

H. B. SPEECH ON THE OCCASION OF A FESTIVE LUNCH IN HONOUR OF H. B. KYRILL I PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW & ALL RUSSIA.

Jerusalem, 11 November 2012.

An Address on the Occasion of a Festive Lunch in Honour of the Eirinikon of His Beatitude Kyrill I Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia at the King David Hotel.

Your Beatitude, beloved and dear Brother in Christ,

The Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of all the Churches, and the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre express our deep joy in receiving our sister Orthodox Church of Russia as Your Beatitude makes this eirenikon to the Holy Land. We rejoiced to receive you solemnly upon your arrival, and to concelebrate the Divine Liturgy with you in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre last night. This is not your first pilgrimage to the Holy City of Jerusalem, but it is your first visit since your election as Patriarch, and we are delighted to welcome you back. For Jerusalem is the spiritual home of us all.

We welcome you as a brother bishop and Patriarch, but most especially as a pilgrim. The Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem is both the guardian and the servant of the Holy Places that you are now visiting, and we are dedicated to maintaining their spiritual witness and integrity for all. The Holy Places are Pan-Orthodox, for they gather Orthodox Christians from around the world. They are also Pan-Christian, for Christians of many confessions are renewed in their faith and commitment when they come to the land of our shared sacred history. And indeed they are universal, for many people of other faiths venerate the Holy Places with equal devotion, and

many people of good will around the world look to Jerusalem as a refuge of hope.

The Holy and Great Sovereign, Saint Constantine Equal to the Apostles, made clear the reality of Orthodox Rum, and within this broad embrace all our Orthodox Churches have lived for centuries. On the one hand ,we share a common faith and the common Chalice of the Eucharist, while on the other hand, we live with and respect the unique cultural, linguistic, and liturgical customs of each, as well as our distinct ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Just as we say in the words of the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, "broken and distributed is the Lamb of God; broken but never divided," so we experience our local Churches as separate, but never divided.

This is the liturgical reflection of the blessing of our unity in diversity in which we live in the ecumenical Orthodox Church.

Our joy at your visit has been further enlivened by our concelebration early this morning of the Divine Liturgy and by this festive lunch at this table in your honour, and in honour of your distinguished entourage. These gifts of the Liturgy and this lunch we receive with gratitude from our merciful God, who created us in his image and likeness, with both soul and body, a spiritual and material unity. We accept these gifts from our Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray for our daily bread, which is both the bread of the Eucharist that feeds our souls, as well as the bread that nourishes our bodies.

As we enjoy this meal together today, we remember, as we are bound to do, all those who have no food, and all who are in any kind of physical or spiritual need. All around the world, there are many who suffer want, and it is part of the mission of the Church to attend as much to the physical needs of God's children as to their religious needs. Not far away from our doors here in the Holy land, we see the predicament of our

fellow human beings who are displaced from their homes, who are desperate, and who are truly those of whom Christ said, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing". "Truly I tell you," said our Lord," just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me", (Mt 25:35-36,40).

We wish you, dear brother, every blessing from God our Father on your eirenikon to the Mother of all the Churches, that is the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and on your ongoing pilgrimage to the Holy Land – a pilgrimage in which we see the renewal and the strengthening of our fraternal bonds of affection and unity. By your pilgrimage, you also strengthen the historic ties that have united the Church of Russia and the Church of Jerusalem for centuries. May our crucified and risen Lord continue to grant you grace for the mission and ministry to which he has called you, and may God bless the Holy Church of Russia and all the peoples of your beloved country.

We also wish to acknowledge the religious and civic participants who are with us on this happy occasion, and we also thank the police for the smooth movement of your pilgrimage.

Allow us to raise our glasses to toast Your Beatitude and wish you Many Years.

Mnogaya leta, VIadyka, «Είς πολλά ἔτη, Δέσποτα».

His Beatitude

THEOPILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem.