

H.B. THEOPHILOS' ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO H.B. METROPOLITAN SAWWA OF WARSAW AND ALL POLAND.

Your Beatitude,

We welcome you with great joy again to the Holy City of Jerusalem, to our Patriarchate and to our monastery in the name of our crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ! Once again, let us say that your presence among us evokes happy remembrances of our recent visit to the Holy Polish Autocephalous Church, and we rejoice in the ever-deepening ties that bind the Polish Autocephalous Church with the Patriarch of Jerusalem, "the first-born of all the Churches." These ties have received the great blessing of our con-celebration last night of the Divine Eucharist in which we demonstrated our witness to our unity in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. The roots of Orthodoxy in Poland go deep. It was the great Saints Cyril and Methodios who first brought the Gospel to the region in the 9th century. It is in their footsteps that the Patriarchs of Jerusalem have followed and cared for the Orthodox faith, which has lived on in among your people, in good times as well as in challenging times. As we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented- of whom the world was not worthy", (Hb. 11:37). Allow us to say that today, after almost a century since you took your place among the autocephalous Orthodox Churches of the world, you have emerged as a beacon of the light and the selfless love of Christ, of peace and reconciliation.

We can say this because during our fraternal visit to the Polish Orthodox Church, we became a witness of the breath and strength of your life and ministry. Your seven dioceses as well as your military chaplaincy, your flourishing monastic communities, your schools, and your centers for the care of the elderly and those in need, as well as Your Beatitude's important influence both in Church and society, are an eloquent testimony not just to your common life, but to the witness of Orthodoxy in our modern world. In the work in promoting Orthodox culture and in your ministry to young people, you ensure the vitality of Orthodoxy in our society.

The Polish Orthodox Church lives out its life in a unique situation where the cultures of East and West meet. The concern of Poland for the deepening of relations between people of our different faiths and cultures, and especially with respect to the peoples of our region, is a great encouragement to us. As Orthodox Christians in Poland, in and through your fraternal relationship with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, you have a unique way of demonstrating your concern on behalf of your government and people. Here we can see the importance of Orthodoxy in the international arena in a special way. And it is in this respect that the Orthodox Church maintains its genuine inclusiveness and openness.

The Orthodox Church values deeply its life of unity in diversity, its insistence on the dignity of the human person, and its witness to genuine inclusiveness and openness. Throughout our history, the Orthodox Church has stood firmly for peace in our region and for the well-being of the entire human family.

We celebrate today once again the historic relationship and the unity of faith that exist between our two sister Churches, and our common witness to the role of a living, vital Orthodoxy in our world. We give thanks to God for your primatial ministry, Your Beatitude, and we offer our fervent prayers for our brothers in the Polish episcopate, and for all

your clergy and people.

May our risen Lord Jesus Christ richly bless your pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and may God bless all the people of your beloved country of Poland.

And we offer this toast for your Beatitude.

Thank you.

Jerusalem, 28 November 2010

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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