

Greek Dep. FM speaks to Orthodoxia News Agency after his recent visit to Mt. Athos



Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Costas Vlassis, who also holds the religious diplomacy portfolio, spoke with the Orthodoxia News Agency this week, immediately after his visit to Mount Athos last weekend, in his capacity as the Greek government's representative in a ceremony to appoint a new four-member executive organ of the Holy Community, which is the council of representatives of all 20 monasteries located on the semi-autonomous monastic polity.

Vlassis referred to the virtues that a pilgrim discerns in the faces of the monks serving on the Holy Mountain, while making a particular reference to the reverence and humility he felt when praying before the Cincture of the Theotokos, which is preserved at the Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopedi.

As he said, "...personally, as a believer, I draw strength from the Panaghia, the Virgin Mary... I also consider it a particularly special blessing and honor to receive a

replica of the icon of the Panaghia Vimatarissa from the Abbot of the Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopedi, the Elder Ephraim.”