

THE LATIN PATRIARCH IN JERUSALEM VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, 17/30 January 2021, the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, His Beatitude Pierre Battista Pizzaballa, visited officially the Patriarchate, accompanied by some of His clergy.

The Latin Patriarch was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Hieromonks.

On this official visit, His Beatitude addressed His Beatitude Pierre Battista Pizzaballa as follows:

“Your Beatitude,

On this occasion of your official visit at the newly appointed Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, we welcome you not as a stranger, but as an old and trusted friend. The news that His Holiness Pope Francis had appointed you as Latin Patriarch was widely welcomed both by your community and by all who are committed to the well-being of the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Saint Paul writes in the First Letter to Timothy:

“I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching... always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully (2 Tim. 4:1-2, 5).

For many years, first as Custos and then as a Bishop, you have shown yourself to be a faithful pastor to all those entrusted to your care in the spirit of these words of Saint Paul. You

are deeply familiar with your people at this place, and we are glad that in you as the new Latin Patriarch we have a colleague with experience who understands the problems and the challenges that the Christian communities are facing in our time.

During your time as Custos, and continuing after your appointment as Apostolic Administrator, the co-operation that has been built between our Brotherhoods and our communities has produced tangible fruits that have been crucial in helping us all, deal with the common issues that we are facing in defending the Christian presence in the Holy Land and safeguarding the integrity of the Holy Places for the whole world.

We cannot emphasise enough the importance of the mutual trust that has grown up amongst us. Never before has the co-operation between our communities proven so effective and productive in our common mission. We cannot forget the instrumental role that you played in the joint effort in the restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and we thank you for your unwavering steadfastness in this regard.

The pandemic has only made our mission more complicated and urgent. We have greater responsibilities and our mutual respect and co-operation are more crucial than ever before. We have every confidence that in your role as Latin Patriarch you will continue to give your best efforts to all that makes for stronger and even more effective relationships.

As we know, Jerusalem is the womb from which the Church was born, and in our own time, Jerusalem can be the womb from which new efforts for the unity of the Church may be delivered. Here in Jerusalem, we are a witness of the authentic spirit of ecumenism, for nowhere else on earth do so many Christian traditions celebrate together in one place in mutual respect and understanding and harmony. Each of us has our own traditions, customs, and culture, and we have a deeper

understanding of the true nature of dialogue. Needless to say, we should also mention the special place that our Anglican and Lutheran sisters and brothers have in this ecumenical vocation.

The Divine Eucharist is at the heart of the mission of the Church, and we must never lose our attentiveness to the path to the union of the Churches for which we pray in every Liturgy that will restore to us the common Chalice when once again we shall be able to be co-celebrants together at the altar. We are aware that we can never be complacent. We must deepen our communication with each other and sustain this ecumenical spirit in all that we do.

We congratulate you as you assume your new responsibility in this difficult time, and we assure you of our prayers and support, as together we place the safety and security of the Christian presence in our beloved Holy Land and the Holy Places before all other considerations.

May God bless you, and may God bless all the communities entrusted to your pastoral care.

Thank you."

His Beatitude offered the new Latin Patriarch an icon of the renovated Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre and a Patriarchate emblem.

Replying, the Latin Patriarch said that He came in Jerusalem 30 years ago, under obedience, then he was appointed as the Custos of the Holy Land and recently as the Patriarch of the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem. He had not aspired to these positions, but accepted them in obedience; therefore, Jerusalem has become an inseparable part of his life for the last 30 years. During this time, he accepted the co-operation of the Greek Patriarch as an important support in his mission, and for this reason, he is grateful and looks forward to the continuation of this co-operation and for the completion of

the restoration project at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General