

## **THE MINISTER OF ANTIQUITIES OF EGYPT VISITS THE “ROTUNDA OF THE EAST”**

On Saturday 10th March 2018, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, welcomed to the historic Holy Monastery of St George Old Cairo, His Excellency the Minister of Antiquities of the Republic of Egypt, Mr. Khaled El Anany and their Excellencies the Ambassadors of the Orthodox countries in Egypt, Greece Mr. Michael-Christos Diamessis, Cyprus Mr. Haris Moritsis, Bulgaria Mr. Lubomir Popov, Russia Mr. Sergei V. Kirpichenko, Serbia Mr. Jugoslav Vukadinovic, Bielorussia Mr. Sergei A. Rachkov, the Deputy Ambassador of Romania Mr. Cosmin Alexandru Stefanescu, the Chairman of the Hellenic Community of Cairo Mr. Christos Kavalis, the Chairman of the Arabic Speaking Greek Orthodox Christians Mr. Farid Houry, and the Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate, Fr. Viktor Kulanga.

Also present were His Eminence Nikodimos Metropolitan of Memphis and Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo and His Grace Theodoros Bishop of Babylonia and Abbot of the Holy Monastery.

The high-profile guests had the opportunity to be taken on a conducted tour by the Alexandrian Primate, of the Museums and Archaeological sites of the Holy Monastery, the galleries of the “Rotunda of the East” and its underground Catacombs. His Beatitude discussed with the Minister of Antiquities issues concerning the smooth operation of the Museum and promotion of the archaeological sites and treasures of the Monastery to the general Egyptian and global public. He mentioned the great restoration work of the monastery and in the decisive contribution of the Great Benefactor of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, shipowner Athanasios Martinos. “All religions live peacefully here in this historic place. This is Egypt!”, His Beatitude the Patriarch pointed out to the Minister.

On his part, the Minister expressed his admiration, his emotion and his heartfelt thanks for the opportunity of being present in this historic place.

His Beatitude then discussed with the Ambassadors of the Orthodox countries, asking them to reinforce the religious tourism sector, highlighting the historic, religious and archaeological monument of St George, in the countries that they represent. ‘Egypt is a country of religious destination, and Christians need to feel safe to visit it, in order to receive grace and power, from the earthly sanctuaries of the Holy Family,’ the Patriarch said.

Immediately afterwards, His Beatitude hosted a lunch for the guests, thanking them for their honorary presence.