

THE PRIME MINISTER OF GEORGIA VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday afternoon, 11th/24th July 2017, the Prime Minister of Georgia, His Excellency Mr. Giorgi Kvirikashvili, visited the Patriarchate, escorted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, the Ambassador of Georgia in Israel and the Ambassador of Israel in Georgia among other associates of his.

The Georgian Prime Minister and his escort were warmly received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos together with Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos and other Hagiotaphite Fathers.

During this visit, the Prime Minister thanked His Beatitude for the good relations that the Jerusalem Patriarchate holds with the Patriarchate of Georgia, for the reception of the Georgian pilgrims and because through his personal attitude He is a factor of political stability.

His Beatitude thanked Mr. Kvirikashvili and referred to the reconciliation and peace-making role of the Patriarchate in Jerusalem and the Holy Land both in the past and at present, especially after His visit at the United Nations Conference for the peace-building in the Middle East.

As a token of recognition and reinforcement of the Prime Minister in peace-keeping, His Beatitude honoured him with the award of the Grand Commander of the Order of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

Thanking His Beatitude, Mr. Kvirikashvili for this honorary distinction, which reflects upon the nation and the Church of Georgia, he also thanked Him for his visit at the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy Monastery of the Sacred Cross, and offered Him an icon of the Archangel, while His Beatitude

offered him an icon of the Sacred Edicule and the 2000-year medal of the history of the Patriarchate, as He also gave blessings from Jerusalem to the members of his escort.

From Secretariat-General

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THE CHIEF SECRETARY OF THE GREEK MINISTRY OF EDUCATION VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday 25th June/8th July 2017, the Chief Secretary of the Ministry of Education of Greece Mr. George Kalantzis visited the Patriarchate, escorted by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and his associate Mrs. Keramida, his son Photios-Xenophon and Mr. Victor Isaac Eliezer, Secretary of the Israeli Central Council in Greece.

Mr. Kalantzis was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers, the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos and others.

Within the agenda of the meeting there was an interesting conversation on the Patriarchal School of Priests as a nursery

of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, cultivating the souls of the future Hagiotaphite Fathers, for their pilgrimage and pastoral mission.

For the good operation of the School, the Patriarchate has recently appointed Mr. Tzanakos and his wife Mrs. Maltezopoulou with the mission of the choice of students and teachers.

His Beatitude thanked the Ministry of Education for its response to matters related to the operation of the School and Mr. Kalantzis in person for his vivid interest.

There was also a conversation on the completed restoration project of the Sacred Edicule, to which the Prime Minister of Greece Mr. Tsipras – whom His Beatitude visited only two days ago – has contributed significantly.

Mr. Kalantzis thanked His Beatitude for His interest and the conversation he had with Him and wished the continuation of their good co-operation for the promotion of our Nation in the Holy Land.

His Beatitude gave Mr. Kalantzis a hard pack copy of the History of the Church of Jerusalem by Chrysostom Papadopoulos and a copy of Kalfa Komnenos' cross, while Mr. Eliezer gave His Beatitude the emblem of the Hebrew Council in Greece.

From Secretariat-General

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HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AWARDS METROPOLITAN JOEL OF EDESSA

On Tuesday 21st June/4th July 2017, during the visit of a group of a hundred pilgrims at the Reception Hall, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos awarded the leader of this pilgrims' group Most Reverend Metropolitan Joel of Edessa with the medal of the Grand Commander of the Holy Sepulchre, in respect and recognition of his contribution to the Metropolis of his Hometown Edessa and Christ's Congregation there, through his word and writings.

Emotional, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joel thanked His Beatitude saying that he came in order to receive the blessing from the Holy Shrines and His Beatitude and this honourary distinction came as a surprise to him.

Having received His Beatitude's blessing they continued their pilgrimage to the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection.

From Secretariat-General

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HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AWARDS THE CONSUL MR. KOENIS

On Friday, 10th/23rd June 2017, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received the Consul Mr. Vasilios Koenis, who has served the Greek Consulate in Jerusalem for three years up to now. Mr. Koenis paid a farewell and respects visit to the Patriarchate.

On this meeting there was an interesting conversation on the pastoral and peace-making role of the Patriarchate, and on the excellent cooperation with the Consul General of Greece for the promotion of the Greek Expatriates' progress.

On the occasion of this visit, His Beatitude offered Mr. Koenis the honorary distinction of the Grand Commander of the Order of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, in recognition and reward of his cooperation with the Patriarchate and the defence of its rights, especially on the restoration project of the Sacred Edicule.

Emotional, Mr. Koenis thanked His Beatitude, saying that he considers his ministry in Jerusalem and the Patriarchate "revealing and educational" and he committed to continue supporting the rights of the Patriarchate from his new post in Greece at present, and from different posts later on.

From Secretariat-General

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THE VISIT OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS IN CAPPADOCIA

The Patriarchate website announces beforehand and informs its followers that our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos will visit Cappadocia from 16th to 20th (new calendar) of June 2017, as a guest of the All-Holy Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos. Details will be announced during the visit.

From Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AWARDS THE DEAN PRIEST NIKOLAI BALASOF

On Friday, 27th May/ 9th June 2017, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received at the Patriarchate Fr. Nikolai Balasof, Dean Priest of the Moscow

Patriarchate and associate of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril.

On this visit, the Dean Priest Nikolai Balasof offered His Beatitude a copy of the icon of the Theotokos kept in the Church where he serves.

On this occasion, His Beatitude awarded Fr. Nikolai Balasof with the medal of the Grand Commander of the Order of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, as a token of recognition of his cooperation with our Patriarchate and his vivid interest in solving its matters in Russia.

Emotional, the Dean Priest Fr. Nikolai thanked His Beatitude and committed to the continuation of the support of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril and his cooperation with our Patriarchate.

With these, His Beatitude gave His blessing to Fr. Nikolai for the continuation of his pilgrimage and his visit and celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord.

From Secretariat-General

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THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF GREECE VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday afternoon, 17th/30th May 2017, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Greece Mr. George Katrougalos visited the Patriarchate, escorted by his associates, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and by the Consul Mr. Vasilios Koenis, and the Romeo-Orthodox Mr. George Bassous of the Palestinian Police force.

The Deputy Foreign Minister and his escort were warmly received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers, the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis.

Within the agenda of the meeting there was an interesting conversation on the sensitive political situation faced by the city of Jerusalem and the significant role of the Church of the Resurrection in the solution of this political issue.

His Beatitude briefed the Minister on the problems of the Patriarchate, such as the water issue in the Hozeva Monastery, which was solved through many wise combinations and actions, the completed restoration project of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, the ongoing refurbishment of the roof in the Basilica of Bethlehem and the repair works of the Holy Cave by us the Orthodox and the Franciscans.

The Patriarchate acts in prudence and wisdom for the protection of the benefits of the Christians in the Holy Land as well as for the decrease of the political tension and the

creation of a climate of reconciliation, peace, love and unity in the region.

Consequently the Deputy Foreign Minister and his escort asked His Beatitude's prayers for the continuation of their visit at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

At the end of the visit there was an exchange of the appropriate for the circumstance gifts.

From Secretariat-General

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THE HOLY MONASTERY OF VATOPEDION VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday afternoon, 13th/26th May 2017, while being on a pilgrimage visit, a group of eighty monks of the Vatopedion Monastery of Mount Athos, under their Hegoumen Archimandrite Ephraim visited the Patriarchate, at the presence of the Most Reverend Metropolitans Athanasios of Limassol from the Church of Cyprus, and Ioustinos of New Krini and Kalamaria from the Church of Greece.

This exceptional and large group was warmly received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers, and were welcomed in the Holy Land, the sanctified by the Incarnate presence, and in Jerusalem, watered and sanctified by the redemptive blood of the crucified and risen from the dead and ascended in the heavens our Lord Jesus Christ.

For this reasons, the eyes of all the Christians and the whole world are focused on Jerusalem, which conveys a message of hope, consolation and joy, projected by the Life-giving Sepulchre of Christ, of which the Sacred Edicule was recently renovated by the help and sponsorship of the Holy Monastery of Vatopedion among others. All pilgrims visiting the Holy Land draw the water of Christ's teaching which was taught here.

The entity and identity of the Christians of the Holy Land and the Middle East are kept in the Church of Jerusalem. The Most Holy Shrines constitute the shield of protection of the Christians in various districts under the Patriarchate jurisdiction which reaches as far as the remote Qatar.

Emotional, the Hegoumen Arch. Ephraim thanked His Beatitude for His welcome and His Fatherly and Patriarchal words, and asked for His prayers in order to continue serving and working on his Athonite striving. He underlined the miracle of the continuation of the sanctifying mission of the Church of Jerusalem and offered His Beatitude a set of engolpia.

His Beatitude offered Geronda Ephraim a pectoral cross, an icon of the Sacred Edicule and a copy of the recently discovered cross made by Kalfa Komnenos of Mytilene. To the Priests of the Monastery, He offered ivory crosses and to the monks icons, and thanked the Holy Brotherhood of Vatopedion for their support and participation at the restoration project of the Sacred Edicule.

From Secretariat-General

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GREEK NAVY REPRESENTATIVES VISIT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday morning, 6th/19th May 2017, representatives of the Greek Navy, namely, Captain Mr.Papageorgiou and Major General Mr. Stamatiadis, visited the Patriarchate, escorted by the Military Attendant of the Greek Embassy in Tel Aviv Mr. Alexandros Broumas.

These Navy representatives were warmly received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

Within the agenda of the meeting the Navy representatives expressed their excitement for their visit to the Patriarchate, which they consider to be a delegate not only of Orthodoxy but also of our Nation in the Holy Land and the Middle East and which projects the values of the Gospel especially at a time when Globalization is being promoted.

To these, His Beatitude added that Globalization is nowadays projected as a new religion, which abolishes the national identity and the national and cultural traditions of the peoples. To questions asked by Mr.Stamatiadis and Mr. Pagageorgiou, if there is ground in the Patriarchate for the

cultivation of the interreligious dialogue, His Beatitude said that this dialogue here is the active application of the peaceful and religious-tolerant co-existence of the followers of the three monotheistic religions in the Holy Land.

The Greek Navy representatives thanked His Beatitude for His time and attitude and asked His blessing to continue their veneration in the Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General

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A 70-MEMBER GROUP OF ARAB-SPEAKING PEOPLE FROM KOUFR YASSIF TOWN VISIT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday morning, 6th/19th May 2017, during the Navy representatives' visit to His Beatitude, a 70-member group of the Greek Orthodox Arab-speaking Community of Koufr Yassif in north Israel – district of Acre, Ptolemais – visited Him, under their Foreman, Dean Priest Fr. Theodosios Mahoulis.

This group was warmly received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Fr. Theodosios spoke on behalf of them, saying that on the occasion of Easter, they feel great joy and honour to visit the Patriarchate and His

Beatitude as the Patriarch of Jerusalem and all Palestine, and their Patriarch and successor of St. James the Brother of God and 1st Hierarch of Jerusalem and they thank Him for all his pastoral care, manifested in the completion of the building of their Church and the expansion of the school in their Community.

Likewise also spoke the President of the Community, the President of the Community Board, the School Manager, the representative of the Women's Association of this town and other Presidents of Institutions in the town, expressing their thanksgiving and needs for the completion of their Church and the extension of the classes in their school.

His Beatitude expressed His happiness and thanksgiving for this visit and reassured them that the Patriarchate will make every effort to fulfil their petitions, and the relief of the Christians in their difficult living conditions in our region.

For these, the Greek Navy representatives and the 70-member group asked the Patriarch's blessing to visit the Lord's Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General

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