

THE SYRIAC-CATHOLIC PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday morning, 22 June/5 July 2021, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Antioch of the Syriac-Catholic Church, Mar Ignatius Youssef III Younan and his entourage visited the Patriarchate.

This visit was a continuation of his visit in Israel from Lebanon to settle His Eminence Mar Yacoub Ephraim Semaan as the Representative-Exarch of the Syriac-Catholic Church in Jerusalem. In this enthronement ceremony, the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem was represented by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias.

While at the Patriarchate's Reception Hall, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Antioch of the Syriac-Catholic Church Mar Ignatius Youssef III Younan was received by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers. His Beatitude addressed the visitors and referred to their cooperation at the Middle East Church Council. His Beatitude's address follows below:

"Your Beatitude,

Your Excellency,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

It is a joy to welcome you, Your Beatitude, to the Holy City of Jerusalem, and especially for the blessed occasion of the enthronement of His Excellency Bishop Yacoub Ephraim Semaan as

your Exarch in Jerusalem. We wish to express our formal congratulations to him as he assumes his responsibilities and joins us among the Heads of the Churches and Christian Communities of the Holy Land.

By the presence of your Exarch in Jerusalem, Your Beatitude, you affirm the spiritual significance of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is both the spiritual capital of Christianity and the spiritual capital of the whole world. And it is, therefore, the spiritual home of all people of goodwill. Here we live a truly ecumenical life. For we inhabit a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious landscape that has embraced many peoples for millennia. It is important that Jerusalem is the host of all our Christian traditions as part of this essential diversity of our experience in this region.

Your Beatitude is well known for your advocacy on behalf of Christians in our region, and you know well that our mission here is one of peace, mutual respect and co-existence., and reconciliation. We are called to the martyrria of the love of God that is made known in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that you will have a pleasant stay among us while you are in the Holy City, and we pray also for your new Exarch. May the light of the Holy Tomb enlighten him as he leads his community in the path of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May God bless all the peoples of Lebanon, Syria, and our beloved Holy Land.

Thank you.”

During this visit, there was also mention of issues related to the Middle East Christians.

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos offered His Beatitude the Patriarch of the Syriac-Catholic Church of Antioch a silver painting depicting Jerusalem, and an icon of the Theotokos, while to His companions He offered blessings

from Jerusalem. His Eminence Ignatius offered His Beatitude an icon of the Theotokos.

From Secretariat-General