

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS ADDRESSES THE SYNOD OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN JORDAN

On Tuesday morning, October 24/ November 6, 2018, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, having being invited, addressed the Diocesan Synod (Majma) of the Anglican Church of Jerusalem, in Amman of Jordan. His Beatitude was escorted by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina. His Beatitude's address at the Synod with the topic "The Ministry of Reconciliation" is below;

Your Grace, Dear Archbishop Suheil,

Dear Father Hosam,

Your Eminences,

Beloved Clergy of our respective Churches,

Sisters and Brothers,

It is always a deep joy for us to be with you, dear Archbishop Suheil, along with the clergy and people of your Diocese, and we greet you warmly as you gather for your annual diocesan synod. You have chosen a timely topic – the Ministry of Reconciliation – for this is the great mission of the Church, especially in the Holy Land and in the Middle East, and we recall the words of Saint Paul, who wrote;

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the

message of reconciliation to us" (2 Cor. 5:18-19).

As we consider the theme of reconciliation, in the context of this synod, our mind naturally turns first to the work of reconciliation between the Anglican Community and the Orthodox Church in our joint international theological dialogue. Anglicans and Orthodox have enjoyed good relations for centuries, relations that have been built on mutual trust and respect. Our official dialogue is now almost half a century old, and we are enjoying the fruit of better understanding. At the recent meeting of the international dialogue, we were pleased that the Reverend Dr. George Dragas and Father Hosam were our respective representatives. They have made significant contributions to this dialogue.

This work of dialogue remains crucial for the well-being of our respective Churches as well as for our closer relationship here in the Middle East. We believe that our local relationship is contributing positively to this international endeavor. We remember the last meeting of the dialogue well, which was held at Saint George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, and this was an effective sign of our relationship. In a world increasingly defined by division, suspicion and enmity, Christians must labor harder for a deeper reconciliation among ourselves.

There is no doubt that true dialogue has the power to break down barriers and eradicate prejudice, which is so necessary in our contemporary situation. The mission of the Church of Jerusalem is precisely the commandment of our Lord to seek reconciliation, as we read in Saint Paul's letter to the Romans;

"We even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now receive reconciliation" (Romans 5:11).

In the Holy Land, throughout the Middle East, and of course, in our beloved Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, we stand firm in

our resolve to resist extremism of any kind, under the wise leadership of his Majesty King Abdullah II, and hold before our region and the world the work of true reconciliation, mutual respect, and genuine independence.

The ultimate message of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the love of God, and the ultimate mission of the Church is the transformation of the whole creation, which is rooted and grounded in love, so that we may live our true vocation as the sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father. As Saint Paul saying in the letter to the Romans;

“ We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies” (Romans 8:22-23).

We acknowledge, from our own experience in this region, that this is not an easy mission. It requires a single-minded conviction and a unity of purpose to which all Churches and Christian Communities of the Holy Land are called.

In this respect we express our gratitude to the local Churches, and more specifically to you, Your Grace, for joining our forces before the recent challenges to the Church in the Holy City of Jerusalem. Our Churches in the Holy Land have the unique privilege to be the guardians and the servants of the Holy Places, which are places of spiritual refreshment for all people without distinction. That is why this mission is a beacon of hope to the world, where there is so much uncertainty, confusion and iniquity.

The people from all over the world continue to come to Jerusalem. As Orthodox and Anglicans in this region we know the significance of pilgrimage, for thousands of pilgrims from our respective communities who come to the Holy Sepulchre and to Saint George's Cathedral every year from around the globe.

The liturgical richness of the Church of Jerusalem, and the spiritual energy that gushes forth from the Holy Sites, are undoubtedly a source of deep refreshment and renewal to those who come to the Holy Land, and we are witnesses to these things.

As we reflect on the theme of reconciliation in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have the example of His Majesty King Abdullah II and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Here we see reconciliation in action in a society where there is freedom of worship and a commitment to the building of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural society. Our ability to meet here as well as of those who live in the surrounding countries is an eloquent testimony to this reality.

May God bless you, dear Archbishop Suheil, in your pastoral ministry to your diocese, and may God bless all your clergy and people to be true witnesses of the crucified love of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the vocation of reconciliation. We wish you success in your deliberations.

And may God bless all the people of our beloved Middle East.

Thank you.

At noon of the same day, the Patriarchal Representative in Amman of Jordan, Most Reverend Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis offered a meal to His Beatitude and to many of the Priests in Jordan, who brought forth a discussion on the problems of the clergy and their flock and asked advice in order to deal with them.

From Secretariat-General