

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the Pilgrimage of Discovery?**

The Pilgrimage of Discovery is a pilot program that makes possible an inspiring religious-educational journey for up to five young adult leaders, male and female, of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago. This peer journey features cultural immersion, visits to historic sites, and a special audience with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The Pilgrimage of Discovery is a rare opportunity for the selected young adults to have a transformative and immersive experience in Constantinople and to grow in their Orthodox Christian faith. The young adults may also have the chance to participate in an environmental service program with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew while on the journey.

### **Which sites will be visited on the Pilgrimage of Discovery?**

Although subject to change, the Pilgrimage of Discovery itinerary will visit: Hagia Sophia (recently converted to a mosque) to witness the epitome of Byzantine architecture and mosaics; Zoodochos Pigi Church at Balukli to receive holy water from the life-giving spring and to see where former Patriarchs are buried; the historic Chora Church (recently converted to a mosque) to marvel at the church's famed Byzantine mosaics; Hagios Demetrios Church in Kuruçesme where the faithful walk through a tight, dark cave in the church to receive holy water from the life-giving spring; and old, Greek 'Pera' to see structures that show evidence of thriving Greek culture in Constantinople prior to the exodus in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The young adults will journey on a private charter boat trip through the Bosphorus and into the Sea of Marmara to the Princes' Island, Heybeliada, to visit Halki Seminary, founded in 1871 by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople to train Greek Orthodox priests and closed for more than half a century, since 1971, by the Turkish state. The group also will travel on a private charter boat trip through the Bosphorus and into the Sea of Marmara to the Princes' Island, Büyükada, to visit the Patriarchal Orphanage which served Greek Orthodox children in the 20th century until it was shuttered by the Turkish government during the Cyprus tensions in the 1960's. A highlight of the Pilgrimage of Discovery will be visiting the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the Phanar, attending worship services at St. George Church at the Phanar, and having an audience with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. There will also be time to explore the city freely after dinners and so much more!

### **How long is the Pilgrimage of Discovery?**

The Pilgrimage of Discovery will be seven days/six nights.

### **What are the dates of the Pilgrimage of Discovery?**

July 31, 2023 - August 7, 2023

**Will the young adults be able to meet with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew?**

Yes. The young adults will be scheduled to have an audience together with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew where they will have the opportunity to engage in open dialogue. The young adults may also have the chance to participate in an environmental service program while on the journey with His All-Holiness known as the Green Patriarch because of his efforts as the first global religious leader to have initiated environmental protection events in the 1980's.

**What is included on the Pilgrimage of Discovery?**

Travel expenses will be paid for up to five selected young adults for this seven day/six night journey. This includes round trip flights from Chicago O'Hare to Istanbul, all transportation while in Turkey, entrance fees to programmed sites, all lodging (double occupancy), breakfasts, dinners, and most lunches. Incidentals, personal expenses, exploring the city on your own and any additional meals will be the responsibility of individual travelers.

**What is the age requirement?**

Applicants must be age 23 to 28 by August 1, 2023

**Where can the Eligibility and Selection Criteria be accessed?**

<https://chicago.goarch.org/ministry/archons-of-the-ecumenical-patriarchate/>

**Where can the Pilgrimage of Discovery application be accessed?**

<https://chicago.goarch.org/ministry/archons-of-the-ecumenical-patriarchate/>

Also be sure to check our Pilgrimage of Discovery Instagram and Facebook pages for updates.

**Why are applicants only being accepted from the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago?**

The Pilgrimage of Discovery is being piloted by the Metropolis of Chicago Archons in preparation for a national program in the future to be sponsored by the Archons of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle.

**How is the Pilgrimage of Discovery being funded?**

The Pilgrimage of Discovery is being funded by the Order of St. Andrew Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

**What is the role of the Archons of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle?**

The Archons of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle defend and promote the Orthodox Christian faith and tradition. The Order's special concern and interest is to serve as a bulwark to protect and promote the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople which is the Sacred See of St. Andrew the Apostle. The Archons are also concerned with the human race's inalienable rights wherever and whenever they are violated—and the well-being and general welfare of the Christian Church.

**Where can more information be found about the Archons of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle?**

Information on the Order of St. Andrew can be found at [www.archons.org](http://www.archons.org).

**How will the participants travel to Turkey?**

The young adults will fly round trip on a major airline from Chicago O'Hare International Airport to Istanbul.

**How will the participants get around in Turkey?**

The young adults will travel by private motor coach and by private charter boat. There will also be a moderate amount of walking done on the Pilgrimage of Discovery.

**What will a typical day be like on the Pilgrimage of Discovery?**

A typical day will include breakfast at the young adults' hotel, travel by private motor coach to interesting sites in or around Constantinople, learning about history, culture, and religion, sharing life-changing experiences with other young adults. Lunch will be provided on most days followed by more site seeing and visits. Dinner will be at establishments representing fine, local cuisine usually overlooking the cityscape or experiencing the city centers. After dinner, there will be time for the young adults to explore the city on their own, if they choose, but these expenses will not be covered by the Pilgrimage of Discovery.

**Will there be any opportunities to attend church services on the Pilgrimage of Discovery?**

Yes. The young adults will have the opportunity to attend worship services at St. George Church at the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople at the Phanar.

**How will the participants stay in touch with their families and friends while on the Pilgrimage of Discovery?**

The use of an American mobile telephone is a viable option for staying in touch with family and friends as long as the phone model is able to operate at the correct GSM frequencies for mobile phone service in Turkey.

**Do the participants need spending money?**

It is recommended that the young adults have some spending money for incidentals, personal expenses, shopping, exploring on their own and any additional meals that may not be included on the Pilgrimage of Discovery.

**How can the participants change money in Turkey?**

Some amount of US currency should be taken along. However, Turkish lira can be obtained in advance of the trip if ordered from many US banks and credit unions. There are also exchange bureaus located in airports and in Istanbul. Also, ATM machines are widely available throughout Istanbul.

**What is the dress code on the Pilgrimage of Discovery?**

The participants should dress modestly and tastefully while on the Pilgrimage of Discovery since they are representing the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago, and the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle. Denim should not be worn on daily excursions. Men are expected to wear pants, dress shirts, or short sleeve polo shirts for daily excursions. Women may wear pants, dresses, or skirts that fall below the knees, and shirts, blouses or sweaters that cover the shoulders for daily excursions. For tours of churches and monasteries, women are expected to wear dresses or skirts that fall below the knees, and shirts, blouses or sweaters that cover the shoulders. In general, shorts, denim, tank tops, and spaghetti-strap blouses are not recommended.

**Do the participants need a valid passport?**

Yes. Passports must be valid for at least six months beyond the travelers' entry date into Turkey and there must be at least one blank page for entry and exit stamps.

**Do the participants need a visa to enter Turkey?**

Yes. American passport holders are required to obtain a Turkish e-Visa for tourist travel to the country. American citizens residing in the USA are eligible to apply for a Turkish e-Visa online, so it is not necessary to visit a Turkish consulate or embassy in person.

**What airport will the participants use in the USA for the Pilgrimage of Discovery?**

The young adults will use Chicago O'Hare International Airport for their flight to Istanbul and for their return home.

**How will the participants travel to/from Chicago O'Hare International Airport for departure to Turkey?**

The young adults will travel at their own expense to/from Chicago O'Hare International Airport for timely departure to Istanbul as part of the Pilgrimage of Discovery.

**Will the journey included tour guides or others who will travel with the participants to, in, and from Turkey?**

The young adults will travel with several Archons of the Order of St. Andrew, with members of the Pilgrimage of Discovery Committee, and with members of a film crew that will be creating a documentary of the journey. From time to time while in Turkey, representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and a licensed tour guide will also be traveling with the group.

**Is health insurance needed for participants traveling in Turkey?**

Yes. Health insurance that is valid in Turkey is required for all young adults traveling on the Pilgrimage of Discovery. If young adults do not have health insurance that is valid in Turkey, supplemental health insurance designed for foreign travel can be purchased independently by the young adults at their own expense.

**What is expected of the participants before they depart for Turkey?**

The young adults must be willing and able to attend 3-4 mandatory preparatory meetings in advance of the Pilgrimage of Discovery to get to know the other young adults, to learn what the young adults should expect on their journey, and to prepare for their experiences.

**What is expected of the participants after they return home?**

The young adults must be willing and able to commit to sharing their experiences at various speaking engagements at parishes and events from time to time in the Chicagoland area with Archons of the Order of St. Andrew for a period of up to (2) two years after the Pilgrimage of Discovery.

**Will the Pilgrimage of Discovery have any impact on the participants?**

Yes, it will! This life-changing experience will help the young adults grow in their faith, better connect with their religious tradition, and understand the relevance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate! This pilgrimage will prepare these young adults to lead the Orthodox Church in the future. This immersive journey will create a lasting impact on the young adults' identity, faith, family, community and culture, while helping secure the continuity of the Orthodox Church.