

HIS BEATITUDE ADDRESS TO M.E.C.C. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN HOTEL MARRIOTT- DEAD SEA.

22 of January 2015

“Every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit”, (Matt. 7:17).

“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit”, (Matt. 12:33), says the Lord.

Very Reverend Secretary General,

Your Graces,

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the M.E.C.C.,

As we gather here in the area beyond the Jordan River and the wilderness of Saint John the Baptist, We greet you with the joy of the Epiphany or the Holy Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The meeting of our M.E.C.C. Executive Committee is taking place in this current crucial time, in which the world in general, together with our Christian congregations and their fellow countrymen here in the Middle East, are facing many

challenges that urge us to respond. Therefore, this is the time that our Council as one unique body that demonstrates togetherness and unity and exemplary coexistence with our fellow citizens in our respective countries has the moral task to gather strength and raise loudly our Lord's prophetic words "The people who sat in the darkness have seen a great light and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death, light has dawned"-(Matt. 4:6).

Our mission is precisely this, to proclaim that indeed "Light has dawned", and that it is the same light that must be translated into action. That is to say, the M.E.C.C. must become the one and only effective instrument of peace and reconciliation to all people and to Christians specifically, who together with innocent people have become the main target of persecution and displacement from their own relative homelands. In this regard, the M.E.C.C. must make use of this unique composition, its physical presence and its unified power to draw attention of the international community, i.e. governments, organizations, and key world civic, religious and Church figures.

It is therefore recommended that an action plan be put into place, such as:

1. The establishment of an effective media and communication department that would become the primary source of information to the world regarding the Christians in the Middle East, a task that we seek to share with the World Council of Churches.
2. The consideration to capitalize on its role as a tool to morally encourage and financially assist the most vulnerable and those affected by life – threatening occurrences, and to remain a living *martyria*, i.e. witness, to the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The empowerment of our Council in regaining the collective support of efforts of its offices and

programs that would enable its Headquarter to resume its original forefront position.

In this context, We discretely suggest that an earnest appeal be made to the partners, donors and friends of M.E.C.C. to come forward, joining our common efforts and vocal concern. In doing so, there would be a limitation to the forced migration and negative circumstances of Middle East Christians and a contribution to the diversity and growth of the Churches within M.E.C.C.

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to His Majesty King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, for his firm advocacy of the presence and protection of Christians, as a custodian of the Christian and Islamic Holy Places in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

We would also like to thank the Secretary General of this Council, Reverend Father Michael Jalakh and his staff, including the Director of the M.E.C.C. office in Amman Miss Waffa Ksouss for the tireless efforts to make this convention possible, and of course for his commitment to the mission of our Council.

Thank you, and We wish success in our deliberations.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem