

REMARKS AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE SACRED AEDICULE IN THE CHURCH OF THE ANASTASIS

22 March 2016

Your Excellency Father Pierrebattista, Your Beatitude Patriarch Nourhan, Esteemed Members of the Project Team, Your Eminences, Your Graces,

Beloved Members of our Respective Brotherhoods, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we mark the formal beginning of the project for the restoration of the Sacred Aedicule in the Church of the Anastasis. This project is being carried out by a team of specialists from the National Technical University of Athens under the supervision of Professor Moropoulou, whose important report has recently been completed and published. This report was submitted to the three Communities here in Jerusalem in February of this year, and the work can now begin;

We wish to acknowledge the consensus that the three Communities have reached so that this project could proceed. We are grateful to the Custos, Father Pierrebattista, and to the Armenian Patriarch, Patriarch Nourhan, for their commitment to this work. In so doing, the three Communities, which are the historic guardians and servants of the Holy Places, are fulfilling the historic responsibility that has been entrusted to us by the Status Quo, the provisions of which have been honored both in the process of producing the report and in the renovation work that is about to start.

For the first time in over two centuries, the Sacred Aedicule

will receive urgent restoration and renovation. This restoration will secure this Holy Place for generations yet to come for all those pilgrims and people of good will who come to this church to seek spiritual renewal. During the entire process of renovation, the Holy Tomb will remain accessible to pilgrims without disruption, and for this careful planning and execution we owe the project team a huge debt of gratitude. The Holy Tomb must always be open to all.

May God bless this work and those whose responsibility it is to carry it out, and may the renovation of the Holy Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ be a beacon of hope for a hurting world.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem