

# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM VISITS HIS HOLINESS THE POPE OF ROME**

On Monday 10th/23rd October 2017, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III visited His Holiness Pope Francis of Rome at the Vatican.

His Beatitude's entourage on this visit were Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Archdeacon Mark.

Upon His arrival at the airport of Rome on Sunday evening, 9th/22nd October 2017, His Beatitude was welcomed by the Most Reverend Bishop Farrell and Reverend Fr. Andrea Palmieri.

In the meeting, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem raised with His Holiness the Pope the recent problem of all the Christian Churches of the Holy Land, caused by the two recent issues; namely: the proposed bill by 40 Members of the Knesset which, if passed into law, would deny the rights of the Churches to freely deal with their land properties; and the recent decision of the Israeli District Court in Jerusalem, which gave effect to the unauthorised and illegitimate contracts relating to the Jaffa Gate properties that belong to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

His Beatitude asked for the support of His Holiness the Pope regarding the efforts to solve the aforementioned problems and for the preservation of the Status Quo especially in the Old City of Jerusalem, which has always guaranteed the rights and customs of Jewish, Christian and Muslim quarters in the Old City. This issue is more accurately explained in His Beatitude's address in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/10/23/35398>

His Holiness Pope Francis listened attentively to the presentation of His Beatitude and stated that the Status Quo in the Holy City must be defended and preserved. The points of His Holiness address are stated in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/10/23/35400>

His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III thanked His Holiness Pope Francis and wished Him the grace of the Holy Sepulchre in the performance of His pastoral work as the head of the Roman Catholic Church; and He offered Him the icon of the Nativity of Christ.

This problem which concerns not only the Patriarchate of Jerusalem but also all the Christian Churches of the Holy Land were raised in detail by His Beatitude in other meetings that He had during His stay in Rome; namely: with His Eminence Archbishop Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States; with His Eminence Cardinal Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; with His Eminence Cardinal Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and with His Eminence Cardinal Parolin, Secretary of State.

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III expressed His thanks to His Holiness Pope Francis for these meetings, for His hospitality in the Vatican hotel "Domus Sanctae Marthae"; as well as for the meal which he enjoyed with His Holiness.

His Beatitude departed for Jerusalem on Wednesday morning 12th/25th October 2017.

## From Secretariat-General

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