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President of the Republic of Cyprus met with Pope Francis



The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Nikos Christodoulides, engaged in a meeting with Pope Francis on Friday, 24 November 2023, accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Philippa Karsera Christodoulides, and the Cypriot delegation.

Initially, the meeting between the President of the Republic of Cyprus and Pope Francis was held in private and then followed a meeting with the members of the Cypriot delegation.

Focused on advancing the already excellent relations between Cyprus and the Holy See, discussions centered on regional developments. The President elaborated on Cyprus's initiative to establish a maritime corridor, highlighting efforts to provide humanitarian aid to Gaza's civilian population. Concerns regarding potential escalations in the broader regional crisis were also addressed, emphasising the Greek Cypriot commitment to addressing these challenges.

The issue of immigration, faced notably by frontline EU states like Cyprus and Italy, was a key topic of conversation. The President underscored shared aspirations and objectives between Cyprus, Italy, and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Cyprus problem took centre stage, detailing efforts by the Greek Cypriot side to resume negotiations and preserve religious and cultural heritage in Turkish-

occupied areas. The President highlighted the critical condition of over 500 religious and cultural monuments in these areas, urging the reinforcement of Technical Committees to safeguard these invaluable treasures.

During the meeting, both Pope Francis and President Christodoulides exchanged symbolic gifts. The Pope conveyed a message of peace through volumes he had signed and the “medal of the Holy Spirit” which he offered to the president. In return, the President of Cyprus presented Pope Francis with a silver replica of an olive tree, symbolising peace.

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