

AN ADDRESS TO THE COUNCIL OF CHURCH LEADERS OF JORDAN IN AMMAN

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

25 May 2010

Your Eminences,

Your Excellencies,

Most Reverend and Right Reverend Fathers,

On this Tuesday after Pentecost, we greet you in the power of the Holy Spirit, the “Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who is everywhere present and who fills all things”. May this same Spirit fill our hearts and enlighten our minds as we begin this venture.

We wish to express our appreciation to His Majesty King Abdullah and to His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi for their initiative in instating this legitimate Council of Church Leaders of Jordan. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is spearheading this part of the world in commitment to freedom of religion, co-existence, and equal rights for all its people. This Council is yet further fruit of this commitment, and we applaud this example of religious freedom in the Kingdom.

It is, therefore, of significance that we are gathered here in Amman for such an important meeting of our Council of Church

Leaders of Jordan. And it is a particular privilege for us to convene this Council.

The Covenant of Omar – the Al-'Uhda Al-Umariyyah – established between the Caliph Omar ibn Khattab, the predecessor of the Hashemite Kingdom and our predecessor Patriarch Sophronius in the 7th century – is the foundation that have shaped the noble relationship between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Christians of the Holy Land to our own day. And this Covenant provides a unique framework for further development of relations and proper *symbiosis* for us all.

Equally importantly, the Covenant sustains those good relations that are the means by which the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan maintains its close and essential association with the Christian Holy places in Jerusalem.

We who have the privilege of exercising the leadership of the Churches and Christian communities of the Holy Land and Jordan have a special duty to build on the foundation of our predecessors to ensure the well-being of the Christian communities of our region and peaceful relationships between followers of monotheistic religions. There can be no authentic future for the Holy Land without our commitment to Justice and Peace on the bases of co-existence and mutual respect.

Our commitment to Justice and peace could only be materialized through our service of our communities and society as a whole. Such service is spiritual and material in nature. Furthermore, we have an essential role to fulfill in initiating and supporting initiatives that bring people closer together and shed the light on the importance of achieving justice and peace in the holy land.

As we begin our new work under the gracious patronage of His

Majesty King Abdullah II and His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi, let us re-commit ourselves to the unique ministry that is ours in the Holy Land and Jordan. Let us endeavour to deepen our life of *diakonia*, the Christ like, humble service that is the vocation of all who claim the name of Christian. And let us never allow vested interest or antagonism to mar the fellowship that this Council is designed to deepen and prosper.

We take this opportunity to congratulate His Majesty King Abdullah II and all the people of Jordan on this momentous day of Independence for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. May God bless His Majesty King Abdullah II and all the Royal Family, and may God prosper the mission of this Council to the glory of his name and to the well-being of all our people.

Thank you for your ready response and participation in this meeting, and for your co-operation in its aims.