

VISIT BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE OF CYPRUS TO THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday 1st march 2016, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, welcomed to the Patriarchal See the Cypriot Minister of Defence Mr. Christophoros Fokaidis, accompanied by the Director General of the Ministry Mr. Christos Malikidis, the Ambassador of Cyprus to Cairo Mr. Haris Motsis and the Consul General of Greece in Alexandria Mr. Emmanuel Kakavelakis.

It is the first time that a Cypriot Minister of Defense has made an official visit to Egypt, as His Excellency the Minister explained to His Beatitude and it is taking place within the framework of the strengthening of relations of the triangle of friendship between the countries of Cyprus-Egypt-Greece as well as the preparation of the tripartite Summit meeting in early June.

At the meeting His Beatitude had the opportunity of briefing his guest on the Missionary activities of the Patriarchate throughout Africa, which he called the continent of the future, as well as on the progress of the works at the Exarchate of the Patriarchate in Geri, Cyprus, which will be a "place of joy" for the residents of the area.

In warm words His Beatitude expressed his honour and love for the Primate of the Church of Cyprus, Archbishop Chrysostomos II, who "offered a sacrifice" by donating as a Dependency of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, the Holy Church of St Savvas in Old Nicosia. "Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus is a rare person with an open heart and visions, said His Beatitude, and by granting these gifts to all the ancient Patriarchates of the Middle East, made Cyprus a Centre of reference and meetings for all the Primates of these Churches.

Over and above all these, also, it is evident how much Cyprus supports our Patriarchate, while in every corner of the vastness of Africa one meets Cypriot businessmen who work successfully at whatever they do. In this way, he concluded, although Cyprus is a small island, its scope is enormous!"

His Excellency the Minister, agreeing with the above, added that "Cyprus is a huge crossroads and its interests are of universal importance, and its role is crucial to the stability and peace in the region, which is why it is creating friendly relations both with Egypt as well as all the other countries in the region.

His Excellency concluded that it is wonderful how Orthodoxy opens roads between peoples on cultural levels, thereby promoting peaceful cooperation". At the end of the meeting before the guided tour of the Museums of the Patriarchate, the Minister gave His Beatitude an icon of the "Ethnofrourousa" (Guardian) Virgin which is made of balls of copper.