

# **FRIENDS OF MOUNT ATHOS**

## **ITINERARY FOR 26 OCTOBER TO 3 NOVEMBER 2019**

### **PILGRIMAGE TO THE PELOPONNESE AND THE 'DEEP' MANI**

FOMA's October pilgrimage will take place in the Southern Peloponnese in the Mani, in that unique corner of the Peloponnese and the second- most southerly tip of continental Europe. This is a dry, bare and rugged territory garlanded by domed Byzantine chapels, churches and monasteries, most of which adorned in rich frescoes. Added to this are the forbidding tower houses, castles, stone villages, ancient sites, beautiful beaches and spectacular caves.

Patrick Leah Fermor, a patron of our Society, wrote a spellbinding part-travelogue, part-biography on the Mani. His house at Kardamyli in the Peloponnese has only recently been turned into an impressive museum which is well worth seeing.

#### **1. Saturday 26 October 2019**

Arrive Kalamata. Afternoon meeting with guide. Discussion of itinerary details.

Dinner and overnight.

#### **2. Sunday 27 October 2019**

Breakfast. Bus to Metropolis Church. Attend Divine Liturgy. Travel

along windy yet picturesque road to Messinia arriving at beautiful Kardamyli. Visit to old town then proceed to Exohori village to see Byzantine-style churches and chapels. Most date to 19th century and have interesting frescoes painted by local artists.

Lunch at tavern. Visit tower-museum, "Mourtzinis Troupakis", containing a permanent exhibition: Mani Settlements. The museum belongs to the so-called "Network of Mani Museums".

Visit 17 th -century church of St Spyridon.

Visit to house, now museum, of Patrick Leigh Fermor (patron of FOMA) in an elegant location. Proceed to Areopolis.

Dinner and overnight.

### **3. Monday 28 October 2019**

Breakfast. Continue to old town of Oitylo. Visit 17 th century Dekoulou Monastery. Continue to picturesque village of Limeni for coffee break and a walk through the narrow paths of the port. Visit to old tower and remains of old castles.

Return to Areopolis, a characteristic Mani town. Visit Churches of St Charalambos, St Nicholaos and Archangels (all 17c.). These churches were decorated by local painters.

Lunch at renowned traditional oven called "Milia". Visit Mani tower, once an olive press.

Dinner and overnight in Areopolis.

### **4. Tuesday 29 October 2019**

Breakfast. Proceed UNESCO-protected Byzantine castle town of

Mystras (near Sparta), preserving several Byzantine churches and the functioning Convent of Mary the Virgin.

Lunch at traditional tavern. Return to Sparta. Free time.

Afternoon visit to the male Monastery of the 40 Martyrs (1305). Attend Vespers and observe some excellent frescoes.

Conversation with monks.

Dinner and overnight in Sparta.

## **5. Wednesday 30 October 2019**

Breakfast. Depart for Monasteries Zervitsa (convent) and Gola (monks) (16c.-17c.); observe frescoes of the pre-Christian philosophers; both dedicated to the Virgin. Hospitality from the monastics.

Visit to winery. Early evening visit to the Museum of the Metropolis of Sparta with a collection of rare icons. Meeting with the local Bishop.

Dinner and overnight in Sparta.

## **6. Thursday 31 October 2019**

Breakfast. Proceed to the renowned Convent of Malevi dedicated to the Dormition with its famous miraculous myrrh-exuding icon of the Virgin Mary (origins from 8c). Commonly called Second Mount Athos.

Thousands of pilgrims come here every 29 August. We will visit and enjoy the monastery's delicacies (well-known for feta cheese).

Continue to Nafplion. Guided walk around the city and visit to the historic Church of St Spyridon.

Dinner and overnight.

### **7. Friday 1 November 2019**

Breakfast. Proceed to Argos to see its Byzantine Museum and ancient Nemea.

Lunch. Afternoon visit to the Monastery of Panagia of Vrahos (Our Lady of the Rock). The first chapel was built inside a small rock cave.

Dinner and overnight stay.

### **8. Saturday 2 November 2019**

Breakfast. Proceed to see the Palamidi Venetian Fort and continue to Agnountos Monastery (11c.) near to Epidaurus.

Lunch. Then either a boat ride to the Bourtzi Island (Venetian prison) or visit to Epidaurus. Meeting with local Bishop.

Dinner and overnight.

### **Sunday 3 November 2019 (Day 9)**

Divine liturgy and departure. Those leaving late could visit the delightful the Convent of St Patapios.

*Please note that this Programme is subject to minor adjustments*