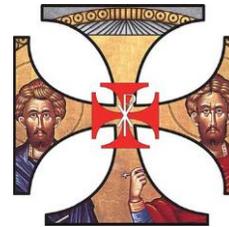


# National Philoptochos Society 2016-2018 Committee Report



## Ecumenical Patriarchate

*Chair: Anita Kartalopoulos*

*Liaison: Maria Logus*

*Members: Lila Pronos  
Peggy Vranas*

**The Mission of the Committee is to support the work of the philanthropic programs and institutions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate including, but not limited to, Balukli Nursing Home, orphanages, schools and shrines by the Philoptochos Chapters, through the annual commitment, and to increase awareness of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with distribution of information to the and Chapters of the Archdiocese.**

The goals of the Ecumenical Patriarchate Committee continue to be advanced by the National Philoptochos with great love for our Patriarchate. As we all know, the Mother Church continues to face difficult circumstances in Turkey. The Philoptochos remains committed to fully supporting and assisting our Mother Church as effectively as possible, through the Annual Commitment, through active support of the tireless efforts of the Archons of the Order of St. Andrew, and through the "Ministry of Presence:" travel to the Patriarchate to personally bear witness to our faith, our support for our Patriarch and our belief and that this Church and its Patriarchate are truly ecumenical.

### **The Annual Commitment:**

Annually, on the first Sunday in November, monies are collected for the benefit of patriarchal philanthropic ministries. The annual collection enjoys wide support throughout the United States and results in a collection of approximately \$100,000 each year. It was decided at the March 2012 National Board meeting in Atlanta, Georgia that those monies be transmitted to the Patriarchate annually in conjunction with the Name Day of His All Holiness which is celebrated on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

The monies collected and distributed since our last convention are as follows:

2016: \$125,000

2017: \$100,000

2018: \$125,000

### **Support for the Order of St. Andrew:**

The Archons, as Defenders of the Faith, take the lead role in engaging in international action on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Philoptochos vigilantly seeks out every opportunity to support and assist the Archons in their vital role, including but not limited to:

- Sharing information regarding events and conditions at the Patriarchate,
- Spreading the message of His All Holiness, whether it be about the faith, the environment or the mission of the Great Church of Christ, and
- Supporting the Archons in international forums such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the UN and others.

The OSCE has proven to be an international forum where the issues of the Patriarchate can be presented to an international audience of diplomats, leaders and individuals focused on individual rights. The Archons annually present two papers at the OSCE highlighting the denial of religious freedom that the Church faces every day and the continued efforts to reopen our theological school in Halki. In 2016, the Philoptochos supported the Archons in this effort by submitting a position paper to this very important organization and added our voice to the of the Order and assist them in their work. The paper was presented in Warsaw, Poland by Anita B. Kartalopoulos in September 2016.

**Philoptochos Pilgrimage to the Ecumenical Patriarchate:**

In October 2007, the National Philoptochos made its first pilgrimage to the Patriarchate, led by Bishop Andonios of Phasiane. All who participated were thankful for a beautiful spiritual experience that included not only an audience with His All Holiness at the Phanar but also visits to our important religious sites.

At the March 2012 National Board Meeting, the members expressed an overwhelming desire to make another pilgrimage to Constantinople which took place in June, 2013 and was led by our spiritual advisor, Bishop Sevastianos of Zela.

Thus, our 2013 Pilgrimage to Constantinople took form and on June 7, 2013, 30 Pilgrims departed from JFK airport for a pilgrimage to Constantinople, our spiritual home.

Given the importance of our support for His All Holiness, it would be most appropriate to consider making another pilgrimage to the Phanar at some appropriate time, either on our own or in conjunction with the Archons.

We are thankful that we, as the members of the National Philoptochos, are able to assist in the great ministry that His All Holiness has undertaken in the Queen of Cities and for all of Orthodoxy worldwide.