

# **DELEGATION OF THE HELLENIC AIR FORCE UNDER MR BLIOUMIS VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE**

At noon on Sunday, October 11th / 24th, 2021, a Hellenic Air Force Delegation was led by its Vice-Admiral, George Blioumis, while in Israel for cooperation in the Aviation field, visited the Patriarchate.

The Chief and members of the delegation, Colonel Georgios Petrou, Defence Attaché, Commander Theodoros Tsiros, Squadron Nicolaos Papayannis, Lieutenant Commander, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Euphrosyni Liarokapi, Secretary of the Defence Attaché and Warrant Officer Ioannis Karvounis, Secretary of the Defence Attaché, accompanied by the Defence Attaché of the Embassy and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, were received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Geronda Secretary-General His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos and Archdeacon Mark.

In this meeting, His Beatitude expressed His joy and respect for the visit, especially during this time of the pandemic and it becomes encouraging for the mission of the Patriarchate and the Brotherhood, who are the guardians of the treasures of Orthodoxy and our Nation in the Holy Land. His Beatitude wished for the protection of the Holy Sepulchre in the mission of the Hellenic Air Force for the protection of our country.

Thanking for this appreciation and His Beatitude's wishes, Colonel Blioumis said this visit is the paying off debt to the Patriarchate by the Hellenic Air Force, because he considers the Patriarchate the trustee of the cultural principals of our nation and guardian of peace in the Holy Land, and explained that the Hellenic Air Force protects it, based on the

principles of training, experience and technology.

In remembrance of this visit, Mr Blioumis offered His Beatitude the emblem of the Hellenic Air Force, “αἰέν συγκρατεῖν”, expressing the attitude of the force as “deterrent, defensive, for peace security”, the four-star board of the leader and a calligraphic pen.

His Beatitude offered Admiral Blioumis an icon of the Theotokos of Gethsemane and of the renovated Sacred Edicule and a pectoral cross, and blessings from Jerusalem for the members of the Delegation.

Accompanied by Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos and Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Delegation visited the Holy Sepulchre for veneration and they were all welcomed by Geronda Sacristan, His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis. The Delegation and Mr Vlioras finally visited the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the God-receiving Cave, where they were welcomed by the Assistant Patriarchal Representative, Archimandrite Polykarpos.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE FIRST SYNAXIS OF THE  
ORTHODOX FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS  
IN ASHDOD ON THE  
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY**

# **APOSTLE AND DEACON PHILIP**

On Saturday 10/23 October 2021, by the blessing and guidance of His Holy Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, the first synaxis of the members of the Russian-speaking flock of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Ashdod was officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the commemoration of the Holy Apostle Philip the Deacon, who baptized here the eunuch as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 8: 5-12).

This was the first meeting of the faithful with His Eminence in which instructions were given for repeating these meetings until our Patriarchate provides a temporary place for the Church Services and eventually proceeds in the building of a Holy Church dedicated to Saint Philip, his daughter Holy Deaconess Ermioni and Holy Prophet Jonas.

The faithful expressed their gratitude to His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos for His love and care and the undivided interest in covering the liturgical needs in their area, along with their wish to visit His Beatitude and receive His blessing.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE GENERAL ABBOT OF THE  
FRANCISCANS VISITS THE**

# PATRIARCHATE

On Friday afternoon, 9/22 October 2021, the recently elected General Abbot of the Franciscans, Reverend Father Massimo Fusarelli Ofm, that is, the Abbot of the Order of the Franciscans all over the world visited the Patriarchate.

The Reverend Abbot was accompanied by the Custos of the Holy Land, Fr Francesco Patton, Fr Dobromiro, Fr Luke, Fr Sinesa and Fr Athanasios Makora, Fr Mark, Fr Faltas, as well as other Franciscans. They were received by His Beatitude, along with their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Geronda Secretary-General Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and other Hagiotaphite Fathers.

His Beatitude addressed all present as follows:

“Dear Father Massimo,

Dear Father Osauro,

Your Paternity, Father Francesco,

Beloved Members of our Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers,

As you make your pilgrimage to the Holy Land, we welcome you, dear Father Massimo, and your brothers, to our Patriarchate. Your pilgrimage to the Holy Land comes at a crucial time for the Christian communities of our region.

As we greet you today, we recall the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, that *where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them* (Matthew 18:20). We give thanks to our Lord, because here in the Holy Land we have built a full and harmonious co-operation of the Sacred Edicule. With this first phase successfully completed, we are continuing with the second phase of the work, encouraged and strengthened by our

relationship.

The restoration of the Sacred Edicule is a historic event of the utmost importance, precisely because it has been accomplished by the three Communities to whom the *diakonia* of the Holy Places has been entrusted by Divine Providence. But in this partnership, the relationship between our two Brotherhoods has grown, and now we anticipate the restoration of the Grotto of the Church of the Nativity.

However, our united front in restoring the Sacred Edicule has an even deeper significance than this. For we have also established an important partnership in facing the unprecedented challenges before the Christian communities due to the complicated political situation here. Our united front is all the more crucial because new difficulties are constantly arising.

In addition to our common task of maintaining the Christian character of the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, we have a shared interest and commitment in accommodating the many pilgrims who come from around the world. We also have a shared interest and commitment in sustaining the Holy Places as places of worship and keeping them accessible to pilgrims without distinction. And we have a shared interest and moral and pastoral commitment to do everything that we can to support and sustain the Christian population so that Christians remain in the Holy Land. This is of obvious consequence, for a Holy Land devoid of its Christian presence would lose its integrity.

We pray that in our cooperation, mutual respect, and deeper understanding, we are advancing the cause of the unity of the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, who prayed that His disciples *might be one, even as he and the Father are one* (John, 17:22).

We wish to express our appreciation to you, Father Massimo,

for all that you do to support Father Francesco and the work of the Custody in the Holy Land. MAY God bless you in your pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and MAY God bless you and your brethren as you begin your new ministry in service to the Order of the Friars Minor.

Thank you.”

Referring also to the very good cooperation of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood with the Order of the Franciscans in Jerusalem, His Beatitude stressed the recently renovated Sacred Edicule and the protection of the rights of the Shrines in the Holy Land.

Thanking for the welcoming reception, Reverend Fr Massimo Fusarelli Ofm expressed his satisfaction for the cooperation of the Franciscans with the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and wished for its continuation for a good Christian witness and protection of the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

**From Secretariat-General**

*Photos by: Heba Hrimat.*

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**PASTORAL MEETING OF H.H.B.  
THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM  
THEOPHILOS WITH THE RAMALLAH**

# DISTRICT PRIESTS

On Tuesday morning, 6/19 October 2021, the day of the commemoration of the Holy Glorious Apostle Thomas, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Holy Church of the Transfiguration of our Lord in Ramallah.

Co-celebrants and participants in prayer in this Liturgy were by the invitation and preparation of the Hegoumen of Ramallah Archimandrite Galaktion the Priests of the Ramallah District in the West Bank; Ramallah Priest Fr Iakovos, Jifna Priest Fr George Awad, Ein Arik Priest Fr Nickolaos, Taybe Priest Fr David, Zababde Priest Fr Athanasios, Hegoumen of Beit Jala and the Monastery of the Shepherds Archimandrite Ignatios, Beit Jala Priests Yuseph Hodali, Paul and Elias, Nazareth ministering Priest Simeon, Patriarchal Representative of Acre-Ptolemais Archimandrite Philotheos, Hegoumen of Haifa Archimandrite Artemios, Abelin Priest Fr Savvas, Hegoumen of Rafidia Archimandrite Leontios, Caretaker of Bourkin Monk Bissarion, Yaffo Priest Fr Constantin, Jifna former Priest Fr Andreas, Saint James Cathedral Priest George Baramki, Bethlehem Priests Spyridon, Issa Thaljie and George Jakaman.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos participated in the Liturgy, having arrived from Jerusalem with their Eminences, Geronda Secretary-General Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis and Archdeacon Mark.

His Beatitude addressed all present as follows:

“Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord” (Psalm 134:1), the psalmist sings.

Beloved Fathers and Brethren in Christ,

Let us bless our Holy Trinitarian God who deemed us, His

ministers, worthy, to gather in the beautiful city of Ramallah under the wings of our Holy Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, to show our unity in Christ on the one hand, "for we are members one of another in Christ" (Eph. 4:25); and on the other, to show our identity in Christ, "as it is fit in the Lord" (Col. 3:18).

And the unity refers to the mission appointed by the Church of the ordained spiritual shepherd, according to Paul's words: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).

While the identity refers to our unbreakable bond with the Name of Christ, Who, "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9), according to Paul.

It is noteworthy that our identity in Christ does not refute, but on the contrary strengthens the love of the country, the love of the place we were born, according to the example set by our Lord Jesus, Who "when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue" (Matt. 13:54, Luke 4:16). Nevertheless, "here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14).

Our clergy meeting, which takes place at the occupied by Israel territory of the Palestinian State, has special importance for our reverend Christian flock as well as for the reverend Priests who serve in the various towns; their liturgical, namely the Eucharistic ministry and pastoral care is more necessary than ever.

And we say this, because the Deacon, namely the Priest of the



Church is an abettor of our Chief Shepherd, Christ, and His "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God" (Col. 4:11), according to the Chief of the Apostles Paul, Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria, and by the confirmation of the Cappadocians, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom and other God-bearing Fathers.

These Great and God-bearing Fathers of the Church became imitators of Saint Paul according to his command: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (1 Cor. 4:15-16).

Indeed, they became imitators of Saint Paul as per his advice to Timothy: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness...That thou keep this commandment without spot...O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so-called" (1 Timothy 6:11-20).

Our Holy Church and especially our Venerable Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, like another Arc and caring mother, never ceased its care for our tested flock, and not only, through the unceasing prayers at the All-holy and Life-giving Sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the good works. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

Concluding this Fatherly and Patriarchal greeting in our Lord we wish for the good outcome and increase in Christ during the proceedings of our meeting, always bearing in our minds and hearts the words of Saint Chrysostom: "The Priesthood is held on earth, however, it has the order of heavenly things".

The Grace of our God and Saviour through the intercessions of the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and all the

Saints be we us all. Amen.”

His Beatitude and the clergy meeting were welcomed by the Mayor of Ramallah, Mr Farah Hadid.

**From Secretariat-General**









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# A DELEGATION FROM THE GREEK AIR FORCE VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday afternoon, 2/15 October 2021, a 24-member Delegation from the Greek Air Force, visited the Patriarchate, among who were the Colonel Mr George Petrou, the Lieutenant Commander Mr Theodoros Tsiros and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras. The delegation is in Israel for the “Blue Flag” Aviation exercise.

They were received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, Who spoke to them about the mission of Jerusalem Patriarchate and blessed them, wishing the success of their mission for the protection of our country.

Having received His Beatitude’s blessing, the Delegation visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for veneration.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF GEORGIA VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday morning, 25 September/ 8 October 2021, the Minister of Justice of Georgia, His Excellency Mr Rati Bregadze visited the Patriarchate, accompanied by the Ambassador of Georgia in Tel Aviv, Mr Lasha and members of the Embassy.

Mr Rati Bregadze was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, and other Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the meeting, there was mention of the long-term bonds of the Jerusalem Patriarchate with Georgia. The keeping of this relation to the present day helps the increased arrivals of Georgian pilgrims and the arrival of the Georgian pilgrims who live in Israel.

The Minister asked His Beatitude's blessing for the prosperity of the Georgian people and continued His visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where He was welcomed by Geronda Sacristan, His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis.

On this visit, the Minister offered His Beatitude an ivory souvenir from Georgia, while the latter offered him a silver painting of Jerusalem and icons of the Sacred Edicule and the Theotokos of Gethsemane to the members of the delegation.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GREECE VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Thursday 24 September/ 8 October 2021, the General Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece Mr Themistoklis Demoiris visited the Patriarchate, accompanied by staff of his office, the Ambassador of Greece to Tel Aviv Mr Kyriakos Loukakis, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and staff of the Embassy and the Consulate.

His Excellency Mr Themistoklis Demoiris was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers, Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, the Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Athens Archimandrite Raphael and Archdeacon Mark.

In this meeting, there was a conversation about the central role of the Patriarchate in vital issues of the Holy Sepulchre, about the need to solve the problem of the hotels of the Patriarchate at Jaffa Gate, guided by the law of the Patriarchate, about Greece's role as an advocate on this regard, about the historic event of the restoration of the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre and about the Patriarchate's role in the keeping of the religious, political and cultural Status Quo in Jerusalem, especially in the Old City.

For this visit, His Beatitude offered Mr Demoiris a copy of the icon of Jerusalem and various blessings to the members of the delegation.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# VISIT OF A CHAMPION OF ISRAEL AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday 11/24 September 2021, Mr Cyril Radetsky from Ashdod visited His Beatitude, accompanied by his parents and His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, the President of the Committee for the care of the Russian-speaking flock. Mr Cyril Radetsky has been a Body-building champion of Israel four times and has received the silver medal in the Pan-European games.

He stated that his visit to the Patriarchate represents a big group of Orthodox Christians, members of our flock in Ashdod and asked His Beatitude on their behalf to be favourable in their ardent desire for the founding of a parish in their town, which will also meet the needs of the neighbouring town of Ashkelon.

His Beatitude received him in Fatherly love and promised to materialize their wish so that they may celebrate the Divine Liturgy in their town. Moreover, His Beatitude blessed Mr Radetsky and wished him the continuation of his brilliant career in athletics. His Beatitude also congratulated him for his desire to simultaneously cultivate his soul within the Holy Sacraments of our Church.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **VISIT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGIST DR. DIETER VIEWEGER FROM GERMANY AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Thursday 3/16 September 2021, the Archaeologist Professor Dr Dieter Vieweger, Director General of the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology, accompanied by his wife, Mr Katja Soennecken, who is also an archaeologist, visited His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, to discuss the continuation of the excavations at the property of the Patriarchate on the hill of Sion.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE SYRIAC-CATHOLIC PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Monday morning, 22 June/5 July 2021, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Antioch of the Syriac-Catholic Church, Mar Ignatius Youssef III Younan and his entourage visited the Patriarchate.

This visit was a continuation of his visit in Israel from Lebanon to settle His Eminence Mar Yacoub Ephraim Semaan as the Representative-Exarch of the Syriac-Catholic Church in Jerusalem. In this enthronement ceremony, the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem was represented by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias.

While at the Patriarchate's Reception Hall, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Antioch of the Syriac-Catholic Church Mar Ignatius Youssef III Younan was received by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers. His Beatitude addressed the visitors and referred to their cooperation at the Middle East Church Council. His Beatitude's address follows below:

"Your Beatitude,

Your Excellency,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

It is a joy to welcome you, Your Beatitude, to the Holy City of Jerusalem, and especially for the blessed occasion of the enthronement of His Excellency Bishop Yacoub Ephraim Semaan as your Exarch in Jerusalem. We wish to express our formal congratulations to him as he assumes his responsibilities and joins us among the Heads of the Churches and Christian Communities of the Holy Land.

By the presence of your Exarch in Jerusalem, Your Beatitude, you affirm the spiritual significance of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is both the spiritual capital of Christianity and the spiritual capital of the whole world. And it is, therefore, the spiritual home of all people of goodwill. Here we live a truly ecumenical life. For we inhabit a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious landscape that has embraced many peoples for millennia. It is important that Jerusalem is the host of all our Christian traditions as part of this essential diversity of our experience in this region.

Your Beatitude is well known for your advocacy on behalf of Christians in our region, and you know well that our mission

here is one of peace, mutual respect and co-existence., and reconciliation. We are called to the martyrria of the love of God that is made known in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that you will have a pleasant stay among us while you are in the Holy City, and we pray also for your new Exarch. May the light of the Holy Tomb enlighten him as he leads his community in the path of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May God bless all the peoples of Lebanon, Syria, and our beloved Holy Land.

Thank you.”

During this visit, there was also mention of issues related to the Middle East Christians.

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos offered His Beatitude the Patriarch of the Syriac-Catholic Church of Antioch a silver painting depicting Jerusalem, and an icon of the Theotokos, while to His companions He offered blessings from Jerusalem. His Eminence Ignatius offered His Beatitude an icon of the Theotokos.

**From Secretariat-General**