

THE LAST DAY OF PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS' VISIT TO RHODES

On Thursday, the 15th/28th of July 2016, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, visited the Acropolis of Lindos in Rhodes. Toured on the site, the Patriarch admired the ancient Temple dated to the Classical Period, and the Byzantine Church, both restored from the ruins, as well as the entire citadel, surrounded by a wall dated to the Venetian period. From the top of the site, His Beatitude enjoyed the serene, wonderful view to the South and the small port where Paul, the Apostle of the Nations, had anchored.

The site abounded with numerous visitors, either on foot or riding donkeys. At the foothills of the Acropolis, His Beatitude was keen to observe handiwork made by the residents of the local settlement. At the settlement, accompanied by Metropolitan Kyrillos of Rhodes, Patriarch Theophilos visited the small underground chapel of St George "Chostos" and the beautiful Church of the Dormition of Theotokos, dated to the 17th c. The entire church is covered by wall-paintings. Adjacent to it is a museum of ecclesiastical items.

At noon of the same day, His Beatitude, accompanied by Metropolitan Kyrillos, left Rhodes for Athens by airplane. From Athens he boarded a flight of Aegean Airlines and arrived safely in Tel Aviv and from there to Jerusalem, praising God for His visit to Rhodes, which is expected to contribute to the promotion and success of the restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, already underway.

From the Secretariat-General

THE VISIT OF THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM TO RHODES

On Monday, the 12th/25th of July 2016, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, visited the island of Rhodes, where He will stay until Friday the 15th/29th of July.

The Patriarch is accompanied by the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hierodeacon Markos, and Professor Antonia Moropoulou of the NTUA, coordinator of the restoration works on the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre.

The aim of the visit is for the Patriarch to meet with stakeholders willing to contribute to the restoration project already underway.

Upon His arrival at the airport of Rhodes, His Beatitude was welcomed by Metropolitan Kyrillos of Rhodes, the Vice-Prefect, Mr F. Ioannou, and the Mayor, Mr F. Hatzidiakou. From there, they all drove to the Sentido Apollo Blue hotel, where the Patriarch will stay during His visit to Rhodes.

In the afternoon, His Beatitude met with Metropolitan Kyrillos and Mayor Hatzidiakos at the Bishopric Palace.

From the Secretariat-General

GREEK AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the morning of Sunday, the 4th/17th of July 2016, the Ambassador of Greece to Israel, Mr Spyridon Lamprides, accompanied by the Ambassador of Greece to Jerusalem, Mr G. Zacharoudiakis, visited the Patriarchate. The Ambassador was warmly welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

The visit took place on the occasion of Mr Lamprides' end of a three-and-a-half year tenure. At the meeting, the Ambassador thanked His Beatitude for their harmonious collaboration on matters of shared interest.

An interesting discussion then unfolded on the role of Greece and the Patriarchate in the current unstable political situation in the South-Eastern Mediterranean and on the position of Christians in the Middle East.

His Beatitude went on to bestow on Mr Lamprides the title of Supreme Taxiarch of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre for his contribution to the Patriarchate.

The Ambassador pledged to go on defending the rights of Greece and of the Patriarchate from his new position in Brussels.

The Patriarch also offered Mr Lamprides, as well as on Mr Zacharoudiakis, icons of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, now under restoration. Mr Lamprides offered a lithograph of the Aedicula by Roberts, dated to the late 19th c.

From the Secretariat-General

httpv://youtu.be/nqhQRsfCV_Q



THE LATIN PATRIARCH IN JERUSALEM VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the morning of Saturday, the 3rd/16th of July 2016, the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, Mr Fouad Twal, accompanied by two clerics, visited the Patriarchate on the occasion of his retirement after eight years in the position of Patriarch at the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem, first established in 1845.

His Beatitude the Latin Patriarch was warmly welcomed by Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of the visit, thanks were exchanged for the sound collaboration between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Latin Patriarch on matters pertaining to Christians in the Holy Land.

Patriarch Twal then inquired about the deliberations of the Great Synod of Orthodoxy, recently convened in Crete.

An interesting discussion also took place on the pastoral care for pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem and on the decent stay of Christians in the Holy Land.

Finally, Patriarch Theophilos offered the Latin Patriarch an icon of Theotokos Jerusalemite and wished Him that by her meditation He will peacefully carry on his work in his homeland of Madeva, Jordan.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/DuiQLt7UCgc>



RASSOPHORE CEREMONY FOR NOVICES AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, the 2nd/15th of July 2016, H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, blessed the monastic robes of Basileios Tsolakis, novice at the St Sion Patriarchal School, and of Constantinos Psychalopoulos, deacon at the Holy Sepulchre, stressing the importance of the robes for the representation of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in the Holy Land and their spiritual value for participation in the services and ceremonies of the Orthodox Church.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/laCyHdq9Ef8>



GRADUATION CEREMONY AT THE

PATRIARCHATE'S SCHOOLS IN JORDAN

On the evening of Monday, 28 June/11 July 2016, the Patriarchate's Schools in Jordan held their graduation ceremony.

The ceremony took place at the school's outdoor area of events, in the city of Fhes, a suburb of the Jordan capital of Amman.

His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, honoured the event with His presence. He was accompanied by Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Chairman of the Committee on the Patriarchate's Schools in Israel and Jordan, Archimandrite Ieronymos, the Patriarchate's Arabic-speaking liaison, f. Issa Mousleh, presbyters from Fhes and representatives of the Jordan Government. Parents and relatives of the graduands also attended the ceremony.

A total of 135 graduands were awarded graduation titles. They came from the "Patriarch Diodoros" School in Amman, the Madeva School, the Fhes School and the Zarka School.

The well-organized ceremony commenced with the Jordan National Anthem and addresses by f. Smerat, the new Principal of the Schools, Ms Amira Sanaa, and representatives of the graduates in Arabic, English and French.

After a performance of traditional dances and songs, His Beatitude's address was read in Arabic by f. Issa Mousleh. As a token of gratitude, teacher representatives conferred on the Patriarch an appreciation plaque. His Beatitude then awarded the graduation titles extending wishes for further academic and professional success.

From the Secretariat-General



A GROUP OF STUDENTS FROM THE NTUA VISITS THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

On Monday, the 28th of June/11th of July 2016, a twenty-member group of undergraduate and graduate students from the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), led by Professor A. Moropoulou, visited the Patriarchate. The visit took place in the context of the initiative for the restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, now underway.

The students were welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem. The Patriarch informed the students on the Patriarchate's work through the centuries across Jerusalem and all the Holy Sites in the Holy Land, centered around the Holy Sepulchre and the Aedicula erected upon it.

Professor Moropoulou, project coordinator, spoke about the technical aspects of the restoration, before making a detailed on-site presentation of the works underway. Receiving the Patriarch's blessing, Ms Moropoulou went on to guide students to the Aedicula for veneration and a technical update.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/GJN0IHni89U>



THE METROPOLITANS OF RETHYMNO AND AVLOPOTAMOS AND MESOGAIA VISIT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, the 27th of June/10th of July 2016, the Metropolitan of Rethymno and Avlopotamos of the Church of Crete, heading a group of seventy pilgrims, and Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia, of the Church of Greece, heading fifty pilgrims, visited the Patriarchate.

The Most Reverend Metropolitans and pious pilgrims were received by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Hagiotaphite Fathers in the Hall of the Throne.

In the context of this visit, His Beatitude spoke to pious pilgrims of the Great Synod of Orthodoxy, recently convened in Crete, which revealed the solicitude of all Orthodox Churches for the protection of their flocks from the dangers of globalisation and secularization of societies, and which has also revealed the Synodic way of life and administration of the Eastern Orthodox Church which, through the centuries, has preserved the Evangelic Apostolic truth intact.

Similarly, His Beatitude spoke of the relief, hope and peace the faithful find in their respective Churches, especially the Church of Jerusalem, the site where the Incarnate, Crucified and Resurrected Lord appeared on earth.

In their turn, the Most Reverend Metropolitans expressed their emotion for being able, by the grace of God, to return once again to the Holy Lands.

Specifically, Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia said that

their pastoral visit takes place in the framework of the “Galilee” Foundation of his Bishopric, a home for seriously ill cancer patients, named thus after the Lord’s words “Behold, now I will go before you to Galilee” and also based on the Evangelic reference on the Lord’s arrival to Galilee, “where He had cured the ailing”.

The Metropolitan of Mesogaia added that the purpose of their visit was to support the work of the Patriarchate and of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, namely the safekeeping of the Holy Sites. He wished that God help the Patriarch and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in this difficult work.

Metropolitan Evgenios of Rethymno pointed out that for us to reach Jerusalem in heaven, we must first set foot in Jerusalem on earth. He also thanked Patriarch Theophilos for the Patriarchate’s support during the recent Synod and referred to the very old links between the Cretans and the Church of Jerusalem, as the Acts of the Apostles contain a reference on Cretans for converting to Christianity on Pentecost day and attesting to the truth of Christ’s Crucifixion and Resurrection. Metropolitan Evgenios also spoke of the Apostle Titus, sent by Paul to Crete in order to appoint presbyters in towns. The Church of Crete takes pride in the fact that it is referred to in Paul’s Epistle to Titus and for having been founded by the Apostle Paul. Through the centuries, Cretan Hagiotaphites have done significant work for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

From the Secretariat-General



THE PRESIDENT OF NEW DEMOCRACY, MR KYRIAKOS MITSOTAKIS, AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On the morning of Saturday, the 26th of June/9th of July 2016, the President of New Democracy and Leader of the Opposition in Greece, whilst on a visit to the state of Israel and the Palestinian Autonomy, visited the Patriarchate.

Mr Mitsotakis was accompanied by his esteemed wife, associates of his, i.e. Mr Alexandris, former employee of the Greek Embassy to Israel, and the Greek Consul-General to Jerusalem, Mr Georgios Zacharoudiakis.

Mr Mitsotakis was courteously welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of the visit, a discussion took place initially on the Great Synod of the Orthodox Church, recently convened at the Orthodox Academy of Crete in Chania, Mr Mitsotaki's birthplace.

Similarly, the religious, cultural and peacemaking work of the Patriarchate was discussed at the meeting, especially in the context of the as yet unresolved problem between Israelis and Palestinians.

This unstable political situation has also produced consequences for the Holy Shrines, in which both political sides are willing to show strong interest, as recently demonstrated in the case of the restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre. Thoroughly informed of the restoration project by H.B. Theophilos, Mr Mitsotakis proposed to speak to economic operators willing to financially contribute to the

continuation of the project.

Extending thanks, the Patriarch said that Mr Mitsotakis' very visit is the strongest help and support of the Patriarchate's work and of distressed Christians in the Holy Land and the Middle East, and that it also attests to the fact that Greece, as heir to the Byzantine Empire, remains the cradle of Rum Orthodoxy in spite of the country's economic crisis. The Patriarch added that the fact that members of Rum Orthodoxy, namely pilgrims from the Orthodox countries of Greece, Romania, Russia, Bulgaria and other, visit the Holy Shrines, is indeed encouraging.

For the support provided by Mr Mitsotakis and his family to the Patriarchate, especially during the crisis that had plagued the Patriarchate a few years ago, His Beatitude bestowed on him the honorary distinction of the Great Cross of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

On his part, Mr Mitsotakis offered the Patriarch the silver emblem of an olive branch as a token of peace and conciliation.

His Beatitude offered Mr Mitsotakis an icon of Panagia Jerusalemite, a cross to his wife and Jerusalemite eulogias to the members of his entourage.

Mr Mitsotakis went on to visit the Church of the Resurrection, Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre, where he had the opportunity to observe the restoration works underway, performed by scientific personnel of the Interdisciplinary Group of the National Technical University of Athens, and the Architect of the Church of the Resurrection, Mr Theodosios Mitropoulos.

After venerating at the shrines, Mr Mitsotakis, was received by the Elder Sacristan, His Eminence Isidoros, Archbishop of Hierapolis, and deacons, where he was offered an icon of the Lord's Descent into Hades as a token of blessing.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/NtXlPKZpG08>



JOINT LITURGY BY THE GREAT SYNOD ON ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY

On the morning of Sunday, the 13th/26th of June 2016, All Saints' Day for the Orthodox Church, celebrated one day after the conclusion of the proceedings of the Great Synod of Orthodoxy at the Orthodox Academy of Crete, Liturgy was performed jointly by all the Heads of Orthodox Churches participating in the Synod. The service was officiated at St Paul's Church in Chania, of the Bishopric of Kydonia and Apokoronos, hosted by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Damaskinos.

The Joint Patriarchal Liturgy was performed with great order and magnificence as praise to God for the fruitful completion of the Synod's deliberations and as a testament of communion within the sacrament of divine Eucharist.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate's Choir sang on the right, and the Church Choir on the left.

The divine Liturgy was followed by lunch hosted by Metropolitan Damaskinos of Kydonia and Apokoronos at the Patriarchal and Stavropegic Monastery of the Life-giving Spring.

This completed the proceedings of the Holy and Great Synod

with doxology to God for having offered the Orthodox Church the gift of this experience of gathering together.

From the Secretariat-General

