

*Greeting to the 12<sup>th</sup> Consultation of the ENHCC*  
*by the*  
*Fr. Stavros Kofinas,*  
*Coordinator of the Network of the Ecumenical Patriarchate*  
*for Pastoral Health Care*

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople has asked that I relay his heartfelt greetings to the participants of this, the 12<sup>th</sup> Consultation of the European Network for Health Care Chaplaincy. The Ecumenical Patriarchate holds a special esteem for the ENHCC in that it was very close to the European Network throughout its founding and its developmental years. It was in Crete, at the Orthodox Academy of Chania in the year 2000, that our Network was formed. I, as representative of the Patriarchate, was blessed to serve as its Network's Coordinator for three consecutive terms. Being that we held three Committee meetings at the Patriarchate in Constantinople, the Committee Members had the joy of meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch and experiencing his personal pastoral concern and his interest in our efforts. It is within this concern and interest that His All-Holiness has asked that I relay his continual spiritual support to each of you in your ministry and to the Network as a whole.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Consultation of the ENHCC, which has the theme '*Working together - The challenge for chaplaincy in an interdisciplinary era*', is taking place during the week of Pentecost, celebrated by the Orthodox Church this past Sunday. In the hymnology of our Church, we hear that, upon the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Most High, "called all men into unity" (*Kontakion of the Feast*). "Contrary to the law of nature, when the one voice of the disciples resounded, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, the peoples, tribes and tongues heard diversely the great things of God, and were initiated into the knowledge of the Trinity" (*Troparion of the 9<sup>th</sup> Ode*). The Apostles were given different gifts so as to evangelize the Word of God and to transmit the consolation of the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth to a world that was divided on all existential levels.

St. Paul tells us that there are a variety of gifts bestowed on us, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (*1 Corinthian 12*). Thus, there are no higher or inferior gifts, but different ones and each gift is totally fulfilled when it is conjoined to the gifts of the others, as they co-exist within the love shared in the persons of the Holy Trinity.

It is obvious that the theme of our Consultation, '*Working together - The challenge for chaplaincy in an interdisciplinary era*', is directly related to these truths. In an era of competition, in which relationships are hindered by a lack of self-worth, or as we say, a sense of low self-esteem, we are called upon to work together in order to provide spiritual healing through the gifts that have been bestowed upon us. We are called upon to help others recognize their gifts, or better still, to help others realize *they* are a precious gift, not for what they *do* but because of who they *are*, blessed humans that are created in the image and likeness of God. Finally, we are called upon to draw ourselves and one another into the unity of faith, into the peace and love of the life of the Holy Trinity.

Again, relaying the blessing and prayers of the Ecumenical Patriarch, I too pray that our meeting will successfully bring us one step forward to such a union so that our gifts will be actualized and confirmed by one another in a true spirit of cooperation and co-existence.