

H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM ADDRESSES “RESTORATION, CONSERVATION OF RELIGIOUS MONUMENTS AND SITES OF VENERATION” EVENT

On the afternoon of Wednesday, the 17th/31st of August 2016, an event entitled “Restoration, Conservation of Religious Monuments and Sites of Veneration” was hosted by Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra at the Exarchate of the Holy Sepulchre in Nicosia, organized by Professor A. Moropoulou, project co-ordinator for the restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre.

The aim of the event was to promote the significance of restoring religious monuments, not only for the monuments as such, but also for the enhancement of environmental management and protection of cultural heritage in the region of the SE Mediterranean and beyond.

In attendance at the event were approximately one hundred guests. Addresses were delivered by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem; H.B. Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus – the address read by Assistant Bishop Porphyrios of Neapolis, Director of the Office of the Church of Cyprus in Brussels, in the presence of Assistant Bishop Gregorios of Mesaoria; the Minister of Communications and Works, Mr M. Demetriades; the Minister of Education and Culture, Mr C. Kadis, and others.

In His address, Patriarch Theophilos said that *“Religious Architecture expresses in the best way the profound relation between Religion, as the heart of human existence and humanity’s expectations, but also of the daily life of*

contemporary people". "No one can isolate religion from life", said the Patriarch, "neither can they ignore that its role in contemporary societies is to promote conscience so that it can respond to ongoing requirements for the achievement of peace, in the words of the Apostle Paul: "Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone". [Romans 12, 17-18].

"The initiative of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem", said Patriarch Theophilos, "with the agreed opinion of the other two Christian Communities of the Holy Sepulchre – the Franciscans and the Armenians – for the implementation of the study conducted by the National Technical University of Athens on the conservation and restoration of the Holy Aedicula, underlines the role of the Church in the protection and promotion of the religious heritage of the peoples of the SE Mediterranean, not least the Christian heritage. It also underlines the fundamental contribution of Greek know-how and innovation in this direction".

"Just like you establish Unions and Chambers of Engineers, so are Churches the establishments of Engineers of the spirit", remarked Patriarch Theophilos.

Professor A. Moropoulou took the podium to talk of *"The promotion and protection of religious monuments and sites of veneration as lever of development in the SE Mediterranean".*

During his stay in Cyprus, Patriarch Theophilos visited the Holy Stavropegic Monastery of Machairas, where he was welcomed by the hegumen, Bishop Epiphanius of Ledra. In his address, Bishop Epiphanius referred to the sacred and miraculous icon of the All-holy Theotokos, one of the most ancient icons of Orthodoxy and one of the seventy painted by the Evangelist Luke. *"Every day it emits miracles and healings for all those coming to it in faith", the Bishop said. "And this Monastery, standing for more than eight centuries as part of the History*

of the Island of Cyprus, remains a spiritual fulcrum on the island of the saints”.

At noon of the same day, Patriarch Theophilos paid a formal visit to Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus, followed by lunch. During lunch, Archbishop Chrysostomos made a donation of 10.000 euros for the restoration works underway on the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre.

From the Secretariat-General

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