

# HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM ADDRESS TO THE ARMENIAN BROTHERHOOD OF SAINT JAMES

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

9 January 2017

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of our Respective Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers,

We welcome you to our Patriarchate on this joyous Feast, and we greet you with words of celebration from the Service of Matins for the Feast of the Nativity:

*Our Saviour, the dayspring from the East,*

*has visited us from on high,*

*and we, who were in the darkness and shadow,*

*have found the truth,*

*for the Lord is born of the Virgin!*

This is our joy, that the darkness has been dispelled by the one true Light, the Incarnate Logos.

As we celebrate the joy of the manifestation of this Light on earth, we wish to take this opportunity, Your Beatitude, to express our gratitude to you for the effort and attention that have found expression in the common work of the restoration of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, and the ongoing work on the Church of the Nativity.

We cannot over-emphasize the significance of this, and the fruit of peace and understanding that this represents. We must give our best efforts together to building up and strengthening this relationship, and we know from our experience that dialogue has proved to be the only way to resolve family disagreements and misunderstandings and to bring about a new unity of purpose.

We fully appreciate the spirit of understanding, mutual respect, and common witness that has been shown by Your Beatitude, and we assure you of our full support as we continue together in this common work and common *martyria* for the well-being of our respective communities, for the people of the Holy Land, and for our wider world.

In our respective traditions, there is a close theological relationship between Feast of the Nativity and Feast of the Theophany, and the Incarnation of the Divine Logos reveals to us the life of the Trinity in the waters of the River Jordan. May the joy of our celebrations of the Nativity and the Theophany, in which the divine life is revealed among us in human flesh, give us renewed spiritual strength and purpose for the work before us.

Thank you for the expression of your greetings in this glorious Feast.

May Christ our God, who is born in the cave of Bethlehem, renew his joy in us and in the hearts of our communities and all the peoples of the Holy Land, that we may work for the fruits of truth, justice, and reconciliation, and may God

bless you and the members of your community this  
Christmastide.

We pray to our Lord Jesus Christ that the New Year will be a  
fresh season of reconciliation and co-existence of the  
Abrahamic traditions in the Holy Land, for this is the work  
that brings forth the fruit of peace.

Thank you