

# **HIS BEATITUDE SPEECH ON THE DECORATION OF THE CUSTOS OF THE HOLY LAND FR. PIERREBATTISTA PIZZABALLA.**

30 March 2016

“For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus”, (1 Tim 3,13).

Your Paternity the Custos of the Holy Land Fr. Pierrebattista Pizzaballa,

It is in the frame of the words of Saint Paul that the Fraternity of the Holy Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ has decided to honour You with the Cross of the Holy Sepulchre.

Your diaconia as Custos of the Holy Land and head of the Franciscan Fraternity has been exemplary. For during your tenure here in the Holy City of Jerusalem, you have been instrumental in building trust and mutual respect between the various religious and Christian Communities in general and our Greek Orthodox Community in particular.

The harmonious cooperation between our respective Fraternities both in the Holy Sepulcher and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and elsewhere has fostered our common martyria of our Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, has produced the historic consensus between our three communities, namely Armenian, Franciscan and Greek over the restoration of the Aedicule of the Holy Tomb, something that for many was considered totally unattainable, today nevertheless is a reality.

Your Paternity, with these words we would like to express our deep appreciation both to your Brotherhood and to you personally.

No matter what is going to be your new monastic and pastoral assignment, for us here in Jerusalem. I mean for us that we have known you as a spiritual leader and pastor and of course a priest working in the vineyard of our common Lord Jesus Christ, you will be considered part and parcel of our Christian Mission in the Holy Land and more specific in the Holy City of Jerusalem. A mission that has been bestowed upon us from the divine Providence, in order to keep, serve and guard the Holy Places as places of Worship and places of spiritual refreshment for the many thousands of pilgrims who are coming for the source of the crucified and resurrected Love of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is risen!

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem