



# WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

## **WORLD MONUMENTS FUND, THROUGH A MAJOR GIFT FROM IOANA MARIA (MICA) ERTEGUN, LEADS THE CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT THE THREE MAJOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN THE RESTORATION OF THE EDICULE**

### **\$1.3 Million in Support Given by Ertegun for the Conservation Work on the Structure that Houses the Tomb of Christ**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, NEW YORK, JUNE 21, 2016**—World Monuments Fund announced today that it will launch the campaign to restore the Edicule in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem with a major lead gift from Ioana Maria (Mica) Ertegun. The support of \$1.3 million will ensure that conservation work begins immediately on a project that has been stalled for more than 50 years. The site has been accepted since the time of Constantine as the burial place of Christ.

Joshua David, President and CEO of World Monuments Fund said, “We are grateful to our longstanding trustee, Mica Ertegun, for enabling us to be a part of the restoration of such an important monument.”

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem said, “The Holy Sepulchre is the most sacred monument of Christianity. The resurrection of Christ from the tomb is the foundation of our faith, and Christians throughout the world revere this place for its spiritual importance. Jewish, Christians, and Muslims alike come to Jerusalem to visit at the tomb of Christ. The restoration of the Edicule is of primary importance. We are grateful for Mrs. Ertegun’s lead gift, which has allowed work to begin.”

Mica Ertegun said, “I am pleased to be the lead donor for the restoration of the Edicule and to help in the restoration of this sacred place of worship for people of many faiths.”

Mrs. Ertegun was inspired to donate the funds to World Monuments Fund after attending a reconciliation prayer service at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 2014. The service was held in celebration of the historic meeting between Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew that took place at the church, in the presence of His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem. Mrs. Ertegun’s intention through her philanthropic work with World Monuments Fund is to preserve places of worship that are of outstanding importance because of their exceptional religious significance for people of all faiths and to honor the important role that all religions play as anchors of tolerance, stability, and social well-being.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, located in the Christian quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, was constructed in the fourth century over the tomb of Jesus Christ. The rock-cut tomb is

enclosed in the Edicule, a small structure within the rotunda of the church. The rotunda is the site of the celebration of the Holy Fire on Orthodox Christian Easter, when the rotunda is ablaze with candles lit from the Holy Fire that is said to spring miraculously from the tomb.

The current Edicule is the fourth structure to have covered the tomb since the construction of the church by the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century. Previous structures had been destroyed by fire, earthquake, and the Fatimid takeover of Jerusalem in 1009. The current structure dates to 1810. Today it is supported by heavy shoring that was installed in 1947, at the time of the British Mandate for Palestine, to address detachment of marble cladding that was first detected in 1926.

A thorough study for the restoration of the Edicule was completed in 2015 by the National Technical University in Athens (NTUA), sponsored by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. In March 2016, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III presented the study to the three communities—Greek Orthodox, Catholic, and Armenian—which share custodianship of the Holy Sepulchre. They endorsed the study and co-signed an agreement to cooperate in its restoration, allowing the work to go forward. The NTUA study team was led by Prof. Antonia Moropoulou, and included Prof. Manolis Korres, Prof. Andreas Georgopoulos, and Prof. Constantinos Spyarakos, who are also guiding its implementation.

The work will consist of removing and reattaching the exterior marble cladding, reinforcing the bearing structure and repairing a fracture in the original rock, and cleaning the marble cladding. The work is scheduled to be completed in spring 2017.

###

**World Monuments Fund** is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's treasured places. For 50 years, working in 100 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to the preservation of important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF seeks to inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York City, the organization has offices and affiliates worldwide. Visit [www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org) for more information, or connect with us on [facebook.com/worldmonuments](https://facebook.com/worldmonuments), [twitter.com/worldmonuments](https://twitter.com/worldmonuments), and [instagram.com/worldmonumentsfund](https://instagram.com/worldmonumentsfund).

**Media Inquiries:**

World Monuments Fund (New York): Kathryn Doyle, +1-646-424-9583 or [kdoyle@wmf.org](mailto:kdoyle@wmf.org)

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem: Office of the Chief Secretariat, +972-26274941 or [secretariat@jerusalem-secretariat.info](mailto:secretariat@jerusalem-secretariat.info)