

H. B. THEOPHILOS III ADDRESS TO THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCH IN JERUSALEM, ON THE OCCASION OF THE EASTER VISIT TO THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCHATE.

An Address to His Beatitude Tarkom Manoogian the Armenian Patriarch in Jerusalem and the Members of the Brotherhood of Saint James on the Occasion of the Easter Visit of the Delegation of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Reverend Fathers,

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

While the Tomb was sealed,

You, O Life, did shine were shut,

You came to your disciples, O Resurrection of all,

renewing through them an upright Spirit in us

according to your great mercy.

(Apolytikion for the Sunday of Saint Thomas)

Today We greet you, Your Beatitude, in the words of this great hymn for the Sunday of Saint Thomas, and we extend to you and to the Brotherhood of Saint James our Easter Greetings and

thank you for your reception. We also wish to express our best wishes and prayers to you for health and strength in your ministry.

The upright Spirit of God is the gift to us of the risen Christ. This Spirit has renewed our hearts in the light of the Resurrection, and this same Spirit will support us all and help us to continue our mission as guardians and servants of the Holy Places. The Spirit has renewal that shines from the Tomb of Our Lord Jesus Christ strengthens not only us, but the whole world.

This God-given mission has always been important. But its importance has only increased in our own time as the world experiences terrible hardship, despair, and hopelessness. The eyes of the world turn to Jerusalem in hope, and especially to the Jerusalem of the passion, the cross, the tomb and the Resurrection. Everyone looks to Jerusalem for spiritual refreshment. Just as "a deer longs for flowing streams," so do the souls of all long for God on this City, the City that has been entrusted to our care and witness. (cf. Psalm 42 .)

People from every land have great spiritual and moral expectations of Jerusalem and the Holy Places. We know that the Holy Places are not just stones. They are living realities of the presence of God and God's activity in sacred history. The life giving Spirit of Our Risen Lord Jesus Christ reveals this reality in and through our ministry in the Holy Places, and we are summoned to unity in our common mission so that the world may always look to the Holy Places in hope, certainty, and liberation of fear.

Throughout history humanity has suffered many atrocities, and many nations including our own, have known the experience of genocide. Genocide is nothing less than a participation in the passion and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And yet we declare that the end of the cross is the Resurrection, for Christ our God shines forth from the Tomb.

In this bright season of Easter, let us continue to live and serve in this renewing Spirit of Our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Light that shines from the Tomb gladden our hearts and enlighten our minds, and renew in us faith, hope, and love, so that our mission here in the Holy Land, and in the Holy City of Jerusalem in particular, may be a beacon of the hope of resurrection, not only to ourselves, but to believers of other faiths as well.

Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed!

3 May 2011, His Beatitude Theophilus III,

Patriarch of Jerusalem.