

HIS BEATITUDE'S SPEECH AT KING ABDULLAH'S II RECEPTION IN JORDAN

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III met yesterday, April 27, with His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein in Jordan, who invited Church leaders in Jerusalem and representatives from the Islamic Endowments to affirm their support for the Jerusalemites in their unwavering efforts to preserve the multicultural identity of the Holy City.

His Beatitude gave a speech at the reception, which reads as follow:

"Your Majesty,

Your Royal Highness,

We greet you, Your Majesty, on behalf of the Christian communities of the Holy Land at this time when we are celebrating the Easter season, and we thank you for your welcome and your good wishes to us.

On behalf of our fellow Heads of the Churches and Christian Communities of the Holy Land, we wish also to extend to Your Majesty our sincere and heartfelt greetings during this holy season of Ramadan. During this time of fasting, spiritual reflection and prayer, we join with our fellow Muslim brethren

in our commitment to the foundation of our common belief, which is a tradition of peace, justice, mutual respect and the shared value of the dignity of human life.

All our traditions value the practice of fasting both for the individual believer and also for the wellbeing of the community as a whole; for fasting is conducive to soul searching which enables examination of one's thoughts and conscience as well as unites us in our complete dependence on Almighty God, reminding us that we share a common humanity and a common human destiny.

In this time, we are firmly reminded of our continuing gratitude to Your Majesty for your faithful custodianship of the Christian and Muslim Holy Places in our beloved Holy Land and particularly in the Holy City of Jerusalem. Your Majesty inherits and guards the Covenant of Omar ibn Al-Khattab to our predecessor Patriarch Sophronios with its' 1,400 years of guardianship of the rights of the churches.

This is the authentic example we have been living, under the Hashemite custodianship in Jerusalem and in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; and is of great encouragement and support to us, especially at a time when the Christian presence in the Holy Land, so vital to the historic peaceful coexistence within our region, is facing new and serious challenges. It is precisely at this time of year, when Christians and Muslims are keeping their holiest seasons, that the Holy Places speak eloquently and provide spiritual refreshment to people of good will both near and far.

We wish you, Your Majesty, the Hashemite Royal Family, and all our Muslim brethren, a peaceful and blessed month of Ramadan.

May Almighty God bless you, and all the people of our beloved Holy Land.

Ramadan Mubarak."

(Photos source: The Royal Hashemite Court Official Website)

