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Patriarch Theophilos III Receives the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece at the Patriarchate



The Patriarchate of Jerusalem had the honor of welcoming His Excellency Mr. George Gerapetritis, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, on Monday, February 3, in a visit that reaffirmed the profound historical and spiritual ties between the Orthodox Church in the Holy Land and the Greek nation. Accompanied by a distinguished delegation, including Her Excellency Mrs. Maria Solomou, Ambassador of Greece in Israel, and His Excellency Mr. Dimitrios Angelosopoulos, Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, the Minister's presence at the Patriarchate was a testament to the enduring fraternal bond that brings together the Mother Church and Greece in the sacred mission of safeguarding Christianity's presence in the Holy Land.

His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem, together with the esteemed Fathers of the Patriarchate, extended a warm and reverent reception to the Minister and his delegation. In His address, His Beatitude eloquently expounded upon the Patriarchate's sacred responsibility as the Custodian of the Holy Places, an apostolic mission that transcends the burdens of time and the vicissitudes of history. He emphasized that, much like the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His flock (John 10:11), the Church remains steadfast in its pastoral and humanitarian service amidst the formidable challenges of regional instability.

In recognition of His Excellency’s unwavering support for the Patriarchate’s mission and Greece’s enduring commitment to the protection of the Christian presence in the Holy Land, His Beatitude conferred upon him the esteemed honor of “Grand Commander, Taxiarchis of the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher”. This sacred distinction reflects the Patriarchate’s profound appreciation for Greece’s vital role in preserving the sanctity and integrity of the Holy Sites.

Expressing his deep gratitude, the Minister affirmed Greece’s historical and moral duty in standing alongside the Mother Church, pledging continued support in all matters concerning its sacred mission. In a spirit of humility and fraternity, he sought the counsel of His Beatitude on how best to serve the needs of the Patriarchate. His Beatitude, in response, underscored the paramount importance of preserving the Status Quo of Jerusalem’s Old City, safeguarding the sanctity of the Christian Holy Sites, and strengthening the spiritual and social fabric of the Christian faithful. He further expounded upon the Patriarchate’s unique status as the only autocephalous Church in the region, bearing the solemn responsibility of fostering unity among Christian communities while ensuring their protection amidst mounting pressures.

Of particular concern was the plight of the indigenous Christian community, whose presence in the land of Christ’s earthly ministry faces unprecedented challenges. His Beatitude articulated the Patriarchate’s unwavering commitment to the safeguarding of its historic monasteries and churches, including the twenty monasteries in the Old City of Jerusalem and other strategically vital locations. He also brought to the Minister’s attention the grave humanitarian crisis faced by the civilian population in Gaza including the Christian community, where the Patriarchate remains an unwavering pillar of service, protection, and hope. In light of these pressing realities, the Minister reaffirmed Greece’s resolute solidarity with the Patriarchate and pledged tangible support for the ongoing humanitarian and rehabilitation efforts in Gaza.

Another key subject of discussion was the critical importance of academic opportunities for Palestinian youth. His Beatitude emphasized the necessity of renewed scholarship programs for students seeking higher education in Greece, recognizing that the intellectual and spiritual formation of future generations is vital for the continuity of Christian life in the Holy Land. The Minister, in turn, expressed his willingness to explore new avenues for educational support, acknowledging that fortifying Christian presence requires the preservation of sacred spaces as well as the empowerment of the faithful through knowledge and enlightenment.

At the conclusion of this fraternal exchange, His Beatitude and the Minister solemnly reaffirmed their shared commitment to the principles of faith, peace, and the protection of Christianity's sacred heritage in the Holy Land. As a token of mutual respect, they exchanged gifts, symbolizing the deep-rooted and unbreakable bond between the Mother Church and the Hellenic Republic.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem remains unwavering in its apostolic calling, carrying forth a sacred duty that has endured for over two millennia. In these trying times, the words of our Lord stand as a beacon of light and truth: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). As the Mother Church, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem shall continue to bear witness to the Gospel, standing as a steadfast guardian of faith, unity, and peace, ensuring that the Christian presence in the land of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection remains unshaken for generations to come.



















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