

THE CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE VISITS THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA

His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, on Saturday 19th June 2021 welcomed to the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St George in Old Cairo, the Chief of the Chief of the General Staff of the Greek Air Force, Air Marshal (1) Mr. George Blioumis and his Egyptian counterpart the commander of the Air Force Air Marshal Mr. Mohammed Abbas Helmy Hashem.

Present at the meeting was the Patriarchal Vicar of Cairo His Eminence Metropolitan Nicodemus.

For the first time, the Air Force Chiefs of the two countries, accompanied by the Greek Defense Attaché, Captain (Navy) Georgios Hatzis, visited the place of martyrdom of St. George, which is a place of pilgrimage for thousands of Christians and Muslims.

Addressing Air Marshall Mohammed Abbas Helmy Hashem, the Patriarch asked him to convey his thanks to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. *"He is my friend and my brother. He sees me whenever I ask him and we talk about the peaceful coexistence of peoples. I always declare that the Mediterranean is a sea of peace. With your presence here today, I will begin to shout out that the heavens will be peaceful with the wings of the archangels. I must tell you about the great military cooperation that Greece has with Egypt. Because if you want to have peace you have to have a good army. I would like to raise my hands to God to bless you. "Our young people fly through the air to show that we want peace but also that we are defending our rights", said Patriarch Theodoros. His Beatitude, thanking the Greek Chief*

of General Staff for his visit, stressed that for a number of years he has served the poor man in Africa. "... and God brought me here to the door of Africa to preach that life is more beautiful when it is peaceful."

Patriarch Theodoros offered to the Chiefs of the Armed Forces of Greece and Egypt as a gift, the Symbol of the Patriarchate, the Lion of the Apostle Mark on Egyptian wood and a souvenir to their wives.

Air Marshall George Blioumis, thanked the Patriarch for the warm welcome he reserved for them, offering him the emblem of the Hellenic Air Force.

In conclusion, the Primate of Alexandria guided them to the unique Rotunda of the East, to the tombs of the Patriarchs, to the catacombs and showed them the Nilometer which shows the water level of the river that passes through Egypt.