

H.B. THEOPHILO'S ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT BY REV. DR. OLAV FYSKE TVEIT TO THE PATRIARCHATE.

2 September 2010

Dr Tveit,

Mrs Tveit,

Your Eminences,

Dear Friends from the World Council Of Churches Staff,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you once again, Dr. Tveit, to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem as you continue your mission to the Holy Land, and we are glad to receive you here in your new role as Secretary General of the World Council of Churches. We welcome warmly also your wife, Mrs Tveit, and the members of your delegation.

As you know, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem has long supported and continues to support and encourage, the mission of the World Council of Churches, a mission that is based firmly in the common witness that we bear to the Triune God and to the Gospel of our Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ.

The Orthodox Church participates in the life of the World Council of Churches not in order to create some sort of "super Church", but to work together for the unity of all Christians in faith, in the creation of, to use a Chalcedonian phrase, "unity without confusion". In our ecumenical journey we are all obliged to maintain a spirit of Christian love one for the

other as well as a spirit of integrity.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem is especially keen to assist you in your concern for lasting peace in the Middle East, for the well-being of all the people of the region, and for the ongoing presence of Christians in the Holy Land. The Patriarchate plays a unique role in all these endeavors, and as a consequence has, over the years, gained the great respect of the historic Churches, the other Abrahamic traditions, Judaism and Islam, and the political authorities of our region.

We have long experience in fostering peaceful co-existence and that way of life we like to call by the Greek word *symbiosis*, for this expresses a true ideal of us. In addition to being an historical witness to the 2000-year presence of Christians in the Holy Land, we have also guaranteed the unique cultural and religious character of Jerusalem.

Because of the Patriarchate's role and witness, we fully endorse the work of the World Council of Churches and of your office especially in the struggle for peace, justice and reconciliation.

As we recognize the shared values and goals that are ours, we also recognize the ongoing work that we must do together. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem stands always ready to support you in your role as Secretary General in addressing the challenges that the World Council of Churches faces and we pledge to speak the truth in love as we strive for the unity of all Christians for which Our Lord prayed, and for which we Orthodox pray in every Divine Liturgy.

Now, therefore, in token of our pledge, and in recognition of your devotion in promoting the unity of all Christians in faith and in deepening the values of the Gospel among the members Churches of the World Council, we bestow upon you the Cross of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

May this Cross be a reminder to you of the daily death and

resurrection that is the vocation of every Christian believer and of the way of the cross that leads to the triumph of new life. May this Cross bring to you both the courage that the cross demands, as well as the joy that the resurrection promises, and may it be strength to you in your important new ministry as Secretary General of the World Council of Churches.

As you and your delegation continue your pilgrimage to the Holy Land, we impart our Patriarchal Blessing on you all and we thank you for the dedication that you show to our beloved Holy Land and to all our people.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem.