

# SECOND OFFICIAL RESPONSE OF HIS BEATITUDE PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS III OF JERUSALEM TO HIS BEATITUDE JOHN X OF ANTIOCH CONCERNING THE JURISDICTION OF THE EMIRATE OF QATAR

Translated by Theodoros Pritsis, M.Div., Th.M.

Reference No.

**1020**

Your Beatitude, Most Eminent Patriarch John of the Great City of God, Antioch and all the East, Our most beloved brother and concelebrant of Our Humility in Christ our God. We embrace Your Most Beloved Beatitude in the Lord and We greet You with exceeding joy.

We have recently received Your Beatitude's letter (Reference No. 396/2013) dated October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013, which conveys to Us the opinion of Your most Holy and Sacred Synod regarding Us and the decision of Our Holy and Sacred Synod to elect and ordain Archbishop Makarios of Qatar. We have read your letter with great attention, together with Our Holy and Sacred Synod, and have studied it closely.

We gladly bring forth Our best possible response, and on

behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod, first desire to inform You that We deeply share in the difficulties, adversities and trials of the sister Church of Antioch and of the Syrian people, which we have shown through our long cooperation with Your predecessor, the ever-memorable Patriarch Ignatios of Antioch, in the meetings of the Primate of the Senior Patriarchates of the Middle East in Jordan and Cyprus, and their visit to the European Union. We have also shown Our active support for the displaced Syrian people and our brethren in the Zaatar refugee camp in Jordan, and by condemning the abduction of the two hierarchs, Your consanguineous brother Metropolitan Paul of Aleppo and Alexandretta and hierarch of the Syriac-Jacobite Church, Metropolitan Grigorios of Aleppo.

The issue at hand, which should not have been an issue to begin with, is that the sister Church of Antioch has an underlying problem with the election and ordination of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Qatar. We have extensively explained the reasons for the canonical presence and pastoral activity of our Patriarchate in the Emirate of Qatar in Our response letter to You (reference no. 213) dated March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013. So allow Us not to repeat to You the same explanation in this present letter.

In this present letter of response it is enough for Us to even acknowledge the concern raised by the Church of Antioch at the expense of the Church of Jerusalem. We never went and protested to any other sister Orthodox Church, but responded to the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, sending Our own delegation, which met with both Your delegation and that of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece.

In this meeting, which was under the auspices of the then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, Mr. Kostas Tsiaras, and the Director of the Department of Ecclesiastical

and Religious Affairs, Mr. Charalambos Manassis, statements and comparisons were presented by both the Patriarchate of Antioch and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem regarding the canonical jurisdiction of the Emirate of Qatar, and no agreement was reached by anyone concerning the issue. The delegation of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem suggested that a committee of Canon Law professors be assembled, which would study the entire issue and decide.

We now suggest dialogue so this issue can be resolved. However, in the instance that Your Beatitude does not accept dialogue, as You have told Us in Your recent letter, and reach a point where You do not recognize the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, We are very saddened because this act will not only break up the in-Christ communion and unity of Our two neighboring sister Churches, but also the entire Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, in such a possible deplorable situation, We will not cease in praying for the sister Church of Antioch and will continue to observe the communion of Christ-like love.

Awaiting Your positive response to the formation of a committee for the study of the entire issue, We send Our embrace in-Christ from the All-Holy and Life-Giving Tomb, We remain,

In the Holy City of Jerusalem, the 11<sup>th</sup> of October 2013

To Your Honored Beatitude

Beloved Brother in the Lord,

**THEOPHILOS III**

PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM