

ADDRESS AT THE EVENT ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS OF THE WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK PRIZE AT THE BAPTISMAL SITE.

25-4-2013

Your Royal Highnesses,

Eminences and Excellencies,

Reverend Fathers, Distinguished guests,

We are pleased to be here with Our fellow judges for the first ever award ceremony of World Interfaith Harmony Week, which is being held under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II. As a religious leader We bring with Us blessed greetings from Jerusalem, the Holy City of peace and reconciliation, for it is there that Heaven met with Earth; and it is there that our Abrahamic faiths, through constant prayer, have achieved harmony. We have gathered here today to celebrate diversity and harmony through different faiths. Here, Ourselves and Our fellow judges wish to convey our gratitude for the efforts of His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad in taking this initiative, and to His Majesty King Abdullah II for introducing the world to a dialogue of harmony between faiths, which was adopted unanimously by the United Nations, just 3 years ago.

Speaking at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, His Majesty outlined the main goals of the “World Interfaith Harmony Week”. The initiative was to recognize the moral imperative of promoting and understanding the values of peace inherent in all religions. All faiths can be joined by their love of God and love of neighbor. By building on such values

common to all religions, "World interfaith Harmony Week" was to become a platform that connected faiths, addressing the urgent need to enhance mutual understanding, cooperation and harmony.

The official U.N. Resolution set out the criteria for "World Interfaith Harmony Week". Among these were:

1. To reaffirm that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace.
2. The first week of February of every year will be reserved for "World Interfaith Harmony Week" between all religions, faiths and beliefs.
3. The initiative will encourage all states to support, on a voluntary basis, the spread of the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world's churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship during that week, based on love of God and love of one's neighbor.

The candidates who have been selected today for their distinction have gathered, from all over the world and from all faiths, in our blessed Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the cross roads of great civilizations. The candidates' achievements have demonstrated the dynamic and potent power of interfaith relations and how, through dialogue we attain to Harmony which is the embodiment of cooperation, mutual understanding and respect that are common attributes inherent to the very essence of religion.

Our physical presence here by the Baptismal Site, where the sacred history was revealed and handed down to us through Holy Scriptures and where Jesus Christ was baptized, bears witness to our common humanity and its destiny to "theosis"; that is our unity with God. Furthermore, The Baptism Site together with Bethlehem and Jerusalem constitutes its own part of a nation of interfaith harmony; where the Abrahamic faiths were

destined to live in peace and understanding.

Though we are destined to live in harmony, interfaith peace is indeed a challenge worldwide. It is precisely for this reason that all efforts to bring our faiths closer together must be acknowledged. This year's celebrations of "World Interfaith Harmony Week" saw more than 300 events held the world over, celebrating not only Islamo-Christian relations but the richness of dialogue with other faiths, from Judaism and Buddhism to Sikhism.

It is with great honour that we invite you to join us in celebrating the announcement of this year's recipients of the "World Interfaith Harmony" prize. Thank you.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III,

Patriarch of Jerusalem