

COMMUNIQUE FROM THE INTER-ORTHODOX BIOETHICS COUNCIL

From 23rd to 26th May 2011, the Inter-Orthodox Bioethics Council convened for its first meeting at the Orthodox Academy of Crete, as a guest of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with participants from all the Orthodox Churches around the world. The Representatives from Bulgaria were not able to attend.

The Bioethics Council was convened following a proposal by His All Holiness Vartholomaios, the Ecumenical Patriarch and a unanimous decision taken by the Primate of the Orthodox Churches during their Synaxis at the Phanar on October 2008.

Presiding over the deliberations of the Inter-Orthodox Council was Metropolitan Ioannis of Pergamos, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Secretary was the Very Reverend Archimandrite Makarios Griniezakis from the Ecumenical Throne.

Following the opening and introductory speech by its President, they studied the method and the issues which they were to discuss, so that a uniform opinion of the Orthodox Church's view on Bioethical issues could be achieved.

The Council decided that at every one of its meetings it would examine one particular bioethics issue, which would be chosen according to priority depending on its pastoral, ecclesiological, theological and social necessity.

Given that the issue of reproduction is one of the most vital and burning issues, which creates enormous bioethical dilemmas in the pastoral theology of the Church, the Council decided that at their next meeting they would

deliberate on this issue and then appointed speakers from among their members to present its scientific and theological views.

His Eminence Amphilochios of Kisamos and Selinos, President of the Orthodox Academy of Crete hosted an official dinner in the refectory in honour of the delegates, which was also attended by His Eminence Irenaios, Archbishop of Crete and Synodal Metropolitans of Crete.

The Inter-Orthodox Bioethics Council, which will meet again in a year's time, is looking forward with the grace of Jesus Christ to bearing fruit to the glory of the Lord and to fulfilling the obligation and mission of the Orthodox Church in the contemporary world.

It should be noted that the Very Reverend Archimandrite Panteleimon Arathymos, Chief- Secretary of the Holy Synod and the Erudite Mr Gregory Liantas Professor of the Higher Ecclesiastical Academy of Thessaloniki, represented the Second Throne Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa