

H.B. ADDRESS AT THE PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY OF WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK AMMAN, JORDAN.

Amman, 27 April 2014

Your Majesty,

Your Royal Highnesses,

Our Fellow Judges,

Distinguished Honorees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the year 2010, at the initiative and encouragement of Your Majesty, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Resolution A/65, establishing the first week of February each year as World Interfaith Harmony Week. This action crowned over a decade of commitment by the General Assembly to focus the attention of the world in the creation of a culture of peace-building, non-violence, and mutual understanding among the faithful of different religious traditions, and it also highlighted the commitment of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to this crucial endeavor.

The first Interfaith harmony Week took place in 2011, and the first awards ceremony occurred last year. Each year commitment to the goals and ideals of this week has increased around the world and has contributed to the transformation of the life of

local communities, especially communities under pressure. This is the great gift of both the Resolution of the General Assembly and of the Royal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, which established the prizes we are awarding today. For however lofty our goals, however articulate our commitment, we recognize that nothing is real unless it is local.

Changes in human society happen at many levels, from leaders and governments all the way to the grassroots. We know that unless there is willingness and an openness to change in our local communities, any hope for genuine and lasting change in society will not bear fruit. The love of God and the love of neighbour are not simply nice ideas; they are commandments at the heart of the world's great religious traditions, and they must find a secure place in each human heart.

The great gift of World Interfaith Harmony Week is the emphasis that we place on the work of organizations and groups at the local level, where the lives of so many are touched and transformed directly, and where the love of God and the love of neighbour find tangible, practical application. This annual prize-giving ceremony not only awards those who have done outstanding work in this arena; it also highlights the many ventures around the world – a growing number each year – which seek to promote those values and virtues that are vital to the common human future that we must build together.

We congratulate this year's prize winners, and we encourage all those others who have shared with us the work that you are doing around the world. We bring to all of you the spiritual blessings of Jerusalem, the city that is holy and dear to us all. All people of peace and good will are the children of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem stands, as it has stood for millennia as a beacon of hope in a troubled and anxious world.

May God bless us all as we seek to live more completely the commandment to love God and our neighbor, and May God give us all the strength and courage to advance the spirit of World

Interfaith Harmony Week wherever we live and work.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem