

# THE GREEK PRIME MINISTER VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the afternoon of the 13<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, His Excellency the Greek Prime Minister, Mr Alexis Tsipras, visited the Patriarchate. Mr Tsipras was accompanied by political associates of his, amongst whom Foreign Minister Mr Kotzias; Infrastructure, Transport and Networks Minister, Mr Spirtzis; Minister of State, Mr Pappas; Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister and Government Spokesperson, Ms Gerovasili; and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Amanatidis. Present at the meeting were the Ambassador of Greece to Israel, Mr Lampridis, Mr Gennimatas, the Greek Consul-General to Jerusalem, Mr Zacharoudiakis, and Mr Koinis.

The Greek Prime Minister and his associates were cordially welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, Hagiotaphite Fathers and members of the Greek Parish of Jerusalem.

After addressing Mr Tsipras, the Patriarch awarded him the Cross of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher in recognition of his moral support to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The Prime Minister extended thanks for this honour and congratulated the Patriarch for promoting dialogue as a means of resolving problems in the Middle East. Mr Tsipras went on to express joy for being in Jerusalem, a sacred Biblical city, in spite of recent incidents of violence. He added that the Greek Ministry of Education had recently organized a Conference that has as participants 129 states, including the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, aiming to bring out the multi-religious and multicultural tradition of the Middle East.

“We believe that the Patriarchate’s contribution to the

prevalence of peace in Jerusalem and the Middle East is of great importance. Monotheistic religions focus on the human being and for this we must promote love to humans as the link between them”, said Mr Tsipras, adding that “We pledge to support the Patriarchate of Jerusalem with every means at the disposal of the Greek Government”.

At the meeting, the Patriarch introduced Mr Antonia Moropoulou, professor at the Metsovion Polytechnic, as an authority in the conservation of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulcher. Mr Moropolou visited the Patriarchate on the occasion of the Prime Minister’s visit.

On the conclusion of the meeting, Mr Tsipras and his associates, accompanied by Patriarch Theophilos, diplomats and members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Greek Parish, walked from the Christian Street to the Church of the Resurrection, where Ms Moropoulou presented plans for the conservation works.

From there, the Greek Prime Minister left for Greece, having completed his visit to Israel and the Palestinian State.

**From the Secretariat-General**

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