

HIS BEATITUDE THEOPHILOS' III, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM ADDRESS OF GREETING TO THE EMIR OF QATAR

An Address of Greeting

to the Emir of Qatar

H H Shiekh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani

during the Pastoral Visit of the Patriarch of Jerusalem

to lay the Foundation Stone

of the Orthodox Church in Doha

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

April 2010

Your Highness,

It is an honour for Us, Your Highness, to be able to address you on the occasion of Our pastoral visit to the Roum Orthodox community of Doha for the laying of the foundation stone of our parish of Saint Isaak the Qatari and Saint George. This is the fruit of many years of careful work and co-operation between the Emirate of Qatar and the Roum Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

We take this opportunity to praise the work that both Your Highness and Her Highness the Consort have done in encouraging

all Qataris to help build in this country a culture of progress and openness. Qatar is well known for the breakthroughs that you have made in overcoming the barriers of prejudice, in encouraging freedom of worship, and in creating a society of mutual respect and peaceful co-existence.

The world sees in Qatar a country that has managed to combine remarkable progress in the economic realm with an equally remarkable progress in the spiritual realm, and as such Qatar serves as a leader and as a model of stability for our region.

We see in his achievement the embodiment of the essence of Islam as a religion of tolerance, hospitality and intellectual rigour and achievement. In this region of the world, Christian and Muslim have enjoyed periods of peaceful co-existence that have been of mutual benefit to both our communities. We know each other well, we understand each other's customs and traditions, and the well-being of our region depends on good relationships between us.

We honour the leadership that Your Highness has shown, and continues to demonstrate, in the practical work of ensuring the ongoing religious and cultural diversity of our region. The Rum Patriarchate pledges itself to be loyal and firm supporters of Your Highness's leadership in this regard.

As we know that we have a place in Qatar, Your Highness has a respected place in Jerusalem, and we are privileged to have your photograph in our Patriarchate. We look forward to the day when Your Highness can visit us at our Patriarchate in Jerusalem, a city that is sacred to the Abrahamic traditions.

We thank you, Your Highness, for this opportunity to address you, and we pray the blessings of the All-Merciful God on you, Her Highness the Consort, on your family, and on all the people of our beloved Emirate.

God bless you.