

THE PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the afternoon of Friday, the 17th/30th of September 2016, the Ukrainian President, Mr Petro Poroshenko, accompanied by his country's delegation to the funeral of former Israeli President, Shimon Peres, visited the Patriarchate.

His Excellency the Ukrainian President and his 25-member escort, including the Ukrainian Ambassador to Tel Aviv, Mr Hennadii Nadolenko, were welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of this visit, an interesting discussion took place on the recently observed feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, having as participants visiting Prelates of Orthodox Churches and several pilgrims, many of whom hailed from Ukraine. Reference was also made to Jerusalem as a site of spiritual repose for pilgrims and to the need for unity in the Church, particularly the Church of Ukraine.

Mr Poroshenko expressed his appreciation of His Beatitude's unifying stance and pointed out the importance of a future visit to Ukraine.

Also discussed was the recent meeting of the General Assembly of the Middle East Council of Churches in Amman, Jordan, hosted by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem; the Patriarch's recent visit to Montenegro to attend the opening of the Church of St John Vladimir and the unifying role of the Orthodox Church for all Orthodox nations.

As a token of remembrance, the Patriarch offered the President an icon of the restored Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, which Mr Poroshenko said will decorate his office. His Beatitude

also offered a gold pectoral cross and Jerusalemite eulogias for all the members of his escort.

Then, accompanied by Patriarch Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers, Mr Poroshenko walked to the Church of the Resurrection where he venerated before observing the restoration works underway on the Holy Aedicula.

The Ukrainian President was then welcomed by the Assistant Sacristan, Archimandrite Polycarpos, to the Office of the Church of the Resurrection, where he venerated the holy relics and the Cross, as blessing for his arduous and significant work in his country of origin.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/yQ3kq78qimg>

