

VISIT BY THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL NAVAL STAFF OF GREECE TO THE PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA

On 31st January 2016, **His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa**, received at the Patriarchal See, the Chief of the General Naval Staff of Greece, Vice Admiral Nikolaos Tsounis, as part of his official visit to Egypt.

The Naval Chief was accompanied by the Egyptian Rear Admiral Mohamed Ahmed, Director of the North Fleet, Captain Loukas Tsarmaklis, Director of A1 General Naval Staff, Captain Vasileios Tsoukas of the Navy, the Defense Attaché of Greece in Egypt, Lieutenant Commander Ioannis Kizanis Adjutant of the Chief of the General Naval Staff, High ranking Officers from Greece and Egypt, and during the visit also present were the Consul General of Greece in Alexandria Mr. Emmanuel Kakavelakis, His Eminence Narkissos Metropolitan of Accra, Patriarchal Vicar of Alexandria and Clergy of the Patriarchal Court.

Welcoming his High Ranking visitor, His Beatitude said: *"We welcome you officially to the Great Hall of the Throne of our Patriarchate in Alexandria, here where for two thousand years the Greek language has been heard, in the city which the Great General Alexander built, at our Ancient Patriarchate, to which the whole of Africa belongs, the continent of the future and where mankind will be tested for the future, because it is here that the world is and will be judged. We welcome you to our Egypt, where with the enormous protection of His Excellency our President Mr. Sisi and the strong Egyptian army, who respect and love our Patriarchate, we feel secure and blessed. We welcome you as Chief of the glorious General Naval Staff, but also as a compatriot, together with your elite Escort, saying to you that our Nation's hope is and will be its Armed Forces. I wish to express to you my love and immeasurable respect to our glorious and heroic Navy, and to pray to God to keep you robust and strong always in your duty for the protection of all that is Sacred in our beloved Motherland. It is you who protect our rocks, our islets, our most beautiful islands, our home, our skies, our seas, our sun. I pray also that our Greek sea, will be a sea of peace and not a cemetery of souls and bodies. Dear Chief, I pray that your insignia will always wave on the Greek waters as the Sun of Righteousness, Orthodoxy and Hellenism"*.

In his reply, the Chief of the General naval Staff Mr. Tounis, said: *"Your Beatitude, we thank you for the most warm welcome. You have filled us with your love and respect for the Armed Forces and for Greece. I express our gratitude to you for all that you contribute to Hellenism and Orthodoxy. I assure you, that the Armed Forces are strong, always alert and as long as we are present, nothing will happen to Greece"*.

At the end of the meeting and before they were taken on a conducted tour of the Museums of the Patriarchate, the Alexandrian Primate gave the Naval Chief a Byzantine icon of ST George, and on his behalf the Naval Chief of Staff gave His Beatitude an honourable Plaque of the Navy.