

(VIDEO) Meeting of the Ecumenical Patriarch with the Prime Minister of Greece



“How happy I am, Your All-Holiness, to welcome you once again. I was telling you on the steps that the day began cloudy, but with your arrival a bright sun came out, symbolic, I think, of the optimism which you always bring in these troubled and difficult times,’ said Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, addressing His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew during their meeting at the Maximos Mansion.

“I apologise that I was not able to attend your speech. I was in the United Arab Emirates and then in Jordan, but I wanted once again to convey to you how much joy and strength your visits always give us.

You complete 35 years on the Patriarchal Throne this coming November. I wish you many more years, and of course we will have the opportunity to discuss the broader developments in our region, the great interest which you show, and we also show, for the protection of Orthodox Christians in the Middle East in a period of great upheaval, but also the positive news which you bring us regarding the

reopening of the Theological School of Halki, an important decision which I know has been a long-standing desire of yours. And I want you to know that the Greek State always stands by the Patriarchate and also by you personally, in order to support you in every way to carry out and continue your God-pleasing work,' the Prime Minister added.

“We recognise and are grateful for this. Mr Prime Minister, I bring you the blessing of the Mother Church, the greeting of the small Greek community of Constantinople,” said the Ecumenical Patriarch.

“It is a week full of happy events that we are experiencing in Athens. Tomorrow morning we return to Constantinople. All my contacts were blessed and successful because they took place in a climate of mutual love and esteem. I also bring you the well wishes of our Patriarchate, and personally, for the full recovery of Mrs Mareva,” His All-Holiness continued.

“She also sends you her love. She would very much have liked to be here,” said the Prime Minister, and the Ecumenical Patriarch then said the following:

“We followed her health ordeal, we lit a candle at the Patriarchate for her health, because she is dear to us, gracious, always towards us.

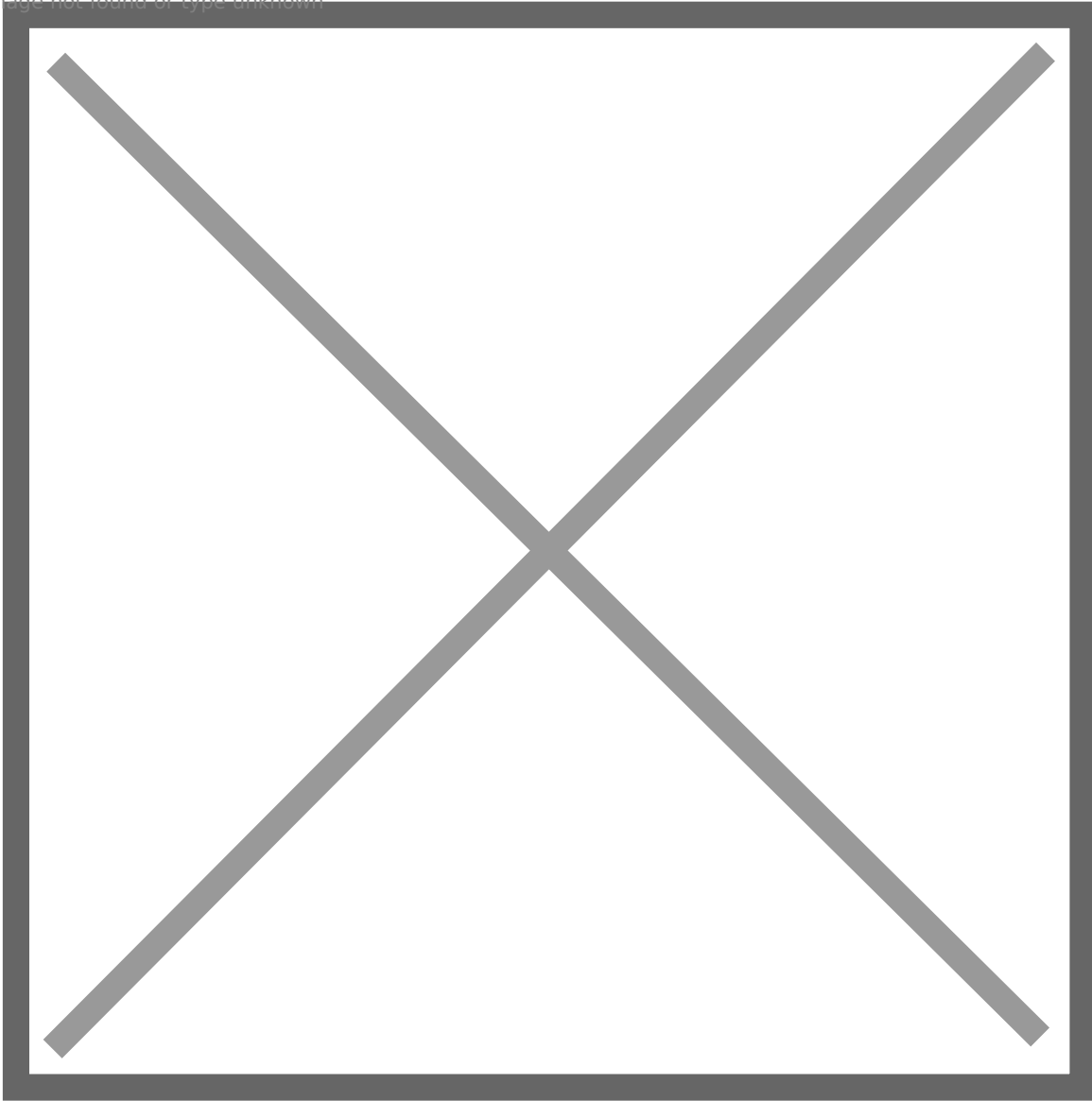
You spoke about the Christians of the Middle East. Just a few days ago I had at the Patriarchate, His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch, who described to us, so to speak, the real situation of the few Christians. Unfortunately, there too the Christians are diminishing over time and they have problems both in Syria and in Lebanon, where the jurisdiction of His Beatitude extends, as regards intra-Orthodox cooperation, we are full of good intentions to return to the good past, because various unpleasant events intervened, and we will continue also with the other sister Churches. Next month we shall go to Imbros together with Their Beatitudes Patriarchs of Romania and Bulgaria, and it will be an opportunity to strengthen our relations among ourselves and to discuss our common problems.”







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