

# HIS BEATITUDE INVITED BY THE NTUA & ACT4GREECE (Crowdfunding Platform)

On Monday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of January/1<sup>st</sup> of February 2016, H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, accompanied by the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, and the Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Athens, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Damianos, on the initiative and care of distinguished professor Antonia Moropoulou, visited the Zografou Campus.

There, the Patriarch was warmly welcomed by the Rector, Mr Golias, the Deputy Rector, Mr Papantonis, the Dean, Mr Boudouvis, the professors having worked with Ms Moropoulou on the Diagnostic Study on the Condition of the Holy Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, Mr Korres, Georgopoulous, Spyrakos, as well as other professors and researchers of the National Technical University of Athens.

In the context of this meeting, His Beatitude explained those honouring Him with their presence the problems pointed out by the study of Ms Moropoulou as regards the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, erected by the Rum Orthodox in 1818, and the need to deal with them by means of compatible material interventions of the highest technical quality, and through conservation, reinforcement and restoration, after the completion of the Diagnostic Study by NTUA specialists. The Holy Sepulchre, said the Patriarch, is the very heart of the Holy Shrines, being the site where our Lord Jesus Christ was buried and from where He resurrected. According to the inscription on the Aedicula, **“Dedicated to the Christ of the Rum Orthodox, 1810”**, its conservation must remain in the hands of the Patriarchate in constitutional collaboration with the Franciscans and the Armenians.

His Beatitude Theophilos went on to appeal for assistance of the NTUA at the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Resurrection where, because of the Lord's Crucifixion and Resurrection, the eyes of local and international religious and political factors remain turned to this day.

The Honourable Rector and the professors listened carefully to the Patriarch's suggestions and pledged to respond in the context of "University diplomacy", with every means at the disposal of the NTUA in terms of scientific personnel, research and study, so that the Holy Sepulchre remain a point of religious and cultural reference amongst the Orthodox and all Christians in the world.

Following this fruitful and hopeful visit, the Patriarch attended the presentation of the "Act4Greece Programme, Crowdfunding Platform" at the Melas Mansion, on the invitation of the Chair of the Board of the National Bank, Ms Louca Katselli, and the Chief Executive, Mr Leonidas Frangiadakis.

The Greek Prime Minister, Mr Alexis Tsipras, Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece, Ministers, Members of the Parliament, the Mayor of Athens, Deans, Rectors and other high-ranking state, scientific and social operators also attended the event.

The aim of the event was the presentation of the project titled "Act4Greece, Crowdfunding Platform" that has as strategic partners the National Bank of Greece, the Onassis Foundation, the Latsis Foundation, the Bodosakis Foundation etc.

The representatives of the partners explained that the project was initiated on the conviction that collective collaboration allows the just and transparent humanitarian utilization of significant resources towards helping the most destitute social groups amongst the Greek people.

This vision has borne food rations across several schools in

Attica, assistance to the inhabitants of remote islands, scholarships for students in need and care for the ill. The programme aims at the creation of a Digital Archive of the 1821 Greek Revolution, care for the environment, support of unaccompanied children of refugees etc.

The “Doctors without Borders” and the UNESCO are included in the partners of this noble and ambitious humanitarian project.

The Greek Prime Minister honoured the presentation with his presence and, in the presence of Ms Moropoulou, assured the Patriarch of his unwavering personal interest in the conservation and restoration of the Holy Sepulchre.

Addressing the public, Mr Tsipras underlined that the crisis in Greece is not only financial but also social, humanitarian and moral and that it can only be cured through the collaboration of several social forces with the aim of helping those weak and impoverished. Mr Tsipras also said the Greeks of the diaspora, the Church and the Greek society must work together in order for the banks to regain the role they are supposed to have for the consolidation of the banking system. He closed his speech by congratulating all the strategic partners who have contributed to the creation of the programme and made an appeal for collaboration and support of this collective project of social solidarity.

Having met with the Minister of Culture, Mr Aristeidis Baltas, the Chairman of the Bank of Attica, Mr Gavrilis, and ship owner Mr Vernikis, Patriarch Theophilos thanked Ms Katseli for the invitation and left with the wish that contributors to “Act4Greece” will be able to support the restoration project of the Holy Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre.

**From the Secretariat-General**