Holiness Bartholomew is the 270th Ecumenical Patriarch and the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians. Our archons take the lead in defending the Greek Orthodox Christian Faith and Its spiritual

leader. Established by Saint Constantine the Great, the City of Constantine was the capital of the Byzantine Empire for over 1100 years. Along with Rome and Alexandria, one of the three great cities of the ancient world, the City was a bastion of civilization and a beacon of Orthodox Christianity. It was here that Ecumenical Synods defended, defined, and spread the Truth of the Teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church for the salvation of the world. It was here that the classics were taught and preserved. It was here that Christianity and Western Civilization made a stand, endured and prevailed, for unlike buildings and monuments, the Truth and great ideas are eternal.

For more information, contact the website at <https://www.patriarchate.org>.

The Five Issues for the Ecumenical Patriarchate

1. Government Interference in Patriarchal Elections

The Turkish government imposes restrictions on the election of the Ecumenical Patriarch and Hierarchs who vote for him by requiring that they must be Turkish citizens. In fact, the government arbitrarily can veto any candidate for the position of Ecumenical Patriarch. With the dwindling population of Hierarchs and Orthodox Christians in Turkey, the election of an Ecumenical Patriarch may not be possible in the not too distant future. This is tantamount to the asphyxiation of the leadership of the Holy Mother Church and a clear illustration of the direct intervention of the Turkish government in ecclesiastical matters.

2. Non-Recognition of "Ecumenical" Status

The Turkish government does not recognize the "Ecumenical" status of the Patriarch and Patriarchate. Turkish authorities do not allow the use of the term or title of "Ecumenical" for any religious activity whatsoever despite the fact that it has been used

since the 6th century A.D. and recognized throughout the world. Turkey regards the Patriarchate as an institution whose leader is seen as the spiritual head of Orthodox Christians in Turkey alone rather than the leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide.

3. No Legal Identity

The Ecumenical Patriarchate has no legal identity or bona fide legal personality in Turkey. The lack of a legal identity is a major source of problems for the Ecumenical Patriarchate including non-recognition of its ownership rights and the non-issuance of residence and work permits for "foreign" (i.e. - non-Turkish) priests who are essential to the continuity and functioning of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Turkish authorities do not allow the Ecumenical Patriarchate to own any property - not even its churches! The Patriarchal house itself is not recognized as the Patriarchate's property and even the Girls and Boys Orphanage Foundation on the Island of Buyukada (Prinkipos) for which the Patriarchate has held a deed since 1902 is not legally recognized by the Turkish government. The inability to secure work permits by "foreigners" who work at the Ecumenical Patriarchate results in these individuals having to

leave the country every three months to renew tourist visas which disrupts the operation and productivity of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and discourages staffing from abroad.

4. Closing of Seminary and Inability to Train New Clergy

The Ecumenical Patriarchate is unable to train new clergy in Turkey to lead their congregations in worship, observance and practice. Turkish authorities forcibly closed down its Theological School of Halki in 1971. Since its closure, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has had to send the young men from its community desiring to enter the priesthood to one of the theological schools in Greece. In many instances, they do not return given the onerous restrictions in getting work permits and the general climate of intimidation. Despite promises by the Turkish government to re-open this theological school, there has been no progress. Left unresolved, the administrative functioning and future of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is imperilled.

5. Confiscation of Property

Through various methods, the Turkish authorities

have confiscated thousands of properties from the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek Orthodox community over the years including our monasteries, church buildings, an orphanage, private homes, apartment buildings, schools and land. Left unchecked, the remaining Greek Orthodox community of Constantinople (present day Istanbul) - the cultural heirs of the Byzantine Empire - will be threatened and ultimately be no more.

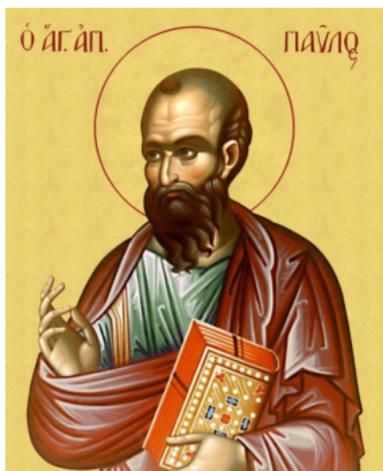
Paul was born in Tarsus and was of the tribe of Benjamin. At first he was called Saul. He studied under Gamaliel, and was a Pharisee and a persecutor of Christianity. He was miraculously converted to the Christian Faith by the Lord Himself, Who appeared to him on the road to Damascus. He was baptized by the Apostle Ananias, named Paul and numbered in the service of the Great Apostles. With fiery zeal Paul preached the Gospel everywhere, from the borders of Arabia to Spain, among the Jews and among the Gentiles, and received the title "the Apostle to the Gentiles." As horrible as his sufferings were, so much greater was his superhuman patience.

Throughout all the years of his preaching, Paul hung from day to day as on a weak thread between life

and death. Having filled all his days and nights with labour and suffering for Christ, having organized the Church in many places, and having attained such a degree of perfection, he was able to say: not I, but Christ liveth in me (Galatians 2:20). Paul was beheaded in Rome during the reign of Emperor Nero, at the same time as the martyrdom of the Apostle Peter. The Name Day for Saint Paul is celebrated annually on June 29th.

Saint Paul, the Apostle

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The Ecumenical Patriarchate Archons in Canada wish to thank the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America for much of the text in this brochure.



Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada)

86 Overlea Blvd., Toronto, ON M4H 1C6

Tel: 416-429-5757 • Fax 416-429-4588

Email: archons@gometropolis.org

Web: www.gometropolis.org/archons