



Embassy of Egypt
WASHINGTON, D.C.

St. Catherine's Monastery: Egypt's Religious Heritage

History of St. Catherine's

St. Catherine's Monastery stands as one of Christianity's most sacred and historically significant sites, representing an unbroken 1,500-year tradition of monastic life and spiritual devotion. Built by Byzantine Emperor Justinian I at the foot of Mount Sinai at the biblical site of the Burning Bush, it is the world's oldest continuously inhabited Christian monastery and a UNESCO World Heritage Site sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.



Egypt is fully committed to preserving the unique and sacred religious status of Saint Catherine's Monastery and protecting it.

- PRESIDENT EL-SISI

Egypt Preserves and Protects the Sacred Status of St. Catherine's

On May 28, 2025, the Ismailia Administrative Appeal Court issued a significant ruling that protected and preserved the sacred, religious, and legal status of St. Catherine's Monastery and its surrounding lands. The landmark ruling affirmed the Egyptian government's commitment that followers of Saint Catherine's Monastery will be able to use the monastery and surrounding religious heritage sites for religious purposes.

The court ruling conferred an official legal status on the Monastery under Egyptian law for the first time since its founding, and acknowledged its religious and historic character, guaranteeing unfettered continuation of the Monastery's religious practices without hindrance.

The plots of land referenced in the ruling lie far from the Monastery's grounds and pertain to areas without evidence of monastic possession, which fall within a nationally protected reserve.

► *The court ruling did not infringe upon St. Catherine's sacred and religious status.*

Resolving Concerns Through Dialogue

Taking into consideration the Monastery's affiliation with the Greek Orthodox Church, Egypt is closely communicating with Greece to reach a mutual agreement.

These negotiations will culminate in a legally binding agreement with the Monastery's legal representatives. It will address all outstanding issues and legal claims, and will clearly reflect that **all religious functions and rituals in the Monastery will continue without hindrance**. It will also provide for the continuation of the Monastery's agricultural activities and operation of infrastructure necessary for the monks' livelihoods, consistent with relevant Egyptian regulations, while guaranteeing the safety and security of the Monastery and its monks.