

HIS BEATITUDE ADDRESS AT THE YOM HASHOAH CEREMONY AT THE B'NAI B'RITH MARTYRS' FOREST JERUSALEM.

16 April 2015-10 am

Your Excellency Mr. Ambassador, Mr. Schneider,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Rabbi Negrin,

Mr. Constantinis,

Mr. Batis,

Leaders of the B'nai B'rith Organization,

Esteemed Guests from Greece,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are honoured to address this distinguished gathering on this important and moving occasion, We remember today Rabbi Moshe Pesaeh of Volos, as well as other extraordinary citizens of Voles, Jew and Christian alike, 'who helped to ensure the survival of most of the Jewish community there during the gruesome Second World War, When so many Jewish communities in Europe were wiped from the face of the earth, the Jews of Volos were able to endure.

Among Rabbi Moshe Pesach's most visible collaborators was Metropolitan Joachim of Demetrias, as well as other Greek Orthodox clergy from Volos and the surrounding region. During

the German occupation, Metropolitan Joachim encouraged the residents of Mount Pelion to hide Jews from the Nazis. When he was interrogated for information about Jews in the area, he once famously replied, "I am a Jew". Metropolitan Joachim was instrumental in saving the lives of more than 700 people, and for this he is memorialized among the Righteous of the Nations.

We are all too aware in our own day, least of all in this region, of the threat of persecution, terrorism, and genocide. For, "Indeed the hour is coming, when those who kill you think, they are offering service to God" (John 16:2). Sadly, there is a growing need for vigilance in our world, where people suffer every day on account of their religious affiliations, their ethnic origins, or their convictions of conscience. While there will always be a need for courage like that of Rabbi Moshe Pesach and Metropolitan Joachim, we also need a new and urgent commitment to end the inhumanity that we see on a global scale.

May Rabbi Pesach and Metropolitan Joachim be an inspiration to all of us, not only to defy those who use violence to deprive the human family of our dignity and diversity, but to see the reflection of God in every human soul. By their examples, may we be firmly resolved to live lives of hope, commitment, and love.

And may their memory be eternal! Thank you.

His Beatitude

Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem