

WORDS OF GREETING TO THE DELEGATION FROM THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM.

25 January 2011

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

In this joyful season of Christmas and Epiphany, we greet you in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. At this time, we celebrate especially the love of God, the peace of God, the justice of God and the reconciliation of God for humanity. As members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher and the Brotherhood of Saint James, having oversight of our respective communities and the Holy Places, we bear witness not only to the message of Christ, but also to the role that Jerusalem plays as a model of respectful co-existence and harmonious living between different ethnic and religious groups.

As a consequence, more than ever before, no matter the size of our respective communities, our life and ministry as Churches and as guardians of the Holy Places are of crucial importance for our respective Churches and peoples to show forth the universal significance of Jerusalem.

We denounce every form of discord, and we must all work to be examples of peace, non-violence, reconciliation and true *symbiosis*.

As Saint Ignatios of Antioch says in his Letter to the Ephesians, "there is nothing better than peace, in which all strife of things is heaven and things on earth is abolished". (13:2).

To prefer peace over violence it does not imply giving up legitimate rights and privileges.

I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Old City police Commander Mr. Aviroif for his efforts to keep order and peace both for the city and the Holy Sepulcher.

May this blessed season see a new commitment to this peace, which is the joy of God and the will of God for the World.

Happy and Blessed New Year.

His Beatitude

Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem