



Vatopedi Monastery experienced the spirit of hospitality that prevails in the monastery and embraces all the pilgrims.

Fr Ephrem has become near and dear to many in the Russian Orthodox Church after the month he spent in Russia with a great shrine – the Belt of the Most Holy Mother of God venerated by millions of Russian believers. They are surprised how it happened that after returning from his trip to Russia the abbot of the largest and, one may say, exemplary monastery on Mt. Athos, was arrested in Greece, an Orthodox country, as it celebrates the Nativity of Christ. Their surprise is understandable as are the sentiments of many Greek bishops, clergymen, and laymen who believe that the ruling on Archimandrite Ephrem is a hostile attack against the Athonite monks and the entire Orthodox Church.

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