

# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AT THE CEREMONY OF THE 70TH INCORPORATION ANNIVERSARY OF THE DODECANESE WITHIN GREECE**

In order to participate at the festivities on the 70th anniversary of the incorporation of the Dodecanese within Greece, and the presentation of the restoration project of the Holy Edicule, invited by the Mayor of Rhodes Mr. Fotios Chatzidiakos, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, arrived at Rhodes airport from Jerusalem by Aegean air, escorted by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Athens Archimandrite Damianos and Archdeacon Mark, at 10:00 a.m. on Monday 21st February/6th March 2017.

Therein, His Beatitude was received by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Rhodes, the Mayor of Rhodes Mr. Fotios Chatzidiakos and other official members of Rhodes.

At noon of the same day, His Beatitude attended the ceremony of proclaiming the President of the Greek Democracy Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos an Honorary Citizen of Rhodes. This honorary distinction and a copy of the keys of Rhodes were offered to the President of the Greek Democracy by the Mayor of Rhodes, followed by the latter's address, that the President is deservedly awarded, as he is the protector of the rights of Rhodes and all Dodecanese, and because as a lecturer and minister of the Legal Science, he had said that "The Legal Science is the corrective function of social injustice" and

that "Democracy is the constitution of measures and analogies".

Replying, Mr. President thanked Mr. Mayor for the honour appointed to him as an individual by the historic island of Rhodes. He also said that by the 1947 treaty between Greece and Italy, Greece was granted the full sovereignty of the island of Rhodes, all the Dodecanese and the neighbouring islets, and not only the rights of sovereignty, but also the obligation of the defence fortification of Rhodes, from both manifested and impending challenges; and this is for the sake of the protection of the island of Rhodes, the Dodecanese, Greece, and the whole of the European Continent where Greece belongs.

At noon of the same day, His Excellency Mr. Mayor offered a meal in honour of the President and all the guests, at the restaurant of the renovated building of AKTAION, a renovation that coincided with that of the three historic Mills of Rhodes for their proper function.

In the evening of the same day, there was the ceremony of the presentation of the ongoing restoration project of the Holy Sepulchre, at the presence of the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Rhodes, the Mayor and other guests, at the Venetian Fortress of the Grand Master. At the ceremony the Mayor addressed the guests, and then His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos gave the following address:

"And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed" (Mat. 27:59-60)

Your Excellency President of Greece, Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos,

Your Eminence Mayor of Rhodes Mr. Fotios Chatzidiakos,

Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Rhodes,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the Holy City of Jerusalem, we bring you the blessing of the new tomb, meaning the Most Holy and Life-giving Sepulchre of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The historic multi-cultural and multi-national island of Rhodes, which has been evangelized by the Apostle Paul and which celebrates today its 49<sup>th</sup> incorporation anniversary within the Greek Dominion since 1948, has been associated with the Holy Land and thus the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Therefore, today's ceremony of the presentation, regarding the completion, maintenance, preservation and restoration project of the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre by the National Technical University of Athens, under the scientific superintendence of Professor Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou, together with the actual presence and participation of our associates and spiritual leaders, the Franciscan Custodian Father Francesco Paton, His Beatitude the Armenian Patriarch Nourhan Manougian and the Commissioner of the Latin Patriarchate His Excellency Mr. Pierebattista Pizzaballa, is of particular importance.

And this is so, because firstly, the common Christian witness that "the one that ye (the myrrh bearing women) seek, Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here – in the new tomb- ; behold the place where they laid him" (Mark 16:6) is denounced.

And secondly, because it preaches to all nations the never setting and ever-lasting light of hope and the resurrection of the Son of Man, the Sun of Righteousness.

The significance to the contemporary man of this Pan-Christian, Universal and indeed holy tomb, which has been hewn out in the rock, is owed to the fact that it has accommodated within it not only Jesus the Nazarene but also the whole of the human nature which He received in the Incarnate God the Logos, Christ, the light of love, the light of the world, the light of reconciliation and peace.”

Addresses were also given by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Rhodes, the Custodian of the Holy Land Fr. Franscesco Paton, the Delegate of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem Hegoumen at the Church of the Resurrection Fr. Samuel, Commissioner Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem Fr. Pierre Battista Pizzaballa.

After the addresses, the Professor of the National Technical University Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou presented the complete restoration project of the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre with the following lecture:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/pys9xfthbck2v4s/07\\_2\\_Rhodes\\_March\\_2017\\_Integrated\\_V7\\_EN\\_F.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/pys9xfthbck2v4s/07_2_Rhodes_March_2017_Integrated_V7_EN_F.pdf?dl=0)

Mrs. Moropoulou’s presentation was followed by a musical event and then dinner at the Dinioras Restaurant, hosted by the Mayor of Rhodes.

### **From Secretariat-General**

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