

# FESTAL VISIT OF THE PATRIARCHATE TO THE ARMENIANS

The visit of our Patriarchate to the Armenian Patriarchate for their joint Feast of Christmas and Theophany, in return of their visit on our Christmas Feast, took place on Saturday morning, January 7/20, 2018.

On this visit His Beatitude and His entourage of Hagiotaphite Fathers were received by the Armenian Patriarch Manukian Nourhan and the Armenian Brotherhood in Jerusalem. His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the Armenian Brotherhood as follows:

“Your Beatitude, Patriarch Nourhan,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of our respective Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers,

As you celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, we wish to express to you our Christmas and Epiphany greetings, and we recall the beautiful words of one of our Christmas services:

Make glad O Jerusalem,

and all you who love Zion, keep the feast.

Today the ancient bond of condemnation of Adam is lossed.

Paradise is opened to us.

(Tone 4 by John the Monk)

The Divine Logos became flesh in a particular time and place, in our very midst here in the Holy Land. Here the opening of Paradise was announced to humanity in the Incarnation of the Divine Logos. Here the Divine-human encounter restored us to our rightful relationship with God and with each other.

We to whom the Divine Providence has entrusted the guardianship and the diakonia of the Holy Places understand this. So do our communities that have lived here down the ages. And so do the many thousands of pilgrims who flock to this Holy City and this Holy Land every month for spiritual refreshment.

We have long known the importance of this place, and we have also known the supreme importance of maintaining the patterns and supports that sustain our communities and the Christian presence in the Holy Land and the Middle East. We rejoice at this season in all that we have accomplished together, especially the restoration of the Sacred Edicule and we look forward to our further co-operation in phase II of the renovation of that part of Church of the Holy Sepulchre beneath the rotunda.

The world takes great encouragement from these joint ventures and from our unity of purpose, just as our unity of purpose in the face of recent threats to the Status Quo has been of supreme importance. As is well known, and as we have emphasized time and again, the Bill of Church Land and the Jaffa Gate case are real challenges to the well-being of our communities and to the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious landscape of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. As we have been bringing our case to the international community, we have seen how our common and united efforts have affected those whom we have visited, and we have been deeply encouraged by their statements of support for us all here in the Holy Land.

We do all this not for the sake of the Holy Places alone, but also for the well-being of Christians and their presence

in the land of the Nativity. We wish to take the occasion of these holy days to express our appreciation to you, Your Beatitude, and to all the Heads of Churches for your recent statement of support in addressing the challenges we are facing.

May the newborn Christ, whose incarnation makes the whole creation rejoice, deepen our bonds and give us grace to continue our joint efforts, both in the work we are doing in maintaining the Holy Places, as well as in defending our historic rights and privileges enshrined in the Status Quo. Mutual respect is fundamental to our harmonious co-existence and is of paramount significance to our mission here.

We wish you, Your Beatitude, a blessed Christmas, and we ask for God's blessing on your Brotherhood and o the Armenian Community in the Holy Land.

Thank you."

The Armenian Patriarch replied to His Beatitude's address, wishing a peaceful and cooperative New Year 2018.

#### **From Secretariat-General**

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# THE CUTTING OF THE NEW YEAR CAKE AT THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL

The cutting of the New Year Cake at the Patriarchal School of Zion took place on Monday afternoon, January 2/25, 2018. During the reception the School Director Reverend Archimandrite Mattheos welcomed H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The reception was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and members of the Greek Consulate, members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Greek Community. His Beatitude cut the New Year Cake wishing a peaceful and blessed New Year, full of progress and success for the students. His Beatitude distributed the pieces of the cake to the Consul General, the teachers, the guests and the students, who sang the carols and other festal songs.

## **From Secretariat-General**

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# THE CUTTING OF THE NEW YEAR CAKE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

The traditional cutting of the New Year Cake on the commemoration of St. Basil and the New Civil Year 2018 took place at the Reception Hall of the Patriarchate on Saturday evening December 31, 2017 / January 13, 2018.

The ceremony was attended by Hagiotaphite Fathers, clergy of the Patriarchate, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, pilgrims from Greece and faithful from the Patriarchate's congregation from various regions.

In this ceremony His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the guests as follows:

***“And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1.7)***

*Today our Holy Church has gathered us all in this sacred place of the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem, in order to give thanks to the Holy Trinitarian God for the change of the year of the goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Philip. 2:6-7).*

*The changing of the year of the Lord's goodness, namely our Ecclesiastical Year, coincides with the historic time of man's life on earth, and according to the psalmist: “As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more” (Ps. 103:15-16).*

*And we say this because the perception of the meaning of time*

as past, present and future, is not being understood "by cunningly devised fables" (2 Peter 1:16), but "according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25), of the Incarnate God and Logos and our Saviour Jesus Christ who was born from the pure blood of the Ever Virgin Mary and is of one essence with the Holy Spirit, according to the true witness of the words of the Bible: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me...To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Isaiah 61:1-2/Luke 4:18-19).

It is precisely this "Spirit of the Lord" the Holy Spirit of Christ which brings together and composes the institution of the mystical body of the Church in the world, that we should entreat at the beginning of the new year and say along with the wise Paul "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:4-6). And this Christ is "him which is, and which was, and which is to come" (Rev. 1:4).

It is evident through these revealing words that the Church introduces Christ's eternity within our historic reality, and it is being extended towards this eternity. And inside the Church, where the year becomes time, namely the quantity becomes quality, according to Ammonios, the memory of the past becomes memory in Christ. And the hope of the future becomes hope in Christ. For this reason, St. Paul quotes Prophet Isaiah (49:8) when he says "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

This anticipated time and the day of salvation refer to both the feast of the circumcision in the flesh of our Lord and God

*and Saviour Christ, and to the annual commemoration of our Father among the Saints Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia; in his honour we keep the Ecclesiastical custom of cutting the New Year Cake which bears his name.*

*This festal Ecclesiastical and Patriarchal event calls us to consider the words of Solomon's wisdom: "For thou loves all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made: for never wouldest thou have made any thing, if thou hadst hated it" (Wisdom of Solomon 11:23-24).*

*Behold my dear ones, the arena of repentance is being opened before us. This is what the beginning of the new year of the Church offers to us. This is the manner of celebrating the beginning of the new year. According to the Wisdom of Solomon: "For he hath given me certain knowledge of the things that are, namely, to know how the world was made, and the operation of the elements: The beginning, ending, and midst of the times: the alterations of the turning of the sun, and the change of seasons: The circuits of years, and the positions of stars" (Wisdom of Solomon 7:17-19).*

*Taking under consideration the meaning of Time according to our God Jesus Christ, let us entreat the Great Hierarch Basil of Cappadocia, who has enriched the morals of the people, to intercede to our Saviour, who was circumcised in the flesh, for our souls and for the peace of the whole world, as well as for the peace in the much suffering region of the Middle East. Let us say with the hymn writer: "O Maker of all creation Who hast established the times and the seasons in Thine own power; Bless the crown of this year with Thy goodness, O Lord, and keep our rulers and Thy flock in peace, by the intercessions of the Theotokos" and Ever-Virgin Mary; keep in peace our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, our Christian Congregation the Holy City of Jerusalem and our noble nation. Amen.*

***Have an auspicious, happy and blessed New Year 2018.***

## ***Many Happy Returns!***

Following His Beatitude's address festal hymns of the day were chanted and His Beatitude cut the New Year Cake wishing a happy New Year to all. While His Beatitude was distributing the pieces of the cake, the Zion School students were singing the carols. Likewise, the students sang the carols at His Beatitude's house of residence and at the houses of many Hagiotaphite Fathers.

On behalf of the young people of our congregation, some young people addressed His Beatitude in Arabic as per the link below:

<http://www.jp-newsgate.net/ar/2018/01/13/35456>

### **From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE JERUSALEM PATRIARCHATE PARTICIPATES AT THE 3RD**



# **ARCHON INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM-THE PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

The Jerusalem Patriarchate took part in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Archon International Conference On Religious Freedom – The Persecution of Christians in the Middle East, in Capitol Hill, Washington D.C. on December 5, 2017. The Patriarchate was represented by Miss Anna Koulouris, secretary at the Secretariat-General office, who delivered the following speech on the Persecution of Christians and Possible Solutions;

“I would like to convey the blessings and greetings of His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem, who is currently in Russia continuing a shuttle tour to garner support from the international community on some of the issues I will discuss here today. We thank the Archons of the Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle for organizing such an opportunity to grapple with this issue of our time.

All the Churches in the Holy Land were completely united and immediate in their response to disturbing developments that unfolded this summer, following increasing efforts in the last few years by radical settler groups within Israel to alter the Christian character of Jerusalem.

The developments are twofold. On July 26<sup>th</sup>, an unprecedented bill was presented to the Knesset. The so-called “Bill of Church Lands,” which quickly gained 40 signatures with its initial proposal, aims to severely restrict the rights of all

the Churches over their own properties and lands. It is the result of lobbying efforts from the Jewish National Fund and radical settler groups with a like-minded agenda to undercut the Churches, particularly the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which is the largest property owner among them and which recently challenged the JNF for refusing to negotiate fairly on the extension of leases. Since July, a firestorm of baseless attacks in the media have fed into a campaign designed by the JNF to divert attention from their own errors and wrong-doing. Regardless of this bill's chance of passing into law, its mere concept and immediate backing by a third of the Knesset, already demonstrates a very dark reality. This is a turning point in which radical elements are fighting to strip Jerusalem of its multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural integrity.

The second occurrence in July of this year was a Jerusalem District Court ruling against the Church mainly regarding two landmark hotel buildings belonging to the Patriarchate in the Old City's Jaffa Gate. In 2004, under the leadership of the now deposed Patriarch Irineos, an unauthorized deal for long term leases was made with the radical settler group Ateret Cohanim. For 10 years, the Patriarchate has challenged this illegal deal, during which it unequivocally proved that the person concluding the deal was not authorized by the Patriarchate, had received a bribe, that there was bad faith, conspiracy, and that agreements were made without the due authority of the Patriarchate. Despite the abundantly clear evidence, the Court ruled in favor of the settler group. An appeal has been filed, but a danger is materializing in the meantime. These radical settler groups feel encouraged in their openly stated mission to "liberate the Holy Land from all non-Jewish elements."

Last November, members of Ateret Cohanim forcefully tried to seize part of the Patriarchate's Gethsemane dependency, which is in the courtyard of the Holy Sepulcher Church. They broke

through the ceiling and erected an iron barrier.

In the last few years, settlers have increased their violent conduct, especially toward Christians, in an attempt to intimidate them out of the city. They harass and spit at our clergy on a daily basis, desecrate our churches and cemeteries, uproot our trees, block our entry to pray at some common sites, such as the Last Supper Room, and regularly commit arson. For this, civic authorities put out condemnations but the reality is the perpetrators face virtually no consequence.

When civic organs of the city of Jerusalem, particularly the Municipality, do not actively pursue visions of inclusion and mutual respect, they aid such a vision of exclusivity and intolerance, and in fact normalize it. Commitment from the government is an essential element in fostering peace. Their silence in the face of violence sends a clear message, that such hateful acts are tolerable.

This is not the disposition of peace-makers or protectors. This is not the attitude of people who understand Jerusalem for the holy place that it is – a place of encounters between human and divine. Jerusalem embraced the bodies of the prophets. Its winds carried their voices. In fateful hours, its earth soaked their blood and hosted their relics. If this is what Jerusalem is for the whole world, who could be bold enough to claim it for only himself?

Most of Jerusalem's holy sites are sacred to more than one, if not all three faiths. In fact, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III argues that Jerusalem itself, as a whole, is a holy site. Who can say that a holy site should be accessible to some but not to others? In the Christian tradition, the holiness of a particular place is not dependent upon our presence there because holiness is not created by us. We simply nurture it where it's found. Therefore, anyone can be allowed to share in its sanctity. Fighting for exclusivity

over holy sites per se, defies their very nature.

In this wisdom, the mission of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem has always been to protect the holy sites as places of worship, open to all people indiscriminately. Nowhere is this more apparent than inside Holy Sepulcher Church. On any given day, at any hour, you will find people of all faiths inside. The stone walls and floors are buffed to smoothness by the thousands of hands and feet that have passed over them. With all your senses you can experience the place freely without barrier. This is by design, it's not an accident.

This mission of inclusion has also allowed the Church to survive countless invasions and war over the course of 2,000 years. In one of the Holy Land's most beloved examples, during the Arab invasion of 637, Patriarch Sophronios signed a covenant with Omar ibn al Khattab, which led to an age of peace where there otherwise could have been war. This covenant is recognized until today by all religious and civil authorities, upheld by the Patriarchate and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority.

Yet, Ateret Cohanim, and other radical settler groups, are propelled by an aggressive motive to remove non-Jews from Jerusalem, as well as certain Jews considered as non-conformant, and they're gaining ground, especially in the Old City, which is Jerusalem's crown and core. They use underhanded methods such as coercion and undue authority to acquire property, and in their view, "redeem the land." Jaffa Gate is one of the strategic centers for achieving this goal. It lies at the heart of the Christian Quarter and is the entryway artery to all the Churches' headquarters, as well as for hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who visit the Holy Sepulcher Church just meters away. If settlers gain control of this area via the Jaffa Gate properties and push out tenants with the type of intimidating and violent tactics they're notorious for using, they will be able to implement their vision to permanently change the Status Quo and work toward

erasing the Christian presence from the Old City.

We take heart in the reality that as our ancient Patriarchates, “pillars and buttresses of truth,” (Tim. 3:15) carry forward through turbulent waters, whether hit head-on with storms, or targeted from dark corners, they are supporting one another.

In this spirit, let us work in our respective capacities to protect the Churches, “pillars and buttresses of truth (Tim. 3:15), and the Christian presence, which are a testament to, and the protector of, the sacred heritage we share.”

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# **HIS ALL-HOLINESS THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH IS OFFERED AN HONORARY DOCTORATE AT THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM**

In the agenda of the 10<sup>th</sup> Academic Conference of the “Orthodox-Jewish Dialogue” which takes place in Jerusalem from

22<sup>nd</sup> November/5<sup>th</sup> December to Thursday  
24<sup>th</sup> November/7<sup>th</sup> December 2017, the Hebrew University of  
Jerusalem decided to pay His All-holiness the Ecumenical  
Patriarch Bartholomew the honorable distinction of the DOCTOR  
PHILOSOPHIAE honoris causa.

For this reason, His All-holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch  
arrived at the Tel-Aviv Ben Gurion airport in the afternoon of  
Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November/5<sup>th</sup> December 2017, escorted by the Most  
Reverend Metropolitan Emmanuel of France and Cleopas of  
Sweden, Reverend Archimandrite Agathaggelos and Mr.  
Constantine Diakrousis.

The Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan  
Isychios of Kapitolias and the Master of Ceremonies of the  
Patriarchate Archimandrite Bartholomew welcomed the Ecumenical  
Patriarch at the airport, on behalf of His Beatitude the  
Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who had not returned from  
His delegation in Russia at that time.

Around 5:30 in the evening of the same day His All-holiness  
the Ecumenical Patriarch visited the Holy Sepulchre for  
veneration, accompanied by His Beatitude our Father and  
Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

After the Holy Sepulchre, His All-holiness the Ecumenical  
Patriarch went to the Patriarchate. There, His Beatitude the  
Patriarch of Jerusalem thanked His All-holiness the Ecumenical  
Patriarch for His attendance in the restoration ceremony of  
the S. Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre and for His work as the  
leader of Orthodoxy in favour of the Romans and offered Him a  
set of engolpia.

His All-holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew thanked  
His Beatitude the Patriarch Theophilos for His support to the  
Ecumenical Patriarchate and for inviting Him to attend the  
ceremony of the completion of the restoration of the Sacred  
Edicule and expressed His joy for their four meetings during

the year 2017.

Around 7:15 p.m. the same evening, His All-holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch attended the reception at the Notre Dame hotel on the opening of the Orthodox-Jewish Dialogue and addressed the members of the conference.

Later in the evening, at the Ceremony of the Hebrew University in Mount Scopus of Jerusalem, the Ecumenical Patriarch was offered an honorary Doctorate. The title was awarded to His All-holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew by Mr. Asher Cohen, President of the Hebrew University and Mr. Michael Federmann, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Hebrew University.

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem was represented in the Ceremony by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenopolis the Master of Ceremonies Arch. Bartholomew and other Hagiotaphite Fathers. At that time, His Beatitude was already on the flight to Ekaterinburg of Russia, in order to attend the festivities on the occasion of the Feast of St. Catherine.

### **From Secretariat-General**

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# THE JERUSALEM PATRIARCHATE HOSTS THE ORTHODOX-JEWISH DIALOGUE

The Academic Meeting of the Orthodox-Jewish Dialogue takes place in Jerusalem from Tuesday 22nd November/5th December to Thursday 24th November/7th December 2017. The Patriarchate hosts the meeting without covering accommodation costs.

Participants in this Dialogue are equally Jewish and Orthodox Academics, clergy or laity and their aim is to examine various aspects on both the Jewish and the Christian perspectives.

The topic of this year's Meeting is "The holiness of Jerusalem in Judaic and Christian tradition".

President of the Dialogue on behalf of Orthodoxy, is the Most Reverend Metropolitan Emmanuel of France. His Eminence belongs to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which took the initiative for the commencement and continuation of this Dialogue.

President on behalf of Judaism is Rabi Mr. David Rozen, who is the President of the International Jewish Committee on Religious Consultations (IJCIC).

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos marked the opening of the Meeting with a reception for the approximately eighty members of the Dialogue at the Notre Dame hotel. His Beatitude's address at the opening of the Dialogue follows in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/12/05/36270>



Other speakers who addressed the members were Rabi Mr. David Rozen, Mrs. Saron Regev on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel and the Ambassador of Greece in Israel Mr. Demetrios Bikas on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece.

The proceedings began on Wednesday 23rd November/6th December 2017, according to the agenda of the Meeting. Professor Mr. Spyridon Tsitigos spoke on behalf of Orthodoxy in English, with the title "Jerusalem as archetypal of the religious".

The opening of the Dialogue was honoured by the presence of His All-holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who visited Jerusalem on the occasion of His honorary Doctorate of Philosophy by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Mount Scopus and He also addressed the members of the Dialogue.

The closure of the Dialogue proceedings on Thursday afternoon, 24th November/7th December 2017, was followed by a meal. The Jerusalem Patriarchate was represented by the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias and the Master of Ceremonies of the Patriarchate Archimandrite Bartholomew.

The speakers' presentations and the outcome of the Meeting are published by the Most Reverend Metropolitan of France in his journal with the title Emmanuel.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# ASSEMBLY OF THE S.SYNOD OF THE HIERARCHY OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (3RD DAY OF HIS BEATITUDE'S VISIT IN RUSSIA)

On Saturday afternoon,, 19<sup>th</sup> November/2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017, the official Assembly of the Sacred Synod of the Hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church took place at the Conference Hall of the Holy Church of the Saviour Christ, which included proceedings of three topics, monasticism, marriage, and internal Constitution of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

The Heads of the Churches around the world addressed the members of the Synod according to the order; The Ecumenical All-holy Patriarch through a conveyed Statement, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Alexandria in person [who offered as a gift the omophorion of the Patriarch of Alexandria Meletios Pigas, which he was wearing when he signed the legislation of the Patriarchal institution of the Moscow Patriarchate at the time of Job, Patriarch of Moscow], His Beatitude the Patriarch of Antioch John in person, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III in person. The address of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem follows below;

*"Your Beatitude Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Cyril,*

*Brother and co-celebrant of Our Mediocrity.*

*Having arrived in the bearer of Saints and much suffered land of Russia from the Holy City of Jerusalem, we convey to You and the Holy Synod of the beloved Archbishops with You, as*

well as to the crowds of our brotherly Orthodox Russians the timeless hopeful message of the incarnate Christ the Lord of glory, Who lived as God-man in Bethlehem and the humble land of Palestine. We bless our brothers and sisters in Christ, by the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Holy Tomb.

Amidst the period of spiritual preparation for the forthcoming feasts of Christ's epiphany, towards which the holy hymn writer generously and gradually mystifies our minds and hearts, namely "the newest mystery of all new mysteries", the Incarnation of the Redeemer of the World, we feel that man's rebirth is primarily ensued through Via Dolorosa, as we commemorate in these sacred meetings of requiem and memory the recent harsh and onerous history of the Church of Russia. Moreover, the end of the Forty days of the Christmas fast, the Twelve-day festal period, coincides with the commemoration of martyrs such as the myriads of infants who were unjustly slaughtered by Herod for the name of the Lord, as well as that of Archdeacon Stephen the First Martyr, who during the martyrdom he suffered by his callous fellow citizens, saw the heavens open and the glorified Christ sitting at the right side of God the Father. The vision of the ineffable and uncreated light was the redemption for martyr Stephen. Similar divine visions of light were experienced by many new martyrs of the Russian nation in the recent years.

The martyrs' offenders ever failed to actually realize that our God is glorified by myriads of archangels and angels, and simultaneously by armies of martyrs, nor did they ever realize, that our God is made manifest on earth in the form of peace and good will among men. Martyrdom is central in the spiritual life; according to the Lord's beloved disciple John the Theologian, the martyrs "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). "They stand before the throne of God, and serve him" boldly for all eternity (Rev. 7:15). The One that sitteth on the throne of Glory our God, protects His servants from "the heat of the

day" namely the wickedness and maliciousness of the "rulers and the principalities of this world" (Eph. 6:12), because "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters" (Rev. 7:15-17). The martyrs beseech God that He may wipe out the wickedness of the world by His love, and that the Divine mercy, peace and righteousness of the God Who is beyond all visible, invisible and comprehensible things will prevail: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).

We glorify the worshiped in one Trinity God, because the prayers of the myriads of the new Russian martyrs, who have been not in the least inferior to the ancient ones, have liberated Your Church from tyranny and strengthened it, so that it marches towards the last times brightened and radiating with the glory of the Holy Saints according to the Lord's will.

The Church of Jerusalem glories especially, having being the womb of the martyrdom, because it was in Jerusalem that He Who "being in the form of God"... "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross", and the first to indicate the path of lifting the cross, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil.2:6-11).

According to the great master of monasticism and the Orthodox Doctrine Theodore the Stoudite, whose memory we celebrated only a few days ago, all beings and the whole of nature will kneel when sin will be abolished in the last day of judgment, precisely because sin lacks hypostasis "as it [sin] was nothing among the living things, but it existed and was

created by the free will of the doer [the person who had committed the sin]". At that time, only God's creatures will remain in existence, because they have a hypostasis, but sin will not, as it has no hypostasis. In addition, "the souls who have been led astray, having gone through all centuries without finding a place to stop, will come to God, Who has no limit, and then by realization and not by [spiritual] communication will they recover their strength, namely they will be restored to their ancient form and realize that God is not responsible for sin" (PG99, 1500D-1501B).

Such is the dominance of the glorified Lord, and such is the power of the plan of the ineffable Divine Providence. According to your native religious philosopher N. Berdyaev, the power of the kingdom of Spirit is elevated above this unmodified foundation against Caesar's kingdom. Many are the times throughout history, that the Church has witnessed the dominance of the kingdom of the Spirit. In this case, this is confirmed by the contemporary status of the brotherly Church of the Russian and other Orthodox Patriarchates and autocephalous Churches. The persecutions have ended and the Church has once more been highlighted as "gold in the crucible". Today the Orthodox Church is called again to bear witness to the truth in a secularized world which is being promoted by the Globalization. As it was recently noted in the Holy and Great Synod in Crete: "In these years of secularism, and in the face of the spiritual crisis which characterizes the contemporary civilization, the projection of the need to underline the importance of the holiness of life is significant...The Orthodox tradition, shaped by practising the Christian truths, is the bearer of spiritual and ascetic morals, which should be highlighted and promoted especially in our era". All of us the Orthodox faithful owe to bear witness to the Gospel of Christ dynamically and in unity, thus becoming the "light of the world" and "the salt of the earth". A matter of prime importance for the faithful is to realize that the starting point of re-evangelizing people is precisely

*the unity and the respect towards the ecclesiastical ordinances, and especially of the ordinance of the Synod. According to the Apostolic tradition, the Synod of each Church is the ordained body by God, to guide the pastoral and missionary work.*

*Your Beatitude, Holy Brother,*

*We know by personal experience the sensitive Russian soul, witnessed by the thousands of pilgrims who visit the sacred shrines of the Holy Land every year. The Russian Orthodox faithful lay their deepest heart, often in tears, primarily before the Horrendous Golgotha and the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb. The deep faith of these genuine faithful people leaves the Hagiotaphite Fathers ecstatic at times. The projection of our souls towards the All-merciful God in deep faith and patience draws His Mercy.*

*Therefore, we, both the clergy and the people are called, to imitate the Saints' example, in alignment with the timeless exhortation of the psalmist to each one of us: "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord" (Psalm 27:14). This waiting on the Lord is the God-taught narrow path for the victory over sin and death, and at the same time the creative course towards the true theology, which the world needs greatly in order to glorify God.*

*To Him all glory and power unto the ages of ages. Amen."*

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem also expressed His gratitude towards the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril and the President Mr. Putin for their support to the Jerusalem Patriarchate in our efforts to preserve the Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem and to protect the Christians of the Holy Land and the Middle East. Likewise there were addresses by the following; His Beatitude the Patriarch of Georgia

Elijah by a representative, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Serbia Eirinaios, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Bulgaria Neophytos, His Beatitude the Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostom, His Beatitude the Archbishop of Albania Anastasios, His Beatitude the Metropolitan of Warsaw and all Poland Savvas, His Beatitude the Archbishop of the Czech Republic and Slovakia Svatislav, His Beatitude the Metropolitan of America and Canada Tikhon in person.

After the addresses by all the aforementioned Hierarchs, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril thanked each and every one of the Heads of the Orthodox Churches and the Hierarchs of the Russian Church for their contribution in underlining the role of the Confessor and Hieromartyr Patriarch St. Tikhon in the reconstitution of the Patriarchal institution of the Russian Church, and declared the termination of the Assembly proceedings.

#### **From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE 12TH ENTHRONEMENT ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BEATITUDE**

# THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS

At 10:00p.m. on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017, there Ceremony with the Doxology took place at the All-holy Church of the Resurrection on the completion of twelve years since the Election and Enthronement of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The Doxology was led by His Beatitude, with co-celebrants the Archbishops and Hieromonks of the Patriarchate, and the participation in prayer of the noble congregation of monks, nuns and laity members of the Greek Community and the Arab-speaking congregation, and the honouring presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the representative of Romania in Ramalla. After the Doxology the Patriarchal Entourage returned in the Patriarchate. Therein, Geronda Secretrary-General addressed His Beatitude as follows:

*Your Beatitude Father and Master,*

*The Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches, along with our venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, commemorates and celebrates the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Your Beatitude's election as the Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, according to the official voting of the Holy and Sacred Synod. This celebration is in the manner of a thanksgiving Doxology and fullness in participation of monks, nuns, clergy and laity, who form the base and of the structure of the holy body of the Church and strengthen its unity in peace, especially at a time that it is being severely tested.*

*Through the decision of Your election and Enthronement in 2005, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood denounced illegal contracts mortgaging priceless for its material and more significantly*



*cultural value land and estate property of the Patriarchate, contracts which confound the over the centuries established Status Quo in the Old City of Jerusalem and seriously wound its Christian Churches. At that time, faithful to its mission over the centuries to safeguard the Holy Shrines, the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre stood up for this and protested strongly. Instead of corruption, it chose transparency and placed Your Beatitude an experienced captain of the ship of the Church which began with Saint James the Brother of God, and despite the disintegration and the storm it was not submerged.*

*Having accepted this mission, Your Beatitude has worthily worked for these twelve years, undertaking decisions and actions which establish the Patriarchate locally as well as in all Orthodoxy and Christianity, as a Church with a leading role among the Christian Churches of the Holy Land, in their mission for the protection of the Christians' rights and the peaceful co-existence with their Jewish and Muslim fellow citizens.*

*Proof of the leadership and reconciliation of the Patriarchate among the Christian Communities is the participation of Your Beatitude as the representative of all Christians of the Holy Land in the Conference for the peace in the Middle East in New York last July, with the initiative of the peacemaker Rabi Melhior; and above all, recent restoration and renovation project of the Sacred Edicule by the National Technical University of Athens, which was initiated by Your Beatitude and was completed only in a few months, despite the numerous difficulties, with the full co-operation of the Christian Communities.*

*As far as the Ecclesiastical property is concerned, irrefutable proof of Your Beatitude's interest in its favour is Your attitude towards the recent wrongful decision of the District Israeli Court, giving effect to the illegal contracts of the Jaffa Gate hotels that belong to the Patriarchate. Ever*

*since, Your Beatitude has not hesitated about neither toil, nor financial cost for the removal of this court order, which if applied, can be destructive for the established since the reign of Constantine the Great Christian Quarter.*

*In order to protect the Christian Quarter, Your Beatitude has mobilized the Christian Churches of the Holy Land, visited the King of Jordan, the Ecumenical Patriarch, the President of the State of Israel, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, the Pope of Rome, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of Cyprus and the President of the Democracy of Cyprus. This issue was also raised by Your Beatitude at the Conference of the European Churches in Cyprus, and the ongoing Meeting of the World Council of Churches hosted by the Patriarchate in Amman. In all aforementioned meetings Your Beatitude has been warning on the consequences of the implementation of the court decision, and has received serious commitments for its removal and the support of the Patriarchate in its efforts to preserve the Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem which guarantees the peaceful co-existence of its citizens in the traditionally set districts for each Quarter.*

*Praising Your Beatitude for all these, we the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood declare our intention to engage and join You in this mission, subjugating our personal will to the collective and ecclesiastical one, so as with the harmony and sequence of the members of the human body, we operate harmoniously, bearing fruit to our Sacred Community and the Greek Orthodox Arab-speaking Congregation.*

*Raising my glass on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and all the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, I wish Your Beatitude many happy returns, in peace, joy, steadfastness and health, with a governmental strength guided from on high, for the increase of Your noble works, for the praise of our blessed nation and the glory of our Trinitarian God. So be it.*

The Consul General of Greece as follows:

*Your Beatitude,*

*Your Eminences,*

*Reverend Fathers,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

*In feelings of joy and great honour, we participate today in the festive celebration of the twelfth enthronement anniversary of His Holy Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, here in the See of the Mother of Churches.*

*Today is a festive day for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, the Patriarchate, for Orthodoxy and for Greece.*

*This day is also a chance, Your Beatitude, to express the respect, love and gratitude on behalf of Greece for your great pastoral work, for the important national work of preservation and highlight of the Holy Shrines in the Holy Land and for the defense and projection of the ecumenical values of Orthodoxy.*

*Your Beatitude,*

*Your devotion in this sacred mission, Your focus in this very important work, quite often under adverse conditions, Your tireless efforts, within and outside the borders of the region for the defense of the Status Quo which has guaranteed the peaceful co-existence of the Religious Communities in the Holy Land for centuries, Your materialized vision and determining initiative for the restoration of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, the cornerstone of the Shrines that reconciles the peoples, nations and civilizations, as well as your steadfast promotion of peace-making, mutual understanding and moderation in a turbulent area which continues to face great challenges and where many are those who talk about peace, but very few the ones who honestly and effectively work towards its achievement, establish this Holy Institution a point of reference with a significant role.*

*For Greece, the defense of the Institution of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, and of its lawful rights is a priority of prime importance. The Mother of Churches symbolizes our long-term presence in the Holy Land, as well as the attitude of friendship and cooperation with all other peoples, according to the ecumenical values of Orthodoxy.*

*Your Beatitude,*

*The Greek Government and the faithful Greeks surround You always with their love and devotion. Greek Officials and civilians flock to the Patriarchate as pilgrims annually, highlighting the indestructible historic bond with it, as well as the importance they give to Your mission, Your work and the work of the Hagiotaphite Fathers.*

*Feeling the burden of Your responsibilities and sharing Your anguish, the staff of the General Consulate of Greece stand by Your side and pray as humble pilgrims that You may have health, strength and longevity to continue Your work, for the benefit of the Patriarchate, the Brotherhood, Orthodoxy, Your Greek-Orthodox Congregation, for the peace in the region and for the Nation of Greeks.*

*His Beatitude thanked and blessed them for their addresses and replied as follows:*

*Your Excellency Mr. Consul General of Greece,*

*Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,*

*Beloved Christians,*

*Noble pilgrims*

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).*

*Today, on the completion of the twelve-year ministry since Our*

*climb to the indeed martyr's Patriarchal throne of our Church of Jerusalem, we went to the All-holy Church of the Resurrection along with the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in order to praise the Trinitarian God in a thanksgiving Doxology, "for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Phil. 2:13).*

*This festive twelve-year anniversary does not refer to Our unworthiness, but to the God-founded Institution of the Church in the Holy Spirit, "which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:9-10) according to St. Paul.*

*Our spiritual and pastoral responsibility on the Hagiataphite established Mother of Churches so far, has aimed at nothing but the keeping of the Sacred and Apostolic consignment of our holy, immaculate and unadulterated Orthodox Faith, according to the order of the Apostle of Nations: "Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us" (2 Tim. 1:14). Moreover, Our aim has been the preservation and ministry of worship of the all-holy and most sacred shrines and the inalienable privileges and lawful rights over them of the noble nation of the Roman Orthodox people.*

*In addition, hearing the words of Prophet Isaiah: "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch" (Isaiah 62:1), We have set on an international campaign for the preservation of the existing multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and interreligious, namely Judaic, Christian and Islamic, Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem, which is being threatened by radical partisan groups and messianist settlor movements.*

We do this by our Patriarchal and Moral Mission of "peace in Christ by which God has called us to live in" (1 Cor. 7:15). "God is not of disorder but He is the God of peace" the wise Paul preaches. And this is so because the Holy City of Jerusalem is the universal spear and eternal emblem of the blood of divine righteousness, namely of the prophets and especially our Lord Jesus Christ, who "died, the righteous for the unrighteous" (1 Peter 3:18) according to Apostle Peter.

Today's twelfth anniversary on the Patriarchal Enthronement calls us not to boast in the things that have been done by Us, but to give "glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God" (Romans 15:17). "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience" (2 Cor. 1:12). At the same time, this anniversary calls us to be alert in view of the current clutter in the world in general and in our region of the Middle East in particular. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity" (1 Cor. 16:13-14), St. Paul orders us.

In this sacred mission of Ours we have as collaborators and communicators Our reverend and dear Hagiotaphite Fathers and brothers, Archbishops, Hieromonks, Deacons and Monks, with whom, as the God-inspired St. Ignatios says " we take care to work all things in unity, under the Lead of the Bishop who is according to God, and the Presbyters who are according to the mind of the Apostles and the Deacons...who have been entrusted the ministry of Jesus Christ, Who had been with the Father before all ages and in the end was made manifest to us" (Vol.2, p.269).

Truly we say along with St. Paul, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). This truth is more obviously witnessed by the history of the Church of Jerusalem, namely of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, being

*surged on the waves of falsehood and slander but not submerged under them.*

*Let us pray to the Father of Lights "that He may guide our footsteps in the work of His commandments" by the prayers of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and the intercessions of our Father among the Saints Nectarios of Pentapolis. And the Grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Sepulchre of our Saviour Jesus Christ fortify us in the ministry of the All-holy Shrines, the irrefutable witnesses of our faith, and in pastoring our pious Christian congregation.*

*For all these, we call upon all those who prayed along with Us and have honoured this feast, the strength from on high, the grace of the Holy Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing coming from God, expressing heartfelt thanksgiving to those who addressed Us namely; Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Leontios, representative of our Brotherly All-holy Church of Russia, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the Brotherly All-holy Church of Romania, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our Parish in Nazareth, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Jordan, the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Joppa, the School Director of our Patriarchal School of Zion, who spoke on behalf of the School, the Reverend Fr. Charalambos Bandour, who spoke on behalf of St. James Cathedral Parish, the Reverend Mr. Abu Aeta, representative of the Community of Beit Sahour, Archimandrite Narkissos and Fr. Jouseph Hodali, who*

*spoke on behalf of the Community of Beit Jalla, as well as all participants in the celebration of this Enthronement Anniversary.*

*To the health of all of you!"*

The reception at the Patriarchate was followed by lunch.

### **From Secretariat-General**

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# **PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON**



# **RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL PLURALISM AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

On Monday 17th /30th and Tuesday 18th /31st October 2017, the proceedings of the “2nd International Conference on Religious and Cultural Pluralism and the Peaceful Co-existence in the Middle East” organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece took place in Athens.

During this Conference addresses were spoken by His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Nikolaos Kotzias, His Beatitude the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Ieronymos, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, the Minister of Tolerance of the United Arab Emirates, the Ambassador of Austria in Greece, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus Mr. Kasoulidis, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Alexandria Theodoros, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokomsk of the Moscow Patriarchate, the delegate of Israel Rabi Mr. Rozen, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Palestine and His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

On Monday afternoon, His Beatitude the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Ieronymos hosted a meal reception for the guests of the Churches and their entourages.

The Conference proceedings continued until Monday afternoon. At 8.00 o'clock in the evening the Prime Minister of Greece Mr. Alexis Tsipras hosted the dinner for all the members of the Conference at “The Acropolis Museum” restaurant.

The Conference proceedings continued on Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> /31<sup>st</sup>

October 2017. In the end there were concluding remarks by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Nikolaos Kotzias, followed by a voting and a press conference.

In the evening of the same day, on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> /31<sup>st</sup> October 2017, H.H.B. departed from Athens to England. Details on this trip will be posted in due course.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM MEETS THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE PALESTINIAN STATE**

On Thursday morning, 28th September/12th October 2017, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited the Prime Minister of the Palestinian State Mr. Rami Hamdallah at his office in Ramallah.

At this visit, His Beatitude was escorted by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Archimandrite Galaktion Hegoumen in Ramallah, Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos, the Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew, the Dean Priest Fr. Issa Mousleh Press Representative of the Patriarchate for the Arab-speaking M.M., and the Legal Adviser of the Patriarchate Mr. Assad Mazaoui.

Present with the Prime Minister were the President of the Christian Affairs Committee of the Palestinian State, Mr. Hannah Amire, the Minister of Administration Mr. Ziyad Badak, the Minister of Culture Mrs. Roula Ma'aye, the Prefect of Jerusalem Mr. Adnan Housseini and Mr. Hannah Aissa.

On this meeting the Prime Minister on behalf of the President Mr. Mahmoud Abbas-Abu Mazen and personally, praised His Beatitude for His efforts and campaigns towards the Leaders of Churches and Countries so that the contracts of the Jaffa Gate hotels of the Patriarchate in the Old City of Jerusalem will not take effect, nor will the recent political decision of the Israeli Court which gives effect to these contracts, and the non-passing of the proposed Law by 40 Members of the Knesset, which does not allow the Christian Churches the free management of their land property. Moreover, the Prime Minister praised His Beatitude for the keeping of the Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem, as a framework of the peaceful religious co-existence of the members of the three Monotheistic Religions.

The Prime Minister Mr. Hamdallah wished His Beatitude the good outcome of His efforts with the support of Jordan and the Palestinian State.

#### **From Secretariat-General**

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