

SIGNING AGREEMENT ON THE INTEGRATION OF WORKINGS OF THE SACRED EDICULE AND THE ROTUNDA AROUND THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

On Monday afternoon, May 14/27, 2019, at the Franciscan Monastery, there was a meeting of H.H.B. the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, and Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos, with the Franciscans, the Custos Fr. Francesco Patton, Fr. Dobromiro, Fr. David, and with the Armenian Patriarch in Jerusalem Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, the Hegoumen of the Armenians at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Fr. Samuel and Fr. Gurion, for the signing of the agreement for the completion of the maintenance and restoration project of the Sacred Edicule and the Rotunda, after the maintenance and restoration works of the Sacred Edicule that were completed two years ago under the technical supervision of the Technical University of Athens.

His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos made the following interview regarding the signing of this agreement:

"Your Paternity,

Your Beatitude,

Dear Brothers,

It is a great blessing, for us to be here in this very special place, and it is a great blessing, because what we are about to sign is the confirmation of what is being mentioned in your

script, it is the confirmation of the initiative that was taken some years ago, for the restoration of the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre.

It is true that our common initiatives and joint venture and common action that we altogether work for the restoration of the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, that opened a new phase I would say, in our history, in our cooperation, in our co-existence, and above all, in our mission and as witness to the Holy City of Jerusalem and of course to the Holy Places, with the Crown of them, the Holy Sepulchre, which as you said, indeed has become the main destination not only for our own pilgrims the Christian pilgrims, but also the destination of all other visitors and non-Christian pilgrims as well.

Today is really a special day, not only for us and for our Communities, that we are in charge of the custody of the Holy Places, but it is important for the Holy City of Jerusalem because everybody is now realizing and acknowledges that if Jerusalem maintains her Christian character as well, it depends on us as well. Therefore our mission is very important, not only in religious terms but also in diplomatic terms and inevitably in political terms.

I would like very much from the bottom of my heart to express on behalf of our Brotherhood, and myself personally, our thanks and appreciation, and we hope and pray that this initiative, to not just restore the foundations and the pavement of the Holy Sepulchre, but that this would be the completion of the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre, that has started so many years ago. And I think that this will bring the Holy Sepulchre to a new era, to a new phase, because, so far, due the restoration works which are going on, there is no doubt that the Holy Sepulchre suffers from its holiness and sanctity and reverence. But by completing the restoration works, the Holy Sepulchre will recover its splendour.

And I must rest you assured that our technical team is ready

to join forces with your own technical team, as well as with the technical team of our Brothers the Armenians. And we are ready also in any possible way, to make our contribution, so that the works will go smoothly, as it happened with the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre.

Thank you very much indeed! Christos Anesti! Christ is risen!"

From Secretariat-General