

Welcome to the site Friends of Mount Athos

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The sacred Mountain Athos represents east ledge of peninsula Halkidiki in northern Greece, in 60 kilometres pressing in emerald waters of Aegean sea. The peninsula is a place mostly rounded by mountains, covered by dense woods, pitted by uncountable rocky ravines. In a southeast part of peninsula in height of 2033 metres above sea level there is a mountain called "Athos".

In a pagan antiquity Athos mountain knew as Apoloniadu (from term 'Apollo'), later at the top of the mountain there was a temple "Zeus" which greek called as "Afos".

Friends of Sacred Mountain Athos is a unique pilgrim centre. The aim of the company is to attract the public to centuries-old orthodox culture and history of Sacred Mountain Athos, and also to organize the excursions and pilgrim trips on Sacred Mountain Athos, visiting of orthodox relics of Greece and other countries. In programs offered by us the pilgrims receive unique possibility to visit a pantry of treasures of St. Mountain Athos and to bow to its numerous relics. To take part in divine services and meals of monasteries, monasteries and cells, and also to meet and have a talk with confessors of St. Mountain Athos. It is a great possibility to see a monastic, ascetic life and the cleanest invariable Charters of Sacred Mountain Athos.

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The church legend say that Holy Mother, having accepted good fortune of the Holy Spirit, was going to go to the Iversky earth, but has received a message from Angel that apostleship to it will appear to bear on other earth. The ship on which was Holy Mother with Apostles, has gone to Cyprus island, to bishop Lazaros, but has been faced a storm and has moored to the Athos mountain. The pagan inhabitants have accepted Holy Mother and listened to her sermons, have believed and were christened.

Many miracles were made there by Holy Mother before to sail to Cyprus.

Before leaving peninsula, she blest the people. And Athos has entered in Christian an era. It was under sovereignty of Rome pursuing Christians to 313 years AD when emperor Konstantin Veliky has published the decree about talent to Christians of a freedom of worship. By this time for the Sacred

Mountain there were monasteries, has blossomed Enochism. There is a legend that in 422 year AD the daughter of Feodosia Great, Plakidia, has visited Athos, but could not enter into a monastery (Vatoped) because she was prevented by voice proceeding from an icon of Holy Mother. Since then fathers of Athos have put the law forbidding the access on Sacred Mountain "Athos" to persons of a female.

In VII century the gain of Egypt, Palestin and Syria Arabs-Moslems has compelled Christians to leave these earths. Many of them, according to the decision of VI Universal cathedral, have located in monasteries of Byzantium, including on Athos.

By IX century the imperial reading and writing granted to Enochs the right mainly to own the "Athos". Their number then has essentially increased, has appeared also orthodox slavic: Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian.

At the time of Crusades (XIII century) Athos suffers persecutions and ruins from outside the Roman papacy, and also violent planting church union by Rome. XIV century - time of a recovery work in destroyed by latin monasteries. The special help has been rendered from the side of pious emperors Andronik II and Andronik III Paleologs.

Since 1453 - wrecks of the Byzantian empire - in territory of Greece there has come the period of Turkish sovereignty, but the Sacred Mountain has reserved freedom of orthodox belief and self-management at a duty to pay a tax. Incomes at that time left on the maintenance of monasteries, restoration of monastic structures (after fires and earthquakes), not payment of debts and numerous taxes, on payments to the deputy of the sultan and its citizen.

At this time Russia released from the Tatar yoke financially helps monasteries of Sacred Mountain. In XVI century, with accession in Ottoman empire Selima II, has begun a difficult period of history of Sacred Mountain with deprivation of monasteries of all manors. Only in 1830 when Greece after emancipating war with Ottoman empire has been proclaimed by the independent country, for Athos there has come the peace period. Today the Sacred Mountain is under jurisdiction of the Constantinople

patriarch, being a part of the Greek Republic and submitting to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Greece.