

H. B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM & MRS MOROPOULOU PRESENT THE RESTORATION PROJECT OF THE H. EDICULE AT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

On Tuesday 1st/14th March 2017, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos arrived in Brussels by the Israeli airlines El-Al from Tel-Aviv, escorted by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Aristarchos of Constantina and Archdeacon Mark.

At Brussels airport, His Beatitude was welcomed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate Most Reverend Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium and Priests from his Metropolis. At the Hilton Brussels Grand Palace Hotel where His Beatitude was hosted, He was welcomed by the Professor of the N.T.U.A. Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou, who had arrived a little earlier.

Around noon of the same day, His Beatitude addressed the European Commission members with reference to the completion of the restoration project of the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, as follows:

“Dear Deputy Director General Mrs. Claire Bury,

Deputy Director Mr. Javie,

Mrs Moropoulou,

Respected Presenters and Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We thank you for your invitation to say a few words to this

special gathering, and we bring you greetings from Jerusalem. As we gather here, we remember the words of the Psalmist:

I was glad when they said to me

“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”

Jerusalem...built as a city

that is bound firmly together

to it the tribes go up,

the tribes of the Lord.

Jerusalem has been down to ages, and continues to be in our own day at the heart of the European civilization. Jerusalem is the spiritual capital of the human family, where not only the adherents of the three great Abrahamic traditions, but all people of good will, without distinction, find a spiritual home.

There is a great deal of current rhetoric about the clash of civilizations, especially in the Middle East. But in Jerusalem we have a synthesis of civilizations. In Jerusalem all the great currents of human thought, endeavour, and religious yearning have formed a unique and inter-related pattern. As we know, civilizations are all derived from the same human mind, soul and spirit. Civilizations are human constructs and have the same human longings at their base. In Jerusalem the best of several civilizations have met, and we see the fruits of this reciprocity.

As you know, we have been engaged in the last few months in the renovation and restoration of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre. This is one of the holiest places in Jerusalem and its significance for the European civilization is impossible to be over-estimated. And since it is the case that human civilization is about the highest aspirations of the human mind and soul, it is also the case that all human

existential concerns find their resolution in the Sacred Edicule, which gives hope and consolation beyond our everyday concerns and worries. Here we see a great synthesis, a unique coming together of the human heart, and in this synthesis we see a way forward to gather all the streams of civilization that the human mind has brought into being.

The human soul is eager to return to the source of its being. The human soul longs for integration, for wholeness, for the restoration of its original vocation and destiny. We have said in a number of different settings that engineers, architects, and those scientists who give themselves to the building and restoration of monuments of universal value are also, in a sense, spiritual engineers. For at the basis of all building is the search of integration, the marriage of form of purpose that enables the human community to attain to its divine potential.

Jerusalem represents just this same synthesis, just this same unity of purpose. In our world today, so many are distracted and confused, and there is much despair. Our European cultural heritage is a synthesis of great traditions that lift the human spirit to a higher plane, that refresh the soul as well as the mind, and that provoke in us a commitment to a deeper understanding of our common humanity.

May your work prosper the best of this human endeavour, so that the human family may be strengthened and make reality a more complete co-existence and mutual respect.

Thank you."

The scientific presentation of the full project was given by its scientific superintendent, Professor of the N.T.U.A. Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou

with the following lecture:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/e0v5p7dlfxhst1n/08_2_Brussels_March_

2017_EN.pdf?dl=0

From Secretariat-General

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