

# PIECES OF AMIANT PLASTER FALL AT THE ETHIOPIANS' CHAPEL BY THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

On Friday afternoon, 9th/22nd September 2017, pieces of amiant plaster fell from the ceiling to the floor of the Ethiopians' chapel which is to the right of the Gate of the Church of the Resurrection. The fall was caused by the ongoing maintenance works at the roof of the Holy Monastery of Abraham, carried out by the Greek Orthodox Jerusalem Patriarchate. This chapel is a place of worship for the Ethiopians, as well as a passage from the court yard of the Church of the Resurrection to their monastery and that of the Copts, with whom they have been on a long term dispute, for which our Patriarchate has recently shown actual interest of finding a solution.

As soon as the information of the event was given, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited the place, escorted by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Geronda Sacristan Most Reverend Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis and the Templar Fathers, Elder Nikita, Archdeacon Mark and the Architect of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection Mr. Theodosios Mitropoulos, and inspected the damage, namely the crack on the ceiling of the chapel from which the pieces of the amiant plaster fell on the floor.

Consequently there was a meeting of His Beatitude with the already present Architect of the Jerusalem Mayoralty, the Head of the Police Department of the Old City of Jerusalem Mr. Haim Smoueli, and the representative of the Archaeological Services of Israel Mr. Amit at Geronda Sacristan's office.

The decisions taken on this meeting were the temporary cessation of the chapel's operation and every maintenance work at the Holy Monastery of Abraham which is above this chapel, in order to avoid any possible danger, and the undertaking of the necessary maintenance works for the unhindered and safe continuation of the ecclesiastical life and order, according to the Status Quo of Worship, by the harmonious co-operation of our Patriarchate with the Department of Christian Affairs of the Ministry of Religion of Israel, the Jerusalem Mayoralty and the Police Force of the Old City of Jerusalem, and not at all with the Archaeological Services of Israel, whose unauthorized presence and intervention He censured. Likewise, His Beatitude censured and precluded any co-operation with the unauthorized presence and intervention of the Archaeological Services of Israel in any other matters related to the Holy Sepulchre, underlining that the Church of the Resurrection is a Pan-Christian place of worship and not an archaeological site.

**From Secretariat-General**