

# THE PRIVATE MEETING OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM WITH HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW

On Saturday evening 19<sup>th</sup> November/2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017, soon after the termination of the Assembly of the Sacred Synod of the Hierarchy of the Russian Church, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos had a meeting with His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril.

In this meeting, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril thanked His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos for the welcoming reception He always offers the Russian pilgrims and politicians and for His position regarding the issue of Ukraine.

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos replied as per the address in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/12/02/36236>

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Russia thanked His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem for this briefing regarding the proposed bill in the Knesset and the preservation of the Status Quo in the Old City of Jerusalem, and continued by saying that They consider the Hagiotaphites to be the guardians of the Holy Shrines and the Status Quo in Jerusalem. As it happened in the past, He said, if the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood had not existed, neither the Most Holy Shrines would have existed up to the present. We praise the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood for its role of preserving the Most Holy Shrines. We express our gratitude towards the Brotherhood for its mission, which demands power, wisdom and bravery, and the Russian Church also considers the protection of the Most

Holy Shrines its mission. For the sake of the Most Holy Shrines, Russia engaged in the Crimean War with all Europe. Today Russian considers the role of the Patriarchate quite important for the preservation of the Most Holy Shrines. The relations between the Patriarchate of Moscow and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem are on the rise. This helps Us discuss two current issues that concern Our Churches.

On the occasion of our meeting, His Beatitude continued, we refer to Ukraine, where the existing deep political conflict is being interpreted as an invasion of Russia to Ukraine. This claim is not true. Russia resists the occurring issues in Ukraine. In Ukraine, plans against our Church are being promoted, with an aim to change its title and pass it over to a schismatic movement, while our Church will be called Russian Church for the secession of our faithful from our Church. Another proposed bill is the effort of schismatic organizations and Uniates. Our faithful there are being persecuted by court decisions which are not been executed by the Government. Another proposed bill is that the Church definitions and the election of its Bishops owe to have the government's approval in advance. I wrote to the Pope of Rome and the World Council of Churches regarding these issues. There was a reaction on this matter by the Pope of Rome and the Chief Secretary of the World Council of Churches with an official letter from the latter. Due to this protest, at present the proposed bills lie dormant, however, they could be brought up again for discussion and promotion. Despite all these, the Hierarchs of the Russian Church of Ukraine came to this Council without hesitation. We thank You for Your presence today in the Assembly of the Hierarchy as well as for Your forthcoming presence at the festivities for the memory of Saint Catherine in Ekaterinsburg.

Moreover, on this occasion, His Beatitude Patriarch Cyril enquired on the Qatar issue.

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem thanked His Beatitude

Patriarch Cyril for His genuine interest in favour of the Holy Land, which is a continuation of His predecessors' interest, and that of the Russian peoples', who revere the Most Holy Shrines and especially the Holy Sepulchre. We are aware, His Beatitude said, that the ecclesiastical and political support of Russia can be taken for granted. The Russian pilgrims' presence is of a special significance, because they convey a message to the religious and political authorities of our region. The Orthodox visitors in the Most Holy Shrines are not "tourists", as they are often referred to by the political authorities, but pilgrims. We, being the Hagiotaphites, represent all Orthodox brothers of ours at the Most Holy Shrines. Without the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, the Most Holy Shrines would not have been preserved to this day. In my speech earlier at the Assembly of the Hierarchy I said that the Holy Sepulchre belongs to the whole world. The Brotherhood's mission is to preserve the All-holy Tomb and all the Shrines so that they are available to all people.

Your Beatitude, We express Our gratitude for Your undivided support to the Most Holy Shrines.

As far as His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril's enquiry for Qatar is concerned, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem replied that the relations between the Jerusalem Patriarchate and the Patriarchate of Antioch are good. The Jerusalem Patriarchate has worked for years and created and established a multi-ethnic Inter-Orthodox Ecclesiastical Centre numbering approximately 10.000 members to the present. With the co-operation and the efforts of the representative of the Jerusalem Patriarchate Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, who is also multi-lingual, a refuge and support are being provided to the local Orthodox faithful, regardless their nationality. Nationalities of expatriate Orthodox faithful in Qatar include Jordanians, Palestinians, Greeks, Russians, and Romanians. The building of the Church of the Patriarchate in Qatar, His Beatitude said, is almost

completed, and by an open invitation His Highness the Emir of Qatar awaits Our arrival for the Consecration Ceremony.

**From Secretariat-General**