

# **SYNAXIS OF THE PRIMATES OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES OF THE MIDDLE EAST**

On the invitation of His Beatitude Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos II, and in the framework of the pastoral care of the Senior Patriarchates of the Middle East and the Apostolic Church of Cyprus, arrived today, 27th March 2012, Their Beatitudes, Patriarch Theodoros II, of Alexandria and All Africa, Patriarch Ignatius IV, of Antioch and all the East, and Patriarch Theophilos III, of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, to participate in the Synaxis of the primates of the Orthodox Churches, in order to discuss the situation of the Christians in the region of the Middle East and to find ways of solidarity, strengthening and support of the Christians to maintain their presence in their ancestral homes.

This Synaxis of the Primates aims at further strengthening the bonds amongst the Orthodox Churches in the region of the Middle East and to improve the cooperation amongst them, as well as the relationships amongst all the fellow Christians and to develop the harmonious and friendly relations between the members of the three Monotheistic religions. In addition, through the Orthodox Synaxis, the representatives of the Orthodox Churches of the Middle East could have meetings and discussions, searching for answers to many important issues, which are related to the Christian presence in the Middle East.

The Primates of the Churches discussed as well the challenges of the region in view of the political and socio-economic changes that are currently taking place in the Middle East at large, and stressed on the need to resolve all conflicting matters through peaceful means and constructive dialogue.

The Patriarchs and the Archbishop of Cyprus underlined as well that due to the current situation in Syria, this Synaxis has a special importance and supported the immediate need for peace, security and stability. They proposed to form a delegation of Primate to visit different decision making centres in order to voice their concern for peace and reconciliation and to create awareness of the situation of the Christians in the Middle East.

They highlighted as well that Syria is a land in which Christians exist since the dawn of Christianity and coexist with mosques in a unique symbolism of symbiosis, fraternity and mutual respect that bring people together. The Primate of Churches confirmed their commitment to support all the efforts and necessary initiatives in order to restore peace and achieve the aspirations of all citizens of Syria.

In addition, the Primate discussed as well ways of common action in a series of programs for the youth of the four Churches, which will be realized soon. They reconfirmed the commitment of the Orthodox Churches towards the Middle East Council of Churches.

The Synaxis made a special reference to the memory of the late Pope Shenouda III, of the Coptic Church who died on 17th March 2012. The Primate of the four Churches expressed their deep condolences to the Coptic Church and wished them to elect a worthy successor.

The Synaxis was concluded with the Blessing of His Beatitude the Archbishop of Cyprus, who wished the Church Primate and their congregations a blessed fasting in order to receive with pure hearts the victorious Christ, who triumphed over death. H.B. Archbishop of Cyprus also wished peace for all the people of the region and the world.

**Holy Archbishopric of Cyprus,**

**March 27, 2012.**

