
THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

THE CHIEF SECRETARIAT OF THE HOLY AND SACRED SYNOD

Phanar, March 1, 1994

Dear Ms. Jensen,

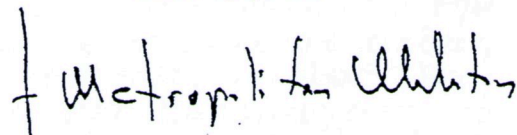
His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has directed me to respond to your letter of December 1, 1993, which he read with prayerful sympathy.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate shares your concern regarding the proper administration of ecclesiastical affairs, not only in the Holy Land, but around the world. As you point out, Orthodox Christians must have a particular interest in the holy sites where our Lord walked and the communities which carry on our faith. However, the issues you raise concern internal organizational matters of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The Ecumenical Patriarchate has a primacy of service to the Church but does not have administrative authority over other Orthodox Churches. We cannot intervene in the internal affairs of another patriarchate or autocephalous Church. Therefore we are unable to directly address the concerns you have mentioned.

You might try writing the appropriate officials at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the civil authorities in the areas of the holy sites. Above all, we must continue to pray that the Lord will speak to the hearts of those responsible for these areas and will provide for the needs of the conscientious faithful who serve there. One person may not make a difference, but if all Orthodox Christian faithful pray and make their feelings known, then we can realistically expect some significant change.

Conveying to you the paternal blessings of our Patriarch and thanking you for your concern in this matter, I remain

Sincerely yours,



+ Metropolitan Meliton of Philadelphia
Chief Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod
of the Ecumenical Patriarchate