

THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM HONOURED FOR HIS ENDEAVOURS PROMOTING CHURCH UNITY, ANNOUNCES DECISION TO HOST PRIMATES IN JORDAN

21st November 2019, Moscow: His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem has been honoured for his dedication and ceaseless efforts in protection and support of unity of the Orthodox faith. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia presented His Beatitude with the Patriarch Alexy II Prize at a ceremony in Moscow. In his acceptance speech, His Beatitude announced his decision to open the Patriarchate's home in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan – conscious of the role of His Majesty King Abdullah II as Custodian of the Christian and Islamic sites in the Holy Land – to host his brothers, the Primate of the Orthodox Church, for dialogue on the preservation of Orthodox unity.

The Patriarch Alexy II Prize of the International Public Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Christian Nations is awarded for “outstanding activities in strengthening the unity of the Orthodox Christian nations” and “for upholding and promoting Christian values in the life of society”.

Speaking at the award ceremony, His Beatitude remarked:

“We accept this prize in humility on behalf of the Church of Jerusalem. For it is the mission of our Patriarchate, that is the Church of Jerusalem, which has been founded upon the redeeming blood of Christ, to be the focus of unity for the Orthodox faithful, and it is our vocation, as those to whom the diakonia of the Holy Sites has been entrusted by Divine

Providence, to ensure that they remain places of religious devotion and worship that are accessible to all.”

The Patriarch spoke of the ‘profound importance’ of church unity as a witness to the world, and the need for constant attention to this sacred duty.

“The unity of the Church in faith and life is a gift of the Holy Spirit, but it is our God-given responsibility – as those to whom the ministry of our Churches, being the mystical body of Christ, has been entrusted – to guard the unity of the Church, even to the point of undergoing sacrifice. We have no choice before God but to commit every effort to defend our unity.”

In service of this effort, His Beatitude invited his fellow leaders of the Church to meet together in Jordan.

“We would like to host, in our home as the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, our brothers, the Primates of the Orthodox Church, to gather in the spirit of fellowship – koinonia – so that counsel will be taken together for the preservation of our unity in Eucharistic communion.”

His Beatitude is widely recognised for his efforts towards unity of the Orthodox faith, in growing fellowship with Christians around the world, and welcoming them to the Holy Sites of Jerusalem; all while tending to the cherished relationships with other faiths and peoples in and around the Holy Land.

From Secretariat-General