

ADDRESS OF H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM IN THE COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES IN JORDAN.

Amman, 5-12-2013

“Behold, now, what is so good as for brothers to dwell together in unity?”, says the Psalm, [Ps. 132(133)]

Your Beatitudes

Your Eminences

Dear Reverend Fathers

The grace of God has brought us together, in order to inaugurate the recently established Council of Churches of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The formation of the National Council of Jordan, which was initiated by His Highness Emir Ghazi, and with the blessing of His Majesty King Abdullah II, constitutes an indeed historic event for our recognized churches, which are called to play a decisive role vis a vis the challenges which our Middle East region is confronted with, in general, and in particular our Christian faithful in this very critical time through which we are passing.

We give glory to God as we commence our deliberations during this blessed and hopeful season of Christmas. The main purpose of our gathering here in Amman is to address structural and administrative issues, which concern the functioning of our Jordanian Council of Churches such as:

- a) The appointment of a coordinator for the council, and
- b) Confirmation that this Council of the Churches is the sole

legitimate body authorized to communicate with the official governmental and civic offices in Jordan in relation to all general Christian affairs and issues of common concern. It shall be made clear from the outset that each Church will continue to sustain the right to communicate directly through its spiritual leader in relation to all its specific and private affairs.

Furthermore, to agree that the new by-laws shall be effected for the Council. For this purpose, we need to appoint a committee comprised of representatives of our Churches.

It should be mentioned that an administrative office should be set up, sponsored by the Church currently in charge, which will change on a rotating basis.

Other issues at our immediate attention are:

a) The proposed changes to the Jordanian matrimonial law, that is,

matters of divorce, inheritance, marriages, etc, especially the civil procedures relating to the ecclesiastical courts. In this regard, we must give our recommendation to the government, and therefore, a committee of legal personnel should be formed.

b) There are various requests from Christian groups who want to join the council and to be recognized by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

c) Any other business related to the purposes of our gathering

It should be made crystal clear that the intention of the Jordanian authorities is to help and encourage the spiritual and pastoral mission of our respective Churches, especially right now as our Churches in Syria, Egypt and elsewhere are experiencing the precise persecution as that of the early

Church, and it in no way intends to interfere with the internal ecclesiastical canons and laws that regulate or dictate the independent governance of our Churches.

In closing these brief remarks, we would like to express our deep gratitude to His Majesty King Abdullah II, and not in the least, our appreciation to His Highness Emir Ghazi for his tireless efforts to support our shared mission.

God Bless our deliberations.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem