

HIS BEATITUDE ADDRESS TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR PASCHAL VISIT.

Jerusalem, 22 April 2014

Your Beatitude, Patriarch Nourhan,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Members of our Respective Brotherhoods,

Reverend Fathers,

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

With these words of joy, we welcome you to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem as we celebrate the Feast of Feasts. For “this is the day that the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it!” (Ps 117:24).

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we call to mind that we are those whom Divine Providence has summoned to be the guardians and the servants of the Holy Places. The Holy Places are the undeniable and ageless witness of our sacred history, for here the Light has shined from the Most Holy and Life-Giving Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ into our darkened world. For this Light dawned here first of all, and so made the earthly Jerusalem fully the image of the heavenly Jerusalem. Here the first day of the new Creation

dawned upon the world.

The eyes of all are directed to Jerusalem in this holy season – that is, they are directed on us. We should never forget that millions of people in every country take courage and inspiration from the celebration of the events of our Lord's passion, death, and resurrection in the Holy City, especially at a time of untold suffering, when our sister and brother Christians face so much fear and danger.

Jerusalem is the living oasis of the resurrection, and the Holy Places are the vibrant testimony of this reality. Our mission in the diakonia – in the self-emptying service -of the Holy Places, is a responsibility beyond ourselves and our region to all those, who look to Jerusalem in hope. Even the holy and glorious Apostles, who were sent by our Lord Jesus Christ to bring the light of the resurrection to all lands, were never cut off from Jerusalem.

So it is with us. Jerusalem is not of the past. Jerusalem remains a tangible, God-given and God-sustained source of the hope of the resurrection, and it is our responsibility to maintain this reality in ways that evident and life-giving.

May God grant to us all the strength and the resolve to be true and humble guardians and servants, that the Light that dawns from the Tomb may shine brightly in our life and spiritual mission. We wish you all the blessings of this glorious Paschal Feast.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Thank you.

His Beatitude

Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

