H.B. SPEECH AT THE RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF H.B. KYRILL I PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW & ALL RUSSIA AT THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM.

Jerusalem, 11 November 2012.

An Address on the Occasion of a Reception in Honour of His Beatitude Kyrill I Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Your Beatitude, dear Patriarch Kyrill,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Reverend Fathers,

Dear Members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher,

Sisters and Brothers,

This evening, as Your Beatitude continues your patriarchal and fraternal eirenikon to the Holy Land and to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, we remember the words of the prophet Isaiah:

Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her -that you may nurse and be satisfied from her consoling breast; that you may drink deeply with delight from her glorious bosom", (Is, 60:10-11).

You have come to Jerusalem, dear brother, at a crucial time. As you know well, our region is experiencing profound change, change which brings with it an uncertainty about the future. As we live through this change, the role of the Church is fundamental to the ongoing well-being of all our peoples.

As the oldest continuous religious Institution in the Holy Land, the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem embodies our sacred history. Since the time of the apostles, the Church has born witness here to the truth of the Gospel, and to the unique status of the Holy Places as spiritual signs to us of the birth, ministry, passion, death, resurrection and ascension of the incarnate Logos, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is simply not possible to separate the life of the Patriarchate from the life of Jerusalem.

The Patriarchate is the Christian heart of Jerusalem, and as such the Patriarchate represents here the entire Christian world in general, and the Orthodox world in particular, Ours is a ministry of service, a true diakonia, for our ongoing presence ensures the spiritual integrity of the Holy Places, and free access to them for all people of good will. At this particular time in our history, therefore, we welcome your support and your encouragement as the Patriarchate of Jerusalem seeks to be a spiritual and moral guide to the peoples of the Middle East, as well as a stone of hope for all.

One of the religious obligations of the Orthodox world is to support and strengthen the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which provides in the Holy Land a spiritual oasis for the local Christian community, for pilgrims who come here and indeed for the international community.

Your eirenikon, dear brother, is just such an example of this support. In your person, by virtue of the grace of your

patriarchal ministry, you bring with you to the Holy Land the whole Russian Church, a Church which, throughout the millennium of her life, has known both great triumphs as well as terrible suffering. The Russian Church bears in her soul the wounds of her Lord. This is the vocation of the Church everywhere, so to live in faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ that we are willing to suffer for the sake of the people of God. The Church has learnt to say with Saint Paul, "I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed in us", (Rom. 8:18).

We rejoice in our shared inheritance with the saints in the One, Holy, Ecumenical and Apostolic Church. Here in this Holy City, on the Day of Pentecost, the inner strength of our unity in diversity was revealed. We rejoice that our God-given uniqueness as peoples with diverse cultures, languages, customs, and histories does not mask the common faith that unites us. The Orthodox Church is both local, and ecumenical, and our visible unity and fraternity is essential. If our unity is not clear to the world, we shall be unable to be an effective sign to the world of hope in the face of despair and seemingly intractable problems. Time and again history shows us that the Orthodox Church, when united in spirit and will as well as in faith, has the power to solve many of our human problems and show to all the path of light and life.

Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her.

As we remind ourselves of the words of the prophet Isaiah, we recall that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem maintains the physical, cultural, religious and ethnic demography of the Old City. More especially we know that the Patriarchate guarantees the Christian character of Jerusalem and the Christian presence here and throughout the Middle East. In this way we embody the words of the prophet as we rejoice with Jerusalem and love her.

Pilgrimage is of the utmost importance, and is another way of expressing our love for Jerusalem. Your own pilgrimage, dear brother, is an example to the faithful. On the one hand, pilgrims have a unique encounter here with the presence of Cod at the Holy Places, and they learn the truth of our life here. And on the other hand, the visits of pilgrims greatly encourage us who live here, for pilgrimage is an undeniable proof that the world holds Jerusalem dear and precious.

As we reflect on your pilgrimage, and as we remember the place of Jerusalem, we remind ourselves that the Eucharist is at the heart of our common life. The Eucharist makes the Church, and the power of the Church is the Divine, Holy and Life-Giving Mysteries of Christ.

As Churches, our structures and administration are important — it is true. But nothing in our life should obscure the centrality of the common Chalice. The Divine Liturgy is the greatest treasure that our Lord left to the Church, and all our life points towards the Eucharist, and flows out of it, in ageless obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We welcome you, Your Beatitude, to this Holy City, where our Lord gave us the Eucharist, the divine assurance of our eternal and indestructible destiny, and we pray with you that our Lord will remember us all in his kingdom, always, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

We wish you the blessings of the Holy Tomb on your primatial pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and we assure you of our fraternal love and prayers in Christ.

Please allow us to present to you and to your party with these gifts, small tokens of our gratitude for your visit-Thank you.

THEOPILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem.