

VISIT BY THE HEAD OF THE ARMED FORCES OF GREECE TO THE PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA

On Wednesday 16th March 2016, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, received at the Patriarchal See the Head of the Armed Forces of Greece, Admiral Evangelos Apostolakis of the Greek Navy, in the framework of his official visit to Egypt. He was accompanied by his wife Mrs. Despina Mangelaki, The Egyptian Air Force Brigadier Mr. Asraf Wahba, the Defense Attaché of Greece in Egypt Mr Ioannis Diamantakis and High ranking Officers from Greece and Egypt. Present also during the meeting were the Consul General of Greece in Alexandria Mr. Emm. Kakavelakis, His Grace Meletios Bishop of Naucratis and the clergy of the Patriarchate.

Welcoming his High Ranking guest His Beatitude said: "We welcome you officially to the Great Throne Room of our Patriarchate in Alexandria, here where for two thousand years the Greek dialect has been heard, in the city built by the Great Commander Alexander, to our Patriarchate to which all of Africa belongs, the continent of the future, where we have 36 Metropolises and Dioceses, hundreds of schools and hospitals and where humanity will be tested for the future, as it is here that people are and will be judged. We welcome you to Egypt, where under the protection of resident Sisi and the powerful army we feel safe and happy. We welcome you as the Head of the Armed Forces as well as a compatriot, together with your wife and your delegation, saying that our hopes are and will be the Armed Forces".

His Beatitude then awarded the Head of the Armed Forces with the Supreme Commander of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark.

In his reply, Mr Apostolakis, the Head of the Armed Forces said: "Your Beatitude, you have filled us with your love and your blessing! I wish to express to you the love the Armed Forces and Greece have for you, because I know your history as we originate from the same place. I express our gratitude to you for all that you give to Hellenism and Orthodoxy. I assure you that the Armed Forces are alive and nothing will happen to Greece as long as we are there".

At the end of the meeting and prior to the conducted tour of the Museums of the Patriarchate, Mr. Apostolakis, Head of the Armed Forces of Greece, gave His Beatitude the Gold Coat of Arms of the Greek Armed Forces and stood emotionally in the Hall dedicated to the late Patriarch Petros VII, remembering that he was in the search and debris recovery parties of the Shinook after the fateful accident in Sithonia.