

# THE HEADS OF THE CHURCHES OF JERUSALEM INVITE FOR AN IFTAHR ON THE OCCASION OF THE ISLAMIC FEAST OF RAMADAN.

On Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> August/ 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2010, the Heads of the Churches of Jerusalem invited Moslems and Christians in an Iftahr in Notre-Damme Hotel. Among the invitees was the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit with his escort.

In this Iftahr His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III addressed the participants in the name of the Christian Leaders as follows:

*"Your Eminences,*

*Your Excellencies,*

*Distinguished Members of the Delegation of the World Council of Churches,*

*Dear Friends,*

*We greet you this evening in the name of Almighty God.*

*This Iftahr, hosted by the Leaders of the Churches for the Muslim community of Jerusalem, is a very special occasion for all of us in the Holy Land and especially for the peoples of Jerusalem. Our gathering this evening demonstrates the experience that is ours in this Holy City as we strive to live out the unique cultural and religious character of Jerusalem.*

*Our faith in the One God, and our religious diversity, find a unity in Jerusalem. Our diversity is not a cause of difficulty and misunderstanding, but a cause of private and public*

*strength. Here we see that the essential values of our monotheistic religious traditions have a common root. And we Muslims and Christians take pride in being the stewards and servants of the sacred heritage that has been passed down to us by the great leaders Omar ibn al Khattab and Patriarch Sophronios of Jerusalem.*

*On this occasion this evening we are glad to be able to welcome distinguished guests in the delegation from the World Council of Churches, headed by the new Secretary General, the Reverend Dr Olav Tveit. The World Council of Churches has committed itself to promote love of God and neighbor, peace, mutual respect, justice and reconciliation, which are religious values that we all share.*

*As we gather together to share this Iftahr, we are reminded that, despite the challenges before us as the peoples of this Holy City and this Holy Land, we are people of faith and God is our living hope. We remain firm in our mission here to preserve the Holy Land as a place where people of different religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds may live together in peaceful and genuine co-existence.*

*May our God in heaven, who is the author and creator of our common humanity, give us the strength and the courage to remain steadfast in the unique mission of Jerusalem. And may we show the world that is by prayer that the human community builds is firm foundation. For we are in Jerusalem a community of prayer.*

*May God bless you all".*

**Chief Secretary's Office.**