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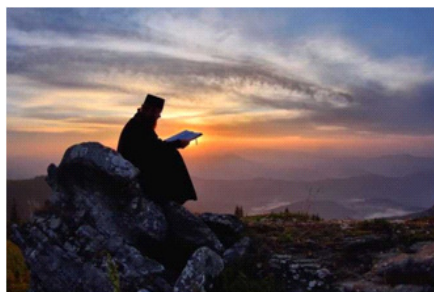
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Monasticism

Louis A. Palivos



Monasticism from the Greek, μοναχός, monachos, from μονός, alone, or monkhood, is a religious way of life in which one renounces worldly pursuits to devote oneself fully to spiritual work. Monastic life plays an important role in many Christian Churches, especially in the Orthodox and Catholic traditions, as well as, other faiths, such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism. In other religions, monasticism is criticized and not practiced, as in Islam and Zoroastrianism, or plays a marginal role, as in modern Judaism.

Woman pursuing a monastic life are generally called nuns, while monastic men are called monks. Godly man are called Geronta, and Godly women are called Gerontisa.

Many monastics live in monasteries to stay away from the secular world. The way of addressing monastics differs between the Christian traditions. As a general rule, in Roman Catholicism, monks and nuns are called brothers and sisters, while in Eastern Orthodoxy, they are called fathers or mothers.

Monasticism in Christianity, which provided the origins of the words “monk” and “monastery”, comprises several diverse forms of religious living. It began to develop early in the history of the Church, but is not mentioned in the Scriptures.¹ However, Elijah (Elias), Elisha and John the Baptist practiced living like hermits. The Lord Jesus Christ stated, “For there are eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother’s womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it.” *Math. 19:12*.

The Christian Monk embraces the monastic life as a vocation for God, Salvation and *Theosis*. This *Theosis* the monks strive to achieve through humility, repentance, fasting, constant prayer and virginity. All Christians, as St. Seraphim of Sarov has stated, strive “for the acquisition of the Holy Spirit,” and toward *Theosis* which is the true spirituality. All sincere Christians are like mystics pursuing salvation and *Theosis*.

In the beginning of the Christian Church, all Believers had everything in common. This voluntary act was to surrender property and distribute it to the needy.

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart. Acts 2: 44-46

Latter, in the Book of Acts, Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property but did not give all the money to the Apostles feet.

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land ...”

Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last.

Acts 5: 3-5

By the Second Century, there were Christians who wanted to pursue more prayer, fasting, poverty and celibacy. They remained within the

(Continue p. 2)

A ^{Πέτρος} very generous donation from “The Intrigue yellow Foundation”



Pictured: Kristine Farra, IY Board Member, Leah Farra, Eleni Bousis, Chairwoman GARCC, Mahtab Hariri Salehi, Founder IY. Pat Garbenas, Behind: Dino Varnavas, Vassiliki Stratikopoulou, Peter Karahalios, President GARCC

The Greek American Rehabilitation & care Center received a very generous donation from a not-for-organization for our nursing home residents and nursing staff. It is very heartwarming when a non- Greek Organization thinks about us and we need to publicize their generosity.

On May 7th, The Intrigue Yellow Foundation, put an #IntrigueAYellowHappy smile on the faces of Chicago’s vulnerable elderly residents of the Greek American Rehabilitation & Care Center! Given COVID19, many nursing homes have been on complete lockdown, unable to interact in person with their loved ones. With the help of Etta and Rock Fizz, Intrigue Yellow provided a catered meal for residents as well as the much appreciated healthcare workers (May 7 is also National Nurses Day !) In addition, residents received a curated gift bag of select candies and yellow flowers just in time for Mother’s Day.

ABOUT THE NON FOR PROFIT THE INTRIGUE YELLOW FOUNDATION

To heal pandemic trauma, a wise awareness towards empathy, along with a healthy movement is necessary. Women are the cornerstone of a nurturing care from home to society and can initiate a rebalancing process during and after this pandemic. Through "Women of Pandemic 2020 Cause" and "A Yellow Happy Campaign", IY sheds light on natural altruistic and creative nature of women artists and entrepreneurs to serve survivors. IY also supports and advises businesses, during this financial time, to develop new sources of growth, with a disruptive innovative humanitarian project.

Intrigue Yellow "Senior Heroes" is our cause to promote with hope for elderly. For sponsorship and collaboration, Intrigue Yellow "Mamas & Chickies" campaign is on its way to socially support new moms in isolation and with baby care.

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THE PLATFORM OF THE GREEK PRESS

- 1.To applaud the achievements of our ethnic group
- 2.To support the ideas of the Hellenic-Christian tradition
- 3.To promote the preservation of the Greek language
- 4.To encourage all worthy Community causes
- 5 To assist all the Greek-American fraternal, cultural patriotic and religious organizations
- 6.To install Americanism in the Greek-American community
- 7.To advance the just causes of Hellenism.
8. To promote the ideals Greece has given to humanity.

Monasticism

Louis A. Palivos

(From p. 1)

Christian Community but others left.

By the Third Century, those seeking spiritual purity started to leave the cities and go to secluded areas, becoming hermits. Also, persecution played a role in Believers withdrawing from the cities. A prime example of one leaving the city was St. Anthony, 251-355 A.D., who distributed his wealth to the poor and became a monk in Egypt.

In the beginning in Egypt, Christians felt called to a more reclusive or eremitic form of monastic living. St. Anthony the Great is cited by Athanasius as one of those early “Hermit Monks” and is considered the Father of Monasticism..

The need for some form of organized spiritual guidance was obvious, and around 318 A.D. , Saint Pachomius, 251-355 A.D., started to organize his many follower in what was to become the first Christian coenobitic or communal monastery. Soon, similar institutions were established throughout the Egyptian desert, as well as, the rest of the eastern half of the Roman Empire. Notable monasteries of the East included:

- Monastery of Saint Anthony, one of the oldest Christian monasteries in the world.
- Mar Awgin founded a monastery on Mt. Izla above Nisibis in Mesopotamia, c. 350 A.D. and from this monastery the cenobitic tradition spread in Mesopotamia, Persia, Armenia, Georgia and even India and China.
- St. Sabbas the Sanctified organized the monks of the Judean Desert in a monastery close to Bethlehem, c. 483 A.D. now know as Mar Saba, which is considered the mother of all monasteries of the Eastern Orthodox churches.
- Saint Catherine’s Monastery was founded between 527-565 A.D. in the Sinai, Egypt, by order of Emperor Justinian I.

By the Fourth Century, there was a transition to the coenobitic tradition, that is, the monks had all things in common and a Spiritual Father.

St. Basil the Great, 330-379 A.D., and St. Pachomius developed rules for the coenobitic monastery way of life, that is, common: prayer, work, eating, income, expenses, involving everyone equally and no ownership of property. The monastery became a micro cosmos of the first Christian Community and life was based on *agape* and *communion*.

Orthodox monasticism seeks for the monk to energize the ascetic way of life that is based on holiness, poverty, fasting and prayer. Particularly these type of specific prayers.

Mental prayers, Gk. *ἡσυχία*, noera prosefhi, or prayer of the heart, Gk. *ἡσυχία*, kardiaki prosefhi. This form of prayer is described as follows by Nikiphoros the Solitary (died c. 1340 A.D.), one of the greatest ascetics of Mount Athos: “You know that the seat of thoughts of every man is in the breast, for when the lips are silent it is here that we talk and deliberate and recite our prayers and psalms and so on. Therefore, having banished every thought from the discursive faculty, you can do this if you want to, give this prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me.” And force this instead of any other thought always to cry within. If you keep this up for a time, the way to the heart will be opened by it. (*Philokalia*, 2, 241). Another outstanding Anthonite monk, Nicodemos, gives this description: “Mental prayer, or prayer of the heart, according to the Holy Fathers known, as Vigi-

lant (Niptikoi), is chiefly this, that a man gather his mind in his heart and, without speaking with his mouth, solely with the word residing in his mind which speaks in the heart, say the following brief prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me, holding his breath a little,” *O Aoratos Polemos-The Unseen Warfare*, Athens, 1947, p. 147.

There are other monks who practice idiorhythmic, that is, they do not eat together, each prepares his own food and can hold property, each can eat what they want and the monastery does not have an Abbot (Igumenos) but a committee of two-three.

Today, both of these methods are practiced at Mount Athos, which has 20 monasteries, numerous sketes, as well as, hermits, which is the third method of Monasticism.

Monks seek to attain passionlessness Gk. *ἀπάθεια*, *ápathia*, which is freedom from anger, hatred, bitterness and all other negative emotions. Monks see their calling as a second baptism. Monks seek to emulate the Lord Jesus Christ, “to be perfect” Matt. 5:48. Monks like all of us, strive to conquer their souls’ and bodys’ passions by praying , fasting, obeying the Lord Jesus’ two Great Commandments, “to love God and to love your neighbor.” Matt. 22:37-40. Like us, monks strive for *purification, illumination and theosis*. Like us, monks strive to acquire more and more the Holy Spirit.

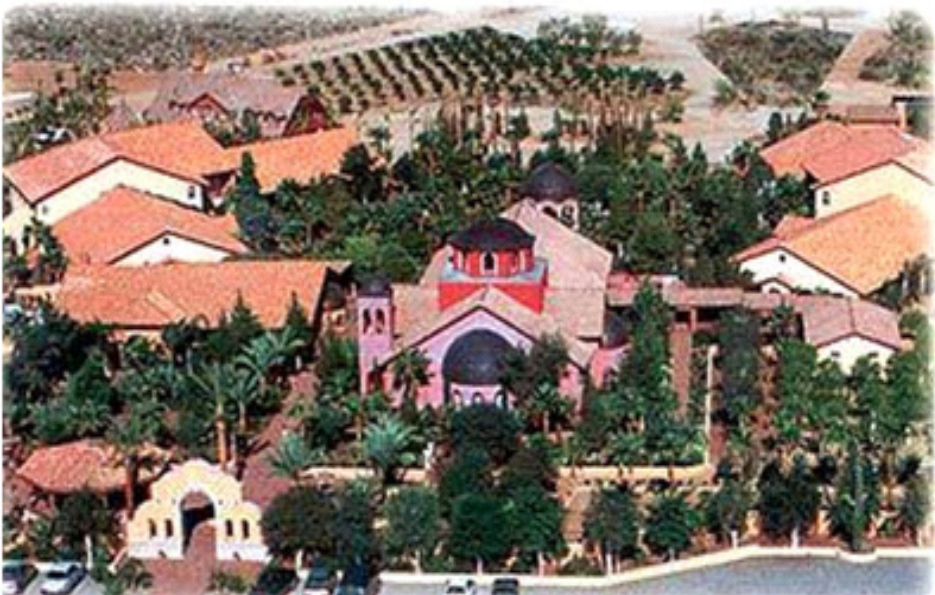
There are some who believe that Monasticism will wane, because of less and less monks/sisters joining monasteries, a spirit of anti monasticism, a spirit of tourism, a spirit of false humility and individuals being ensnared into sects.

There are others who promote Monasticism for only a little while and for introspection, reflection and prayer. Some others oppose Monasticism on the basis that the Lord Jesus Christ commanded the Apostles to, “Go and make Disciples of all nations.” Matt. 28:19. Further, the Lord Jesus Christ prayed to the Father “that thou not taken the out of the world, but that thou protect them from the devil. “ Jn. 17:15. The Lord Jesus Christ did not ordain anyone to be a monistic. Against two of the desires , that is, abstinence and marriage, Saint Paul warned those “who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence .” I Tim. 4:3. Lastly, St. Paul also warned,

Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations ”Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” which all concern things which perish with the using, according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but* are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh. Col. 2:20-23

Conclusion

Monasticism began with persons seeking temperance, and to have all material possessions in common. This early Believers lived in homes, and practiced poverty, celibacy, fasting, prayer and abstinence. Later, Believers would venture outside the homes and the cities to remote and secluded areas. They would become hermits. Today, they are Christian Monasteries all over the world. Having visited three monasteries at Mount Athos, and numerous others in Greece, Jerusalem and the U.S., I experienced a greater appreciation of the Monastic Life. So who are we to judge anyone wishing to become a Monastic and to pursue his/her salvation and to pray for our salvation? Furthermore, some Monastics have ventured outside their monasteries to teach and to preach. Yet, other Monastics can practice in a crowded world wherein they are alone with God. Still other Monastics can practice being married and living in the



world. St. Gregory of Nyssa, the brother of St. Basil the Great, was married and wrote on virginity. We can live in the world and be Monastics, but it is hard to find the silence in the noise and to remain unmoved but are in constant motion.

1. Wikipedia, *Monasticism* .
2. Constantine Cavarinos, *Anchored in God*. Astir Publishing Com., Athens, Greece, 1959.
3. Ibid, Constantine Cavarinos, *Anchored in God*.
4. Constantine Cavarinos, *The Holy Mountain*, The Institute For Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Inc. Belmont, Mass. 1973.
5. Ibid, Constantine Cavarinos, *The Holy Mountain*.
6. Dinos Roussos, *Freedom from Human Traditions*, Eastern European Mission, 2012.

Parliament debates gov't response to pandemic



Party leaders debated the government's response to the coronavirus outbreak in Parliament Thursday.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis lauded his government's response, saying it was the only one that outlawed layoffs. He said the government spent €17.5 billion to prop up incomes and compa-

...nies and will spend more, when European funds are available.

Mitsotakis said further steps will be taken to help employers and employees. State will subsidize salaries of those furloughed or forced to work part-time. Home ownership will continue to be protected from foreclosures. Mitsotakis criticized opposition proposals for even more money to be poured into the economy, accusing the formerly governing Syriza of still promoting the idea that money grows on trees.

Opposition leader Alexis Tsipras said government response to crisis was belated and inadequate; added that a recession deeper than 4 percent this year, as forecast weeks ago by Bank of Greece governor Yiannis Stournaras, will be the result of Mitsotakis' "inertia, timidity and inability to anticipate the real needs of the economy."

Tsipras accused the government of using the crisis as an excuse to benefit its friends and to weed out “unfit” businesses, especially small and medium ones.

Tsipras criticized the decision to re-open schools, other than for high school seniors, as unnecessarily risky and part of a government PR strategy to show that it is “winning.” He added that testing is badly lagging. Tsipras ended by calling for a “broad progressive coalition” in government.

Socialist leader Fofi Gennimata applauded the “medical experts” for their handling of the pandemic, but added that the government is moving ahead without a plan and with its main concern being how it will communicate its policies for its benefit.

Gennimata challenged Mitsotakis to be bolder in demanding that EU aid its poorer members and “not hide behind” French President Emmanuel Macron and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. She demanded that such aid be made through money transfers, not loans. She also proposed a 3-year suspension of the Stability Pact imposing limits on budget deficits.

May 1, 2020

Dear Sotiris,

Enclosed is a small gift from my wife and I for you. Thank you for working so hard on the newspaper and always printing my articles. to help people understand more about God's love.

May God bless you and keep
you safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Peter + Mary Filakouridis



MARIA PAPPAS
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Athens welcomes EU tourism roadmap for summer



With the summer season around the corner, Greece was generally satisfied on Wednesday with the roadmap outlined by the European Commission regarding the resumption of tourism in the European Union.

"The Greek government welcomes the framework of guidelines and recommendations for tourism and transport presented by the European Commission today," government spokesman Stelios Petsas said in a statement, adding that the formation of a common European framework was not a given. Greece played a key role in shaping the proposals, as it was the first country to raise the issue of tourism in the European public debate.

The EC proposals are nonbinding, and most European governments are pursuing their own customized plans at different speeds.

In a statement, the Commission said that "domestic and intra-EU tourism will prevail in the short term," while non-essential travel to the bloc, like holidaymakers traveling from other countries, is set to remain disrupted for a longer period.

The proposal also said that airlines and airports must reorganize check-ins, drop-offs and luggage pickups to avoid crowds, and insists that passengers wear masks.

The Greek government was particularly pleased that its position that there is no need to leave the middle seat empty on planes was adopted. According to the Greek proposals, vacant seats between passengers was initially a deterrent for the companies and therefore for the entire tourist product.

At the same time, the Commission's position that the lifting of travel restrictions to countries will initially apply to those with fewer coronavirus cases is something that favors Greece.

However, Athens' proposal for tests to be conducted on travelers within a period of 72 hours before boarding the plane was not included in the Commission's recommendations. The basic logic is that one can test negative and then contract the virus, in which case the 72-hour test

In any case, Greece's comprehensive plan for tourism will be made public next week and is expected to heed the Commission's guidelines, even though each country maintains a degree of autonomy.

AHI chief asks Pompeo to lift arms ban on Cyprus



American Hellenic Institute (AHI) President Nick Larigakis has written to US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo requesting him to utilize the authority delegated to him last week by President Donald Trump under two recently enacted laws to waive the limitations placed on the transfer of arms to the Republic of Cyprus.

The AHI chief also prompts Pompeo to remove the Mediterranean country from the list of countries to which arms sales are banned under strict US export rules, known as International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR).

"The Republic of Cyprus is a valued strategic partner of the United States that promotes regional stability and US security interests," Larigakis said in the letter dated April 22.

"AHI calls for Secretary Pompeo to act immediately to remove the Republic of Cyprus from the ITAR list," he said.



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NEWS FROM GREECE

Greece presses appeals for rescue fund at EU summit



Greece fully supports the urgent establishment of a recovery fund, in addition to the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), which will focus primarily on grants to European Union member-states rather than loans, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis stressed during Thursday's EU leaders summit to discuss the bloc's response to the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

The video conference took place as Greece announced an extension of the restrictions imposed to stem the spread of the coronavirus by a week until May 4, amid recent outbreaks at a migrant facility and a private clinic.

Addressing the summit, which again confirmed the divisions between the North and South over the way forward, Mitsotakis said he agreed with the view that the recovery fund should be "huge" and that it should be financed with some kind of common long-term debt instrument. The fund, he said, should focus primarily on subsidies to member-states rather than loans. "We must not allow further increase in the debt-to-GDP ratio," he warned.

A strategy that does not burden the public debt of any country would serve the interest of all states, and would not be just an act of solidarity, he said. Europe must not once again do "too little, too late," Mitsotakis said and called for swift joint action for "tourism in the South."

Meanwhile despite recent concern about several outbreaks of the coronavirus in recent days, Health Ministry spokesman Sotiris Tsiodras said that, overall, Greece's containment efforts are holding, while noting however that "things can easily slip."

An Athens prosecutor on Thursday launched an investigation into whether criminal charges should be brought against the management of a private clinic in Peristeri, western Athens, after at least 29 people – 18 patients and 11 employees – tested positive for Covid-19.

"This virus is very easily transmitted and especially in health facilities," Tsiodras said. He announced 55 new cases, bringing the total to 2,463 and four new deaths, pushing the death toll to 125.

There was also concern Thursday about the Attica Police Headquarters (GADA), as 15 officers from GADA and a police station in Oropos, eastern Attica, were quarantined after it emerged that they had come into contact with an asylum seeker who tested positive for the coronavirus.

Gov't mulling plan to ensure only healthy tourists arrive

Tourists can enter Greece only if they have undergone a test for Covid-19 and tested negative, according to a proposal the government is reportedly examining under its mantra "we are a safe country

and we only accept someone who is definitely not sick."

With Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis aiming for the tourist season to open formally on July 1, senior government officials are looking to ensure that all measures are in place to ensure there is no coronavirus relapse.

More specifically, the plan stipulates that the temperature of tourists will be taken upon their arrival and they must carry a certificate confirming they are healthy.

In the event that during the holidays they show symptoms or fall ill, the plan is to move them to quarantined structures and hotels contracted with the health system to exclusively host coronavirus patients.

Greece expects, as Mitsotakis has stated, a unified European stance on the issue of tourism. If this is not possible, then there is a plan for bilateral cooperation with various countries such as Israel, Germany, Russia, but also nations in the Balkans which have the advantage that their citizens can come to Greece by road.

The European Commission's plan, which will provide guidelines on how hotels, aircraft transport as well as trains and ships will operate, is expected to be made public on Wednesday.

The government's roadmap for tourism is expected to be unveiled in the first fortnight of June.

On Europe Day, President says region needs 'real, not just rhetorical' solidarity



In a message marking Europe Day and the 70th anniversary since the Schuman Declaration, which ultimately led to the founding of the European Union, Greek President Katerina Sakellariopoulou on Saturday emphasized the need for "real and not just rhetorical" solidarity among EU member-states, in the face of the pandemic and the economic crisis that it brings.

"A common response to the pandemic, and the distribution of financial burdens in dealing with it, is necessary to protect the integrity and unity of the European Union and the eurozone," she said in a statement.

"In a world that is ever darker, Europe despite all its flaws, mistakes and failings, remains the shining house on the hill," she said.

Moody's puts off rating update on Greece

International ratings agency Moody's on Friday postponed the scheduled publication of a report on Greece's economy, effectively maintaining a wait-and-see stance, leaving the country's "B1" rating and

"stable" outlook unchanged from a report issued on April 17.

It had estimated at the time that Greece's economy would shrink by



5 percent this year and rebound by 4 percent in 2021. It had also noted that although the Greek national debt remains very high, the country stands to benefit from its favorable maturity profile and the large cash buffer it has maintained.

The next update on the Greek economy by Moody's is scheduled for November 6.

Moody's decision not to update its rating means that despite the exceptional circumstances Greece has avoided a downgrade that could harm its status in global markets and can look forward to the upgrades that started in 2019 continuing once the pandemic has subsided.

New and improved Omonia Square unveiled



Dozens of people cautiously gathered at downtown Omonia on Thursday night for the unveiling of its new fountain by Athens Mayor Kostas Bakoyannis, who launched a revamp of the cheerless square shortly after taking over at the municipal authority last year.

Coming as Greece starts to lift lockdown restrictions imposed in March to contain the spread of the coronavirus, the unveiling of the new square was welcomed by residents of the capital, who stopped their cars and motorcycles to watch the fountain being switched on.

Primis Player Placeholder

In a speech at the unveiling, Bakoyannis hailed the fountain's innovative and ecologically friendly design, saying that it uses a fraction of the water used by conventional fountains and is also energy efficient.

Apart from improving the appearance of one of the more rundown parts of central Athens, the new square will also be "an oasis of cool," added, saying that it will help lower the temperature in its vicinity and filter pollution from the air.

Green light for tourism investments

Two tourism investment projects adding up to 110 million euros have just got that bit closer to implementation after the issue of two necessary decisions.

The presidential decree signed by President Katerina Sakel-

laropoulou and Deputy Environment Minister Dimitris Economou approved the town planning study for a plot of 131,600 square meters at Kanistro in Halkidiki. The •50 million project that Mare Village will implement will include developments of a residential nature as well as others related to tourism and recreation (conference centers, stores, tourism accommodation etc). The village to be created, which will be able to host 410 people, will supplement the Miraggio Thermal Spa resort of 640 beds and the nearby 80-slot Med Sea Health marina.

The other project concerns a strategic tourism investment by AGC Equity Partners at Ano Mera on Mykonos. "The Mykonos Project," worth •60 million, received a positive opinion from a section of the Council of State regarding the plan for the development of 95 private luxury properties on a 60,320 sq.m. plot just above Karapetis beach. The complex will be developed as a five-star hotel unit, complete with sports and spa facilities, a functions hall and stores.

From 2004 to 2020

It is nice – and unfortunately rare – to see so much praise for Greece in the international media as we are seeing right now over the country's response to the coronavirus crisis.

The most recent such plaudits came from Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman, who mentioned Greece as an example of a country that has successfully dealt with this new threat.

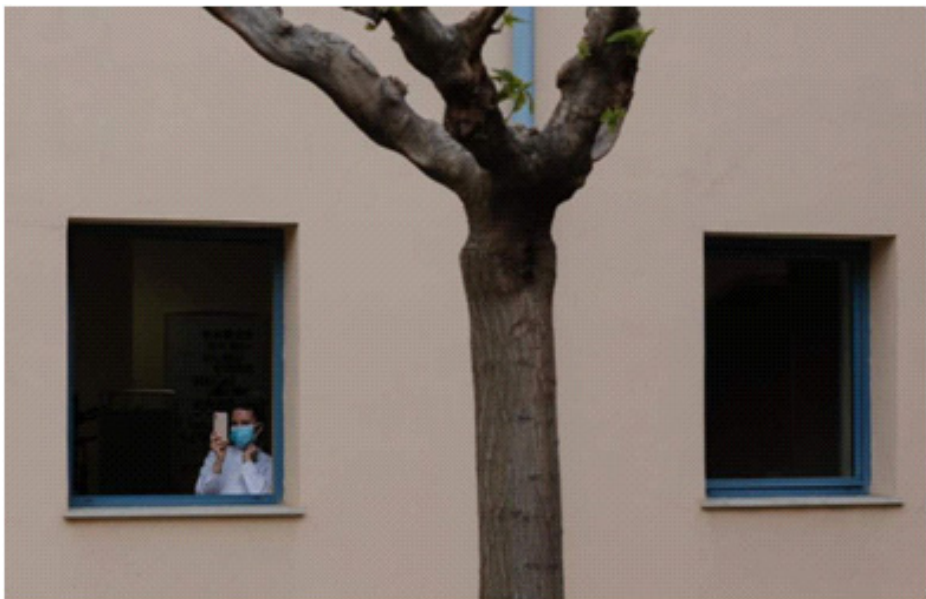
These positive comments – which come after a decade of what has been admitted to be overly harsh criticism leveled against Greece – bring to mind the periods before and after the 2004 Athens Olympic Games: the barrage of negative reports in the runup to the Games and the paeans after the event, where the "proud Greeks" were praised for putting on an amazing Games, despite ominous predictions that they would be a shambles.

There have been other moments since when Greece enjoyed international recognition for its efforts, such as in 2014, when the economy started emerging from a deep recession. I remember being at the International Monetary Fund's Spring Meetings and hearing congratulations from colleagues and Fund officials on the country's performance.

There was a similar upbeat mood in 2018 over the Prespes name deal with North Macedonia, when the international community hailed Greece as being part of the solution instead of part of yet another problem. The country has also stood out at times for its response to the migration crisis, drawing praise even from Pope Francis for the humanity it displayed. On the domestic level, however, these three instances became the subject of political confrontation, with one side slamming the conservative government of Antonis Samaras for its "tough austerity" and the other accusing the SYRIZA-led administration of "opening" Greece's borders and selling out to Skopje.

MARIA KATSOUNAKI

Changing society, changing politics



If all goes well, the Greek government should be able to start lifting restrictions on commercial activity and public movement aimed at containing the spread of the coronavirus next month. This will allow us to slowly come out of isolation and to get back fundamental liberties like the freedom of movement – on the condition that our actions don’t put lives at risk.

What kind of people, though, will we be when we re-emerge? How different will “coronavirus man” be to the man we left behind after closing ourselves up in our homes, homes that over the weeks have been the setting of sundry transformations? The DiaNEOsis think-tank is expected on Monday to publish the results of a new nationwide survey titled “How Greeks Live During the Pandemic.” The announcement of that report is what inspired the thoughts that follow.

The pandemic resulted in us cultivating certain common traits and habits. We learned how to protect ourselves, how to sanitize, how to maintain safe distances and how to live by the rules. We learned how to trust the state a lot more and feel proud of the praise we’ve received from the international community for our response to the crisis so far. We found ways to cut red tape by demonstrating a surprising acumen for digital tools and electronic governance.

When we come to assess the post-coronavirus period, we will need to weigh our gains against our losses. We will need to strengthen the convergence of disparate political leanings that seems to be transpiring in the face of a common fear of death. Criticism and confrontation, though necessary components of democracy, need to be mindful of the fact that we are in a state of war. In the face of this new global challenge, political differences appear to be waning, but the political system is still responsible for curbing polarization and ensuring that the focus of our national priorities is not lost. And we do not mean the kooks in every party who feed on spreading nonsense on social media.

The day after augers not just social shifts, but political ones too. Strong leaders with quick reflexes, with the ability to own up to their mistakes and weaknesses, with real concern for citizens, and who are able to take their cue from science and the experts so that the unpredictable becomes predictable, are what will earn the trust and support of the citizens.

The new “coronavirus man” is not just being shaped in society, but also in the halls of politics.

Europe is alone

The signs are becoming painfully clearer by the day. When one hears the man who holds the office of what used to be the leader of the Western world suggesting during his daily briefing that people inject themselves with disinfectant as a way of treating the novel coronavirus – “Is there a way we can do something like that by injection inside or almost a cleaning?” – one understands how important it is to have a solid European response to the pandemic.



Europe is alone. Without allies, without backup. It does not have the luxury to delay its response.

Coronavirus: White House task force members self-isolate



Image caption Dr Anthony Fauci has become one of the public faces of the fight against the virus in the US

Three members of the White House coronavirus task force are self-isolating for two weeks after possible exposure to the illness.

Dr Anthony Fauci, who has become the public face of the fight against the virus in the US, is one of those who will go into quarantine.

His agency, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said he was at “relatively low risk” due to the degree of his exposure.

Dr Fauci has tested negative. The 79-year-old will work from home for the time being and will be regularly tested, the institute said.

Global coronavirus cases rise above four million Vice President Mike Pence’s press secretary Katie Miller, the wife of Trump aide Stephen Miller, tested positive for the virus on Friday.

Her diagnosis came after a valet for US President Donald Trump was also confirmed to have the illness.

Who is self-isolating?



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) director Dr Robert Redfield and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) commissioner Stephen Hahn are also self-isolating.

In a statement, the CDC said Dr Redfield, 68, had no symptoms and was not feeling unwell, but would also be teleworking for two weeks after “low risk exposure” to someone at the White House. It is unclear who this person is.

And an FDA spokesman told Reuters news agency on Friday that 60-year-old Stephen Hahn was also self-isolating. He has also tested negative, the spokesman said.

Image caption Dr Robert Redfield and Stephen Hahn are also both self-isolating for two weeks

The three men were due to address a Senate committee on Tuesday. Before the news about Dr Fauci became public, committee chairman Senator Lamar Alexander said Dr Redfield and Dr Hahn would be allowed to testify by videolink.

What’s the situation in the US? According to Johns Hopkins University data, the US has 1.3 million confirmed cases and has recorded 78,794 deaths - by far the highest total in the world.

Many states brought in lockdown measures in March to try to contain the outbreak. But now some have lifted restrictions to allow people to return to work, a move health officials fear could further spread the virus.

Former US President Barack Obama has sharply criticised his successor’s response to the crisis. During a private phone call to former staffers, Mr Obama called the response “an absolute chaotic disaster”.

Last week Mr Trump said he would refocus the White House task force on kickstarting the US economy, a day after suggesting he would disband it.

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Coronavirus: What did China do about early outbreak?

The US and other countries have raised questions about whether China was fully transparent when the virus first emerged there. So what do we know about what happened in China, and what did it say and do about the outbreak? **Here's our timeline:**

1 December - The first onset of symptoms are observed, according to the Lancet medical journal.

However, it's believed the virus first appeared some time in November

27 December - Chinese authorities are told about a Sars-like disease by a doctor in a provincial hospital in Hubei province.

30 December - The health commission in Wuhan notifies local hospitals of a "pneumonia of unclear cause", and asks them to report any related information of suspicious cases in the past week.

Ai Fen, a leading doctor at Wuhan Central hospital, receives medical results from a patient with a suspected coronavirus.

Dr Ai takes a photo of the results and sends it to another doctor in the area. It circulates among the medical community in Wuhan.

Another doctor at Wuhan Central hospital, Dr Li Wenliang, sends a message to fellow doctors in a chat group warning them about the outbreak and advising they wear protective clothing to avoid infection. Dr Li is later summoned to the Public Security Bureau and accused of "making false comments" that had "severely disturbed the social order".

Reports spread on Chinese social media Weibo of a "mysterious pneumonia", raising fears of a deadly virus.

31 December - Chinese officials confirm they are investigating 27 cases of viral pneumonia and dispatch a team of health experts to the region.

Authorities say seven are in a critical condition yet no human-to-human transmission has been identified.

What's behind Trump's new strategy on China? Trump says virus worse 'attack' than Pearl HarborThe authorities alert the World Health Organization (WHO).

1 January - A hospital in Wuhan posts on the Chinese social media platform WeChat that they are "fighting a mysterious pneumonia".

Dr Ai Fen says she is reprimanded by a hospital disciplinary committee for "spreading rumours".

The Wuhan Public Security Bureau detains eight people for spreading rumours about the virus, reporting it on a Chinese news programme, Xinwen Lianbo, a show watched by millions.

The WHO puts itself on an emergency footing to deal with a potential outbreak. Chinese authorities shut down Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, the location of a number of cases and a potential source of the virus

3 January - Various allegations gain traction on Chinese social media, such as local health authorities silencing hospital staff from speaking out about the virus.

(We are unable to independently verify these posts and many were removed by Chinese authorities which heavily censor the internet.)

7 January - Chinese top leaders, including President Xi Jinping, discuss the outbreak at a meeting of the standing committee of the politburo, indicating they knew about the virus from an early date.

8 January - A second team of experts is sent to investigate the outbreak.

9 January - China makes public the genome of the coronavirus, proving its link to Sars and Mers viruses. Scientists are now able to develop tests for the virus.

11-17 January - The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) conducts its important annual political meetings for Hubei province.

13 January - The first case outside China is confirmed. The WHO says a traveller from Wuhan was identified by officials in Thailand on 8 January and taken to hospital the same day.

14 January - The WHO posts on Twitter that "preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission."

15 January - A patient returns to the US from Wuhan and becomes the first known US case of Covid-19.

20 January - A group of health experts at China's National Health Commission confirm human-to-human transmission of the virus, as cases are identified elsewhere in the country.

The first case in South Korea is announced.

20 - 21 January - The WHO sends a delegation to conduct field research in Wuhan. They say evidence suggests human-to-human transmission is taking place but more analysis is needed.

23 January - Wuhan (and nearby cities) are put under lockdown.

23-25 January - Construction workers in China start building two new hospitals from scratch.

24 January - The Chinese government bans the trade of wildlife throughout the country.

24-30 January - China celebrates the Lunar New Year holiday, when millions of people travel across the country.

25 January - Chinese officials request all travellers leaving the country to declare their health status.

28 January - Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, director general of the WHO, meets President Xi to discuss the outbreak, highlighting it as the institution's top priority.

30 January - The WHO declares Covid-19 a Public Health Emergency of Global Concern - this follows 82 confirmed cases outside China.

The healthiest countries to live in

We talk to doctors and residents in top-ranked nations to understand how they're managing the virus, and what continued challenges lie ahead for residents.

The fight at the frontlines of Covid-19 is being waged in clinics and hospitals around the world. But the success of that fight has, in large part, depended on the effectiveness of the healthcare systems in each country. So far, there's been a noticeable correlation between a country's ability to contain the virus and previous rankings of its healthcare system to provide positive health outcomes.

Top 10 healthy countries, according to the 2019 The Legatum Prosperity Index

1. Singapore 2. Japan 3. Switzerland 4. South Korea 5. Norway 6. Hong Kong 7. Iceland 8. Denmark 9. The Netherlands 10. Austria

Japan's health-conscious culture means that many people are already used to wearing



masks. Ranked second in the index's health pillar, Japan has been praised globally for its early successful management of Covid-19, though a recent infection spike has put the country back on alert, with the prime minister issuing a state of emergency across much of the country on 7 April. Despite that, the country has not yet enforced a lockdown, and this is in large part due to the ability of the country's medical system to manage the virus in its early stages. Many Japanese already wear a face mask, especially in winter and spring, and it is one of the reasons that we don't have a big outbreak yet. Hokkaido was the first place in Japan to declare a state of emergency, and is now re-imposing restrictions (Credit: Credit: Perry Svensson/Getty Images).

South Korea

Coming in at fourth place in Legatum's health pillar, South Korea was particularly prepared to handle the Covid-19 outbreak after the experience of containing Middle-East respiratory syndrome (Mers) in 2015. Healthcare providers and hospitals were already equipped and trained to act in such a crisis. The country has been able to test more than 450,000 people, just under 1% of its population of 51 million, and the daily new caseload has been hovering at just 47 to 53 infections in recent days.

The nature of Korea's healthcare system also contributed to the early diagnosis and treatment of Covid-19 across its population, where every citizen is covered by the National Health Insurance Service (NHIS). "Due to relatively low medical cost thanks to universal public insurance coverage coupled with government-driven price setting, in addition to a fee-for-service model, imaging and lab tests are widely performed in South Korea's healthcare system," said Seoul-based Dr Brandon B Suh, also the CEO of Lunit, a company working to give AI tools to healthcare providers. "With the Covid-19 outbreak, many [people] were diagnosed early and proper management was applied in a timely manner."

The government and businesses have also moved quickly moved to implement effective health measures. "The government stabilised the supply of masks by implementing a new measure in the purchase of the mask, matching each day with the last digit of the birth year," said Seoul office worker Yongbok Lee. Private insurance is also popular here as well, with 77% of citizens enrolled to cover costs that the NHIS does not cover, according to Insurance Business Asia magazine.

Israel

When it came to monitoring and reacting to the emergence of Covid-19 in Wuhan, few countries moved more swiftly than Israel, ranked 11th in the health index. By the end of January 2020, the Minister of Health had already signed the People's Health Ordinance Decree to expand the Ministry's powers to deal with the potential outbreak.

Accurate testing was also established early on in Israel. "A molecular diagnostic test (RT-PCR) to detect coronavirus in respiratory samples was developed very early by the Central Virology Laboratory, and was expanded to numerous laboratories across the country," said Dr Khitam Muhsen, professor of epidemiology and preventive medicine at Tel Aviv University and one of the consultants to the Ministry of Health in Israel regarding the Covid-19 crisis. "Israel is among the leading countries in the number of coronavirus tests per million population." The publicly based healthcare system also allows for a more integrated and centrally controlled response. The country also has unique challenges in its diverse population. The ultra-orthodox community, for example, does not consume traditional media and experienced a larger outbreak than the rest of the country.

Germany

With an overall lower Covid-19 mortality rate than many of its European neighbours, Germany – ranked 12th in health in the index – has been hailed as an international success story, but experts there caution that the country isn't yet out of the woods. There are a lot more beds available, a lot more ICUs and more doctors.

Residents are resigned to the fact that things won't be back to normal in the near future but are trying to stay hopeful. "The hardest thing for me is to keep my mum from leaving the house," said Ingrid Gruhs, resident of Murnau am Staffelsee on the edge of the Bavarian Alps, "so, this is why I made a mask for her and went shopping with her today for the first time after three weeks; it was so important for her to do the shopping herself." "As the number of new infections is decreasing, I believe that is the right move now to think about how to ease the measures. The country's healthcare system is well-positioned when it comes to mounting an effective country-wide response.

Australia

Coming in at 18th in the health pillar in the index, Australia has currently managed to keep the growth rate of cases to less than 5% –Australia's "blended" healthcare system, a mixture of universal coverage through Medicare and a much-used private system, has helped prepare the country for any worst-case scenarios. Australia has also seen a low incidence of local transmission, and the government introduced rapid contact tracing and mandatory quarantine for those who travelled overseas or had contact with an infected individual.

After the shutdowns are eased, residents are awaiting a return to the simple pleasures. "I look forward to a simple cup of coffee in the sunshine at my favourite cafe with my best friends having a laugh," said Sydney-based Jennifer De Luca, who writes at Luxury Adventure Travel. "Something that we used to do weekly and an activity that I completely took for granted."