

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE 28TH OF OCTOBER 1940 AT THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL OF THE HOLY SION

On the evening of Friday, the 15th/28th of October 2016, the National Day of the 28th of October 1940 was celebrated at the events halls of the Holy Sion Patriarchal Hieratical School.

His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, honoured the ceremony with His presence. He was accompanied by the Chairman of the School Board, Elder Sacristan, Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, and the Acting Dragoman, Archimandrite Mathew; the Patriarchal Commissioner, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Joachim of Zambia and other Hagiotaphite Fathers; the Greek Consul General to Jerusalem, Mr Christos Sofianopoulos, and members of the Greek Consulate; NTUA Professor, Ms Antonia Moropolou and members of the Greek parish.

The ceremony was organized by the Principal, Mr Nikolaos Souliotis, who opened the event with an address. Mr Andreas Demetriou, on behalf of the teaching staff, delivered the panegyric speech for the day.

In addition to the speeches, the programme of the event included an essay titled "The contribution of the Church to the struggle for liberation" by student Constantinos Stamou; a message by Archbishop Damascene of Athens on the occasion of the anniversary, songs, poems and the National Anthem.

The overall content of the programme conveyed the message of the self-sacrifice and unanimity of the Greek people, the

bravery of our ancestors who fought during the period between 1940-1944 in order to support the “No” proclaimed by Metaxas, and rid the nation of the Italian and German occupation, allow it to live by the principles of its national and religious tradition, democracy and Orthodoxy, heal its wounds and create structures of life that touch on prosperity, fit for human life.

On the conclusion of the ceremony, Patriarch Theophilos and the Greek Consul praised teachers and students alike on paying tribute to the message of the day, a message of hope, resurrection and progress, made possible through our ancestors’ sacrifice and bravery.

From the Secretariat-General

http://youtu.be/v0_lf2LEKRg



HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM ADDRESSES THE MEETING OF ROMAN CATHOLICS AND EVANGELISTS AT THE “AUGUSTA VICTORIA”

On the evening of Friday, the 8th/21st of October 2016, one of the meetings of the joint visit of Roman Catholic and Evangelist church officials to the Holy Land took place on the site of the historical hospital of the Lutheran Church in

Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives, on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Lutheran Reformation.

Invited to attend the meeting were the leaders and representatives of Churches in the Holy Land. The invitations were sent by Propst Wolfgang Schmidt of the Lutheran Church in Jerusalem.

At the meeting, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, addressed attendants in English, see link: <http://www/jp-newsgate/en/2016/10/21/27030>

From the Secretariat-General

THE PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the afternoon of Friday, the 17th/30th of September 2016, the Ukrainian President, Mr Petro Poroshenko, accompanied by his country's delegation to the funeral of former Israeli President, Shimon Peres, visited the Patriarchate.

His Excellency the Ukrainian President and his 25-member escort, including the Ukrainian Ambassador to Tel Aviv, Mr Hennadii Nadolenko, were welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of this visit, an interesting discussion took place on the recently observed feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, having as participants visiting Prelates of

Orthodox Churches and several pilgrims, many of whom hailed from Ukraine. Reference was also made to Jerusalem as a site of spiritual repose for pilgrims and to the need for unity in the Church, particularly the Church of Ukraine.

Mr Poroshenko expressed his appreciation of His Beatitude's unifying stance and pointed out the importance of a future visit to Ukraine.

Also discussed was the recent meeting of the General Assembly of the Middle East Council of Churches in Amman, Jordan, hosted by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem; the Patriarch's recent visit to Montenegro to attend the opening of the Church of St John Vladimir and the unifying role of the Orthodox Church for all Orthodox nations.

As a token of remembrance, the Patriarch offered the President an icon of the restored Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, which Mr Poroshenko said will decorate his office. His Beatitude also offered a gold pectoral cross and Jerusalemite eulogias for all the members of his escort.

Then, accompanied by Patriarch Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers, Mr Poroshenko walked to the Church of the Resurrection where he venerated before observing the restoration works underway on the Holy Aedicula.

The Ukrainian President was then welcomed by the Assistant Sacristan, Archimandrite Polycarpos, to the Office of the Church of the Resurrection, where he venerated the holy relics and the Cross, as blessing for his arduous and significant work in his country of origin.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/yQ3kq78qimg>



MS LENA KARRER VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the morning of Wednesday, the 7th/20th of September 2016, Ms Lena Karrer visited the Patriarchate.

Ms Karrer is the daughter of the late Lukas Karrer, Mayor of the island of Zakynthos during World War II. Mayor Karrer, in collaboration with the ever-memorable Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Zakynthos, helped 275 members of the Jewish Community of Zakynthos flee to the countryside, giving the Nazis a list of merely two names – of himself and the Metropolitan – which led to the saving of the island's entire Jewish Community. In 1978, the "Yad Vashem" Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority honoured the late Mayor Lukas Karrer and Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Zakynthos with the "Righteous Among the Nations" title.

Ms Lena Karrer, accompanied by Ms Ruth Zakh, representative of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem. The Patriarch expressed His appreciation of the Mayor and the Metropolitan, whilst Ms Karrer extended her gratitude to the Greek State and Church for the rescue of the Jewish Community of Zakynthos through the heroism of these two distinguished men.

During the meeting, His Beatitude offered Ms Karrer a crucifix and icon of Theotokos Jerusalemite and of the Holy Sepulchre, and a medal commemorating 2000 years of Christianity. A commemorative medal was also offered to Ms Zakh.

From the Secretariat-General



DELIBERATIONS OF THE MECC 11TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 8.9.2016

On Thursday, the 26th of August/8th of September 2016, the 11th General Assembly of the MECC approved the appointment of new officials to serve on behalf of each Family.

The proposals of the Orthodox Family, approved and ratified by the General Assembly, are as follows:

His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch is appointed President of the Orthodox Families, with Bishop Constantinos of Chrysoupolis and Dr Michel Abs as members of the Executive Committee at the MECC.

The Patriarchate of Alexandria is represented by His Beatitude Theodore, Patriarch and Pope of Alexandria as President of the Delegation of the Patriarchate of Alexandria at the MECC, with Metropolitans Nikolaos of Ermoupolis and Narcissus of Accra as members of the Executive Committee at the MECC.

Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem is appointed President of the Delegation of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, with Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina as member. Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella and the Director of the Patriarchate's Office in Amman, Miss Wafa Goussous, are appointed members of the Executive Committee.

Archbishop Chrysostomos heads the Delegation of the Church of Cyprus, with Presbyter Ioannis Nicolaou as member and Michael Spyrou as Assistant General Secretary.

On the morning of the aforementioned day, the Moderator of the competent Committee read the message of the General Assembly, which was then commented upon, modified and approved. Along general lines, the message holds that the Middle East and specifically the Holy Land is the birthplace of Christianity and the site where the Church was founded to mark the beginning of its historical, salvaging course.

As the cradle of Christianity, it must be inhabited by Christians, aided by their respective States and protected by persecutions, still witnessed to this day. Residing their homelands, Christians can be useful to their countries, brave patriots, cultivating the dialogue for reconciliation and peace with their Muslim countrymen, serving as a bridge in the political dialogue between Israel and Palestine. Christians enjoy the special protection of the King of Jordan, the country that has undertaken to safeguard the religious status quo in Jerusalem – especially of the Church of Resurrection as a Christian site of veneration and Umar's Mosque as a Muslim one.

Thanks are extended to the King of Jordan, along with wishes to Muslims for the Eid-Il-Adha feast.

The Message calls for an end to the plight of financial refugees, and for the humanitarian treatment of refugees; likewise, Turkey is called upon to remove the negative results of its invasion to Cyprus.

The elected Presidents of the MECC Families are: Metropolitan Mar Theophilos George Saliba for the Pre-Chalcedonian Family; Patriarch John of Antioch for the Orthodox Family; Right Rev. Dr Habib Badr for the Evangelical Family; and Mar Raphael Luis Sako for the Latin Family. Dr Michel Jalakh was reelected

unanimously General Secretary.

Fr. Jalakh went on to thank the Assembly and asked for their prayers and support in the next four years, so that the MECC can fulfill its mission for peace, justice and protection of the Christian Communities in the Middle East.

The approved Message can be reached here: www.mecc.org and contains references on the genocides of the Armenians, the Chaldeans, Pontic Greeks and other peoples by Turkey in 1915, as well as on the abduction of Syrian Primates, with an appeal for their liberation. An appeal was also made for the resolution of the Cyprus problem and the unification of the island of Cyprus.

As a token of appreciation for their services, the four thus far Presidents of the MECC have been recognized as Honorary Presidents.

The General Assembly offered Patriarch Theophilos a fine icon of the Holy Cross. Smaller icons were offered to all members of the Assembly.

From the Secretariat-General

MR TERRENCE QUICK VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the afternoon of Friday the 13th/26th of August 2016, Mr Terrence Nicholas Quick, Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister of Greece, accompanied by his assistant, Mr Constantinos Meimaris, visited the Patriarchate to represent the Greek Government in the celebrations for the Dormition of Theotokos,

to take place on the 14th-15th/27th-28th of August 2016.

Mr Quick was welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of the meeting, His Beatitude informed Mr Quick on the present interreligious situation in Jerusalem, on the Patriarchate's balancing and pacifying contribution, and on works underway, with the Prime Minister's personal support, for the restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, as well as on donations made to this purpose.

Mr Quick extended thanks and expressed joy over his scheduled participation in the celebrations for the Dormition of Theotokos in Gethsemane.

From the Secretariat-General



GREEK AMBASSADOR TO JORDAN VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the morning of Friday, the 13th/26th of August 2016, the Ambassador of Greece to Jordan, Ms Louisa Marinakis, until recently serving at the Greek Consulate-General in Jerusalem, visited the Patriarchate on the occasion of her retirement from the aforementioned position.

The Honourable Ambassador was welcomed by Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of the meeting, an interesting discussion took place on the rule of law prevailing in Jordan under His Excellency King Abdullah II ibn Hussein, who protects the Christian majority of the country, especially the Rum Orthodox one, towards remaining in the Holy Land instead of emigrating to Western countries.

The Ambassador asked for the Patriarch's wishes for her new post and her scheduled participation in the feast of the Dormition of Theotokos.

From the Secretariat-General



THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF GREECE TO ISRAEL VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, the 10th/23rd of August 2016, the new Ambassador of Greece to Israel, Mr Constantinos Bikas, visited the Patriarchate on the occasion of assuming his new duties.

The Ambassador was welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of this inaugural visit, Mr Bikas expressed joy over starting his tenure from the Patriarchate, which he appreciates and respects as a very ancient Christian institution in the Holy Land that performs remarkable religious, cultural and pacifying work.

In His reply, the Patriarch informed the Ambassador on the

present-day political situation in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, with a political solution being as yet unattainable; He also referred to the Patriarchate's struggle, by means of religious weapons, to calm tempers and create a climate of political dialogue, aimed at a viable solution that, if possible, would satisfy the rights and demands of both political sides.

Finally, Ambassador Bikas thanked His Beatitude for bringing him up-to-date and expressed a strong desire to collaborate with the Patriarchate. Patriarch Theophilos wished the Ambassador a fruitful tenure to the benefit of the Church and the Greek nation.

From the Secretariat-General



TWO HUNDRED-MEMBER GROUP OF THE HELLENIC NAVY VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, the 7th/20th of August 2016, a group consisting of 200 members of the Hellenic Navy, headed by the Defence Attaché of the Greek Embassy in Israel, Mr V. Broumas, visited the Patriarchate.

The group was welcomed by Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

The Captain and crew of the Hellenic Navy delegation received His Beatitude's blessings and invited Him to visit their

frigate in Haifa, either in person or by proxy.

They went on to visit the Holy Sepulchre in order to receive the power of the Resurrected Christ for their patriotic service and to observe restoration works now underway on the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre.

From the Secretariat-General



HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM VISITS MOUNT ATHOS

On the morning of Saturday, the 24th of July/6th of August 2016, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, commenced His already announced visit to the Agion Oros.

The Patriarch was accompanied by the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Secretary of the Holy Synod, Archbishop Demetrios of Lydda, Archbishop Nektarios of Anthedon, the Exarch in Athens, Archimandrite Damianos, Hierodeacon Markos, and Mr Theodoros Yiangou, Professor in the Faculty of Theology at the Aristotle University of Salonika.

In the early hours of the aforementioned day, His Beatitude left from Salonika for Ouranopolis and from there, at 9:30 am, He sailed for the port of Daphne. Upon His arrival, He was welcomed by the representatives of the Xeropotamos and Simonos Petras Monasteries, fathers Paul and Ieronymos respectively.

From Daphne the Patriarch left for Karies, where He was welcomed by the four representatives of the Holy *Epistasia*, the Executive Committee of Mount Athos. At the entrance to the church of the Dormition of Theotokos, Patriarch Theophilos was welcomed by representatives of all twenty monasteries on Mount Athos.

There, His Beatitude put on a mantle and venerated the Gospel, as cantors of the Monasteries of Vatopedi and Simonos Petras sang the "Axion Esti".

After venerating the icon of Theotokos' Axion Esti, the Patriarch led Doxology.

The President of the Community of Mount Athos, representative of the Vatopedi Monastery, f. Barnabas, then addressed Patriarch Theophilos, and was followed by the Patriarch's reply speech.

In His address, the Patriarch spoke of the beneficial and salvaging work carried on by the Church of Jerusalem through the centuries. "With the help and protection of great emperors, e.g. St Constantine and his mother, St Helena, Theodosius the Great, Justinian and others, the Pan-Orthodox and Pan-Christian holy site, the fulcrum of our faith, the Church of the Resurrection and the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, was first built, followed by Monasteries, Cenobia and Lavrae". In these sites of veneration, Patriarch Theophilos said, the Church of Jerusalem attests to this day, among heterodox and followers of other religions, to the synergy of Christ's two natures, the divine and the human, in a single hypostasis, according to the Christological doctrine of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod in Chalcedon. In closing, His Beatitude asked for a renewal and strengthening of the spiritual ties between the Agion Oros and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, so that Fathers from Mount Athos may be informed of the Patriarchate's work and that Hagiotaphite Fathers can visit Mount Athos and learn of the cenobitic and ascetic way

of life.

After the exchange of gifts, His Beatitude was addressed by the hegumen of the Monastery of Stavronikitas, Hieromonk Nathaniel. In replying, the Patriarch spoke of the inextricable ties between the Mother of Churches and Mount Athos, expressed through the flow of history by monks of Jerusalem and Mount Athos, joined by their ascetic traditions. The ecumenical ascetic figures of the Holy Land, the Patriarch said, cultivated an infertile land with their virtues and stand to this day as role models for the Fathers of Mount Athos too. "The continuous immigration of monks between these two spiritual centres [...] and above all the unparalleled contribution of both these sanctified and spiritual sites towards the formulation of Orthodox worship [...] shortened distances and joined the spirits and hearts of Mount Athites and Jerusalemites", the Patriarch remarked.

From Karies, the Patriarch returned to Daphne and from there He sailed for the Holy Skete of St Anna. There, He was warmly welcomed by Hieromonk Ioannis, hegumen of the cell of the Dormition of Theotokos, and others.

In the evening, the Patriarch walked to the katholikon of St Anna Skete, where He was addressed by the hegumen of the Monastery of the Great Lavra, Hieromonk Prodromos.

The Patriarch went on to lead the night-long vigil for the feast of the Dormition of St Anna, having as co-officiants Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Demetrios of Lydda, Nektarios of Anthedon and a plethora of Hieromonks, Mount Athites and the Exarch in Athens, Archbishop Damianos. Monks and pilgrims, numbering approximately 500, attended the vigil.

The divine Liturgy was indeed a communion of heaven and earth, a descent of heaven to earth and rise of the earth to heaven; rise of the congregation to the kingdom of God, that was given to earth through the Incarnate, Crucified and Resurrected

Jesus Christ.

The divine Liturgy was followed by lunch, during which His Beatitude addressed the hegumen of the Great Lavra, commemorating the life of the barren St Anna who neither despaired nor stopped praying to God and was therefore rewarded with a great gift, the ever-Virgin Mary who would go on to bear the Incarnate Jesus Christ. Likewise, the Patriarch said, we pray to God to allow us to bear the Orthodox testimony in the Holy Land and “to complete the already launched project for the restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre for the glory of God and the praise of the blessed race of the Rum Orthodox”.

From the Secretariat-General

