

THE MEETING OF THE MAYOR OF JERUSALEM WITH THE HEADS OF CHURCHES AT THE PATRIARCHATE

At 11:30 on Monday morning, January 7/20, 2020, at the Great Hall of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, there was a meeting with the Mayor of Jerusalem Mr. Moses Leoni and his associates with the Heads of the Christian Churches and their companions.

In this meeting His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the Mayor on behalf of all the Heads of Churches as follows;

"Your Excellency Mr. Mayor,

Distinguished Members of the Municipal Government

Your Eminences, Fathers,

Respected Leaders of our Civic Organizations

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We greet you today with the hope and joy that this season carries, and which so many of our brothers and sisters from around the world associate with this Holy City.

Indeed, Jerusalem is sought by all who "long for flowing streams" (Ps. 42:1) of spiritual refreshment. It is a place of renewal, where every soul seeking proximity to God can find Him through veneration of the holy places and contemplations of the heart. The vibrant mosaic of our common life here is a testament to this dynamic.

It is for this reason that the Churches, who represent the Christian Community of the Holy Land and more specifically of the Holy City of Jerusalem, continue to promote this common

life, and remain steadfast in their ages-old mission to maintain the dignity of the holy places as places of worship for all people, and tend to the needs of our local Christian community, the community at large, and the several million pilgrims who visit Jerusalem each year.

This mission is well known by all who live here as an integral function to the well-being of this Holy City. Therefore, the *ab antiquo* rights of the Churches must be respected and continue to be taken into consideration. In the wake of challenges which we have faced in recent years, we are confident that the voices of the few who seek to destroy Jerusalem's multi-religious and multi-cultural character have no place moving forward.

We are also confident in your conviction, Mr. Mayor, toward the preservation of Jerusalem's unique character, as well as to the millions of people for which this Holy City is a light beckoning them toward peace and reconciliation, both here and beyond.

We pray that in this New Year 2020, through our respective religious and civic responsibilities, our common dedication to this Holy City of Jerusalem will lead us further down the path of mutual understanding and a peaceful, flourishing, co-existence. We also pray that 2020 be a year of blessings, peace, and prosperity for you, your families, and all people who call Jerusalem home, both physically and spiritually."

From Secretariat-General