

THE VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF GREECE AT THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

On Tuesday evening, June 3-16, 2020, His Excellency the Prime Minister of Greece Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, while being on Israel on a business trip, escorted by his wife Mrs. Mareva Mitsotaki, and their son, by a group of his associates among whom the Minister of Energy Mr. Kostas Chatzidakis, the Ambassador of Greece in Israel Mr. Sarris, the former Consul General in Jerusalem Mrs. Eleni Sourani and the current Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and Mrs. Tzima.

The Prime Minister was welcomed at the Gate of the Patriarchate by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos along with Hagiotaphite Fathers and guided him at the Holy Sepulchre, the Horrendous Golgotha and finally at the Office of the Church of the Resurrection, where He addressed him as follows;

“Your Excellency, Prime Minister of Greece Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis,

The Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and We personally rejoice especially on the presence of Your Excellency amongst us during this veneration at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where the Horrendous Golgotha and the All-holy Tomb of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ lie.

The deep bond between our nation and the Holy Sepulchre is proven by the inscription therein, which writes “those who resurrected the noble and royal Nation of the Rum Orthodox”.

Mr. Prime Minister, your visit at the State of Israel and in the Holy City of Jerusalem has a special meaning for the

Christians who live herein, and of course for those who live within the territory of the Palestinian Authority and in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

And we say this, because as it is known, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, also known as Rum Orthodox, is the guarantee on the one hand of the Christians' identity, and on the other, of the threatened Christian character of the Old City of Jerusalem.

In its spiritual and ecclesiastical mission, the Patriarchate continues tirelessly its pastoral care throughout the centuries, a care that is not restricted only to the preservation and safekeeping of the holy shrines, monuments, monasteries and Churches, but also to the field of education with especial emphasis in the operation of Schools and other social or charitable foundations.

The consequences of the universal crisis of the coronavirus plague are already visible and quite serious. However, the interest of the Greek government and of you personally, Mr. Prime Minister, in practice and in various ways, is doubtless and for granted, therefore we also hope in the consideration of our Patriarchate by you and your Government.

Expressing the warm thanks of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and Us personally, we wish success in your mission here, and a good outcome of your hard efforts for the prevailing of peace and the progress and the prosperity of the peoples of the Mediterranean and of the tested Middle East.

Please accept this commemorative medal, which was created on the restoration of the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre by the National Technical University of Athens in 2017."

Emotional, the Prime Minister thanked His Beatitude for His kind words and for the honour during his visit at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and added: "a visit in Jerusalem without visiting the Holy Sepulchre is without substance" and offered His Beatitude a silver platter in remembrance of his visit.

His Beatitude offered the Prime Minister a symbolic commemorative medal which was made on the restoration of the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre and symbolic souvenirs from Jerusalem for his companions.

Concluding, the Prime Minister thanked His Beatitude for His address, the presents, and asked His blessing for the success of the mission of the Government with the reassurance that the Greek Government will always be a supporter of the mission of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

From Secretariat-General