

THE CYPRIOT PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSIONER VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the afternoon of Tuesday the 1st/14th of June 2016, the former Defence Minister of the Republic of Cyprus, now Presidential Commissioner for Humanitarian Issues, accompanied by his associate, Mr Alexandros Kais and the Ambassador of Cyprus to Tel Aviv, Ms Thessalia Shambou, as well as the Secretary of the Cypriot Embassy, Ms Louisa Varaklas, visited the Patriarchate.

The Minister and his entourage were warmly welcomed by His Beatitude Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers. In the context of the meeting, an interesting discussion took place on ways of collaboration between the Greek and Jewish Diaspora for the safeguarding of their identity – against the ongoing Turkish occupation for Greek-speaking Cypriots, and antisemitism for Jews in specific countries.

Reference was also made to the Ottoman Empire, especially in the Middle East, that has left its traces both in the Arabic world and on the status quo of the Holy Land. It was correctly pointed out that the precursor to the Ottoman Empire in the Holy Land was the covenant agreed by Umar Khattab and Patriarch Sophronios, the so-called *Achtiname*, which constitutes the framework of coexistence between Christians and Muslims since the 7th century. On the ground of this particular covenant are the relations between the Patriarchate and the three governments of the Holy Land, Israel, Palestine and Jordan maintained to this day, protecting the status quo of the Holy Shrines.

This interesting and constructive meeting was followed by exchange of gifts and Mr Photiou's departure for veneration at

the Holy Sepulchre.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/CYN0L32dZvU>



GEORGIAN ICON DONATED TO THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, the 29th of May/11th of June, a group of Georgian pilgrims visited the Patriarchate.

Among them was iconographer Teymouraz Jamarije and the donator, Teymouraz Kambolava, who offered the Patriarchate an icon of St Nina, St Nikolas and St George the Trophy-Bearer.

His Beatitude thanked them for the donation and reciprocated with an icon of Theotokos Jerusalemite, extending wishes for the grace of the Resurrected and Ascended Lord during their pilgrimage.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/f9QxMlM86Eo>



GREEK ALTERNATE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, the 28th of May/10th of June 2016, the Alternate Minister of Rural Development visited the Patriarchate. Mr Bolaris was accompanied by associates of his, the Ambassador of Greece to Tel Aviv, Mr Spyridon Lamprides, the Consul-General to Jerusalem, Mr G. Zacharoudiakis, and Consul V. Koinis.

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

An interesting discussion took place in the context of the visit, on the relations between the Patriarchate and Greece, heir of the Byzantine empire and supporter of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Mr Bolaris was also informed on the Patriarchate's pastoral work and the guardianship of the Holy Shrines; also on its peace-making activities and the restoration project, now underway, of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre on the basis of a study conducted by the National Technical University of Athens.

After the discussion and exchange of gifts, Mr Bolaris continued his visit to the Holy Sepulchre, where he witnessed the restoration works on the Aedicula.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/F2xC4zlVxgs>



METROPOLITANS OF THE CHURCH OF GREECE UPDATED ON THE RESTORATION OF THE AEDICULA OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

At noon of Tuesday the 18th/ 31st of May 2016, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, welcomed Metropolitans Pavlos of Servia and Kozani; Chrysostomos of Trikki and Stagi, and Chariton of Ellassona, of the Church of Greece. The Metropolitans were accompanied by a group of fifteen clerics.

To the Hierarchs and their entourage, His Beatitude spoke of the works in progress for the protection, conservation and restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre. He then went on to inspect the aforementioned works, in the presence of Mr Theodosios Mitropoulos, Architect of the Technical Office of the Holy Sepulchre, Hagiotaphite Fathers, the representative of the Greek Consulate-General, Mr Vasileios Koinis, and the representative of the Old City Police, Mr Johnny Kassabri. From there, the Patriarch proceeded to the Office of the Church of the Resurrection, where He was reverently welcomed by the Elder Sacristan, Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/gRuXwKfNMDE>



INSPECTOR AT CYPRUS ' EDUCATION MINISTRY VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

At noon of Friday the 14th/27th of May 2016, Mr Christos Hadjiathanasiou, Inspector of Primary Education of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Cyprus, visited the Patriarchate with Mr Fandi Abdelnour, member of the Patriarchate's School Board in Israel.

Mr Hadjiathanasiou was welcomed by Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem. The two of them discussed educational issues pertaining to the Patriarchate's schools, employing teachers appointed by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Cyprus. Also discussed were the harmonious relations between the Patriarchate and the Cyprus state, with special reference on the recently restored Exarchate of the Holy Sepulchre in Nicosia, by the support of His Beatitude Chrysostomos, Archbishop of Cyprus.

Mr Hadjiathanasiou offered the Patriarch a book authored by himself, and received the book on the History of Jerusalem by the ever-memorable Archbishop of Athens, Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, as well as an icon of Theotokos Jerusalemite.

From the Secretariat-General

http://youtu.be/k4xvVmX0r_Q



FOURTH DAY OF PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS' OFFICIAL VISIT TO HUNGARY

On Thursday, the 13th/26th of May 2016, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, visited the Greek Embassy in Budapest. During the visit, the Patriarch blessed the building and the Embassy personnel, making a supplication for health, peace, stability and prosperity.

At noon, Ambassador Giannakakis hosted the Patriarch and His Entourage, as well as Metropolitan Arsenios of Austria-Hungary, to lunch at a city restaurant.

In the evening, the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted dinner in honour of His Beatitude at a floating restaurant on the Danube.

At midnight of Thursday, Patriarch Theophilos, accompanied by Metropolitan Arsenios and a representative of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, boarded a plane of EL-AL Israel Airlines and landed safely at Ben-Gurion Airport, in the early hours of Friday the 14th/27th of May.

From the Secretariat-General



FIRST DAY OF PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS' VISIT TO HUNGARY

On Monday, the 10th/23rd of May 2016, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, launched His official visit to Hungary, upon invitation from the country's government.

The Patriarch is accompanied by the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, and Archdeacon Evlogios.

His Beatitude arrived to Budapest at 9:15 am of the aforementioned day, flying with El-Al Israel Airlines.

At the airport He was warmly welcomed by the Most Reverend Arsenios, Metropolitan of Austria-Hungary of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, being the top Advisor of Hungary's Cabinet Chief, Mr Zoltan Csallokozi; the Hungarian Ambassador to Ramallah, Mr Geza Mihailyi; the Greek Ambassador to Hungary, Mr Demetrios Yiannakakis; Consul Mr Loukas Tsokos, and other officials of the Hungarian Government, i.e. Mr Miklos Soltes, State Secretary for Civil and Church Affairs. At the airport, His Beatitude spoke of the importance of the Holy Shrines as a protective roof for Christians in the Holy Land and for Jerusalem's religious and social status quo.

From the airport, the Patriarch was driven to Novotel Hotel.

After lunch, He visited Protopresbyter Josef Kaloti of the Bishopric of Austria-Hungary, at the Centre for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Patients with Serious Diseases in Budapest. During the visit, an interesting discussion took place on the hospital's humanitarian work and the possibility of collaboration with the Patriarchate's Four Homes of Mercy, in Bethany.

The Patriarch went on to lead Doxology at the Ecumenical

Patriarchate's Chapel of St

Ierotheos and St Stephanos, first Christian king of Hungary. In attendance at the service were Metropolitan Arsenios, priests of the Bishopric, parishioners, Messrs. Yiannakakis, Tsokos, Mihailyi, the President of the Greek Community, Mr Georgios Koukoumtzis, and Counselor Marha Politidou.

In his address, Metropolitan Arsenios referred to the adversities facing the Greek Community in Budapest, and the Patriarch replied that the Church of the Holy Land, drenched with the blood of Christ, makes a supplication for overcoming such adversities by the example of Jesus Christ, the Resurrected from the Dead, who said "Do not fear, little flock" and taught patience. "Patience will save our souls and help us overcome difficulties", said the Patriarch.

In the evening, the Patriarch, His Entourage and members of the Hungarian Government and the Greek Embassy were hosted to lunch at Actor Hotel, courtesy of Mr G. Koukoumtzis and Ms M. Politidou.

The dinner marked the conclusion of the first day of the Patriarch's visit to Hungary.

From the Secretariat-General



GRADUATION AT THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL IN TAYBEH

On the evening of the 1st/14th of May 2016, the graduation

ceremony took place at the Patriarchal School in Taybeh, near Ramallah.

Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Patriarch Commissioner, represented the Patriarchate at the event. He was accompanied by the President of the Patriarchate's Schools in Israel, Archimandrite Ieronymos, and the Patriarchate's liaison with Arabic-speaking media, f. Issa Mousleh. The well-organized ceremony began with a prayer and the National Anthem of Palestine, and was followed by the entrance of 23 graduates.

The School's Principal went on to address guests, praising the Patriarchate's contribution to the establishment of the School – that includes a Nursery, Primary and High School and a Lyceum – which it goes on to support both financially and morally.

Representatives of the graduates then spoke in Arabic, English and Greek, extending thanks to the Patriarchate, the School and their parents.

The ceremony closed with the Patriarch's address, read by f. Issa Mousleh, and the award of graduation degrees by the Patriarchal Commissioner, the Schools' President and the School's Principal, alongside wishes for success and professional progress.

From the Secretariat-General

GRADUATION CEREMONY AT THE

PATRIARCHATE'S ST DEMETRIOS SCHOOL

On the afternoon of Wednesday, the 28th of April/11th of May 2016, a graduation ceremony was held for 19 students of St Demetrios School. The ceremony took place at the Notre Dame Hotel's Hall of Events, opposite the New Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem.

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem honoured the event with His presence. He was accompanied by the Chairman of the Patriarchate's Arabic-speaking Schools in Israel, Archimandrite Ieronymos; the Patriarchal Commissioner, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias; the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina; and Presbyter f. Issa Mousleh, the Patriarchate's liaison with Arabic-speaking media.

Also attending the ceremony were the representative of the Greek Consulate, Mr Vasileios Koinis, the Palestinian Ambassador to the Vatican, Mr Issa Kassisye, the priests and board members of St James Cathedral, and f. Farah-Charalambos Bantour, as well as eminent members of the Arabic-speaking Community and the Greek Parish in Jerusalem.

From the Secretariat-General

GRADUATION CEREMONY AT THE SCHOOL OF BEIT SAHOUR (VILLAGE OF THE SHEPHERDS)

On the afternoon of Monday, the 26th of April/9th of May 2016, the Graduation Ceremony of the Patriarchate's Lyceum in the Village of the Shepherds took place at the School's hall of events.

The ceremony was honoured by the presence of H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem. The Patriarch was accompanied by Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Archdeacon Evlogios and other Hagiotaphite Fathers, i.e. the Chairman of the Patriarchate's Schools in Israel, Archimandrite Ieronymos, the Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem, Archbishop Theophylaktos of Jordan, the representative of the Greek Consulate in Jerusalem, Mr Vasileios Koinis, and the hegumen at Beit Sahour Monastery, Archimandrite Ignatios.

The ceremony began with the parade of the Graduates, hymns, and the excerpt on the Resurrection from the Gospel according to John.

The School Principal, Mr George Saante, then addressed guests, praising the Patriarchate's contribution to the School, that began with its establishment in 1990 and continues to this day. The School, which incorporates the teaching of the Greek language, includes a Nursery, a Primary School, a High School and a Lyceum. Mr Saante made special reference to the contribution of teachers and parents in providing graduates with the necessary skills to carry on their studies or their professional careers.

Three graduates then addressed guests in Greek, English and Arabic.

Traditional Palestinian dances and songs were performed during the event.

On the conclusion of the ceremony, f. Issa Mousleh, the Patriarchate's liaison with Arabic-speaking media, and teacher at the School, read the Patriarch's address.

From the Secretariat-General

