

H. B. ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT & COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ON ORTHODOXY.

Bethlehem, 20 October 2013.

Your Excellencies,

Honorable President of the General Assembly Mr. Sergei Popov,

Honorable Secretary General Mr. Anastasios Nerantzis,

Your Eminences,

Distinguished members of the Interparliamentary Assembly on
Orthodoxy,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

“Behold now, what is so good or so pleasant as for brothers to
dwell together in unity?” (Psalm 132:1).

First of all, we would like to express our deep appreciation
for having been included in your important meeting here in the
Holy Land, especially in the holy city of Bethlehem – the city
of peace and reconciliation; for it was here where heaven and
earth met and reconciled.

Our meeting at this hospitable table is an extension of our gathering yesterday evening in Jerusalem at the Patriarchate, where we had the opportunity to discuss the very purpose and mission of your organization and to highlight the mission of the Jerusalem Patriarchate in the world, and especially in the context of the current political developments in the Middle East, namely the unpredictable crisis in Syria, Egypt, and the unresolved Israel-Palestine conflict. It is more important than ever for meetings such as these.

Your commitment for peace and reconciliation amongst nations and peoples, which is founded on the message of the Gospel and expounded by the Orthodox Church, is highly commendable and increasingly vital. For your capacity as active parliamentarians of your respective Orthodox countries, including the great world power of the Russian Federation, is indeed significant not only for the benefit of your own constituencies, but for the whole world, especially our Middle East region.

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven,” says our Lord Jesus Christ, the “Sun of Justice,” who was born in this very city of Bethlehem.

The Church of Jerusalem known as the Rum (Greek) Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, all Palestine and Jordan, shares a common mission with the sister Churches and joins you in your courageous and philanthropic initiatives, which is our moral obligation before God and toward our fellow man, with whom we share a common nature and common destiny.

For as Saint Paul says, “Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a dear conscience desiring to act honorably in all things.”

Dear brothers and sisters, once again we welcome you to the Holy Land as messengers of peace and reconciliation. For

“Blessed are the peacemakers,”

May Our Lord, the Prince of the Incarnate Peace, guide your footsteps, enlighten your minds, and bless your mission”.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem