

# **H.B. PATRIARCH THEOPHILO'S ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF H.A.H. PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW I AND H.H. POPE FRANCIS I IN THE HOLY SEPULCHER.**

CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER, 25 May 2014

An Address on the Occasion of the Visit of His All-Holiness  
Patriarch Bartholomew I and His Holiness Pope Francis I to the  
Church of the Anastasis in Commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary of the Meeting of the late Patriarch Athenagoras I  
and the late Pope Paul VI in Jerusalem in 1964

**Your Holiness Pope Francis and Your All-Holiness Patriarch  
Bartholomew,**

**Christ is risen!**

As we gather here in this sacred place before the Most Holy and Life-Giving Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ in commemoration of the historic meeting 50 years ago of the late Patriarch Athenagoras I and the late Pope Paul VI, we recall the words that we pray with great intention at every celebration of the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom:

*For the peace of the whole world,  
for the stability of the holy Churches of God,  
and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.*

We to whom divine providence has entrusted the guardianship and diakonia of the Holy Places, and to whom the pastoral ministry to the Christian communities of the Holy Land has been committed, welcome Your Holiness Pope Francis and Your All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew to this gathering in the bright and glorious light of the resurrection. Our gathering here is a confirmation and a celebration of the common path towards reconciliation and full communion that began 50 years ago in this very place.

In the course of the last half-century, we have enjoyed the fruits of deepening theological dialogue between our Churches. This dialogue has fostered encounters between our faithful, removed all sorts of obstacles between us, encouraged reconciliation, prompted the healing of unfortunate memories, and been an example to Christians of other communities to seek a more profound and enduring unity in Christ.

According to Saint Makarios of Egypt, “the Lord came on this earth to suffer on behalf of all and to buy them back with his blood and to put the heavenly leaven of goodness into faithful souls.” He also said that the Lord continues to perfect in faithful souls “all virtues until they are leaven into one in the good and they can become with the Lord One Spirit’” (Hom. 24:3).

Our commitment to the pilgrimage of unity is precisely this: to grow in the perfection of the virtues so that the heavenly leaven that makes us one Spirit with the Lord may rise in us, and be a sign of hope for a world in despair and confusion. For, as Saint Makarios wrote, “without this heavenly leaven

which is the power of the divine Spirit it is impossible" for us to "be leavened with the goodness of the Lord and so reach life."

We pray today not only for the union of our Churches and for the union of all, but also for the peace of the world, and particularly for the peace of this region, which is the cradle of peace. We remember our sisters and brothers and all innocent victims in blood-soaked Syria.

The Holy Places in this Holy Land are the eloquent martyria of our faith in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ, "who is now crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. 2:9). The Holy Places are the common refuge of humanity, and they shine with the brightness of the true Light, a beacon of peace and spiritual refreshment for all.

On behalf of our brothers, the Custos of the Holy Land and the Armenian Patriarch in Jerusalem, and the other Heads of Churches and Christian communities gathered here, we call upon God our Father that the light of resurrection that shines from the Most Holy Tomb of his Son our Lord Jesus Christ may enlighten our minds and warm our hearts, so that the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of unity and the Spirit of the bond of love, may guide our steps towards the fullness of that unity for which Christ prayed.

*O Christ the true Light, you enlighten and sanctify every person who comes into the world: may the light of your countenance shine upon us, that in your light we may see the unapproachable Light. And direct our steps to the keeping of your commandments; through the intercession of your Most Holy Mother and all the Saints.*

*(From The First Hour)*

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem