

PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS IN AMMAN

Amman – 12 August 2017

Good afternoon.

We thank you all for coming to this press conference.

We are here today to deliver this message from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II, who, according to the Status Quo and international law, is the acknowledged custodian of both Islamic and Christian Holy Sites in Our beloved Holy Land.

Over the past weeks, Our Holy City of Jerusalem has been riding turbulent waves of developments that have thrown Our Patriarchate, along with all the other Churches and Christian communities of the Holy Land, into the rough seas of political tensions and agendas. The latest of which is the well-known decision in the “Jaffa Gate” case, that so crossed the lines of justice and reasonableness.

We have stood silent, bearing patient witness to a harsh campaign against Us and against Our Patriarchate, that seemed to grow in strength daily with false accusations and slander, targeting Our heritage and Our integrity. Today, it is Our call of duty and Our commitment, entrusted to Us by the Lord, that lead Us to break Our silence and say:
Enough is Enough.

We are constrained to take this unprecedented action in calling this press conference to reject publicly and clearly

the unfair ruling of the Israeli District Court in the "Jaffa Gate" case. This decade-long legal battle has resulted in an unjust decision which disregarded all of the Patriarchate's clear and concrete legal evidence proving bad faith, bribery and conspiracy. Such a decision, in favour of the Settlor group *Ateret Cohanim*, can only be interpreted as politically motivated.

This bias decision, which affects not only the Patriarchate, but also strikes at the very heart of the Christian Quarter of the Old City, comes at an extremely delicate and sensitive time and will certainly have the most negative effect on the Christian presence in the Holy Land. It could well lead to escalated tension in our community that we are all working diligently to try and diffuse.

We shall be initiating an appeal process to the High Court of Justice, where we have confidence there will be a decision based purely on matters of law, procedure, and justice. The Patriarchate shall now embark on everything within its power so that this unjust ruling will be overturned.

Our concern about politicisation of the "Jaffa Gate" case is made more acute by the recent action of 40 members of the Knesset, who two weeks ago, signed a proposed bill for debate in the Israeli Parliament that would, if passed, restrict severely the rights of the Churches to deal freely and independently with their lands and would threaten their confiscation.

This bill is a clear attempt to deprive Our 2,000-year-old Patriarchate, as well as Our fellow Churches present for centuries in the Holy Land, of our legitimate and historic freedom and independence. This intolerable bill, if passed, would be a clear violation of every international treaty that has governed the region, and would be an insupportable assault on the freedom of worship.

We are calling for an urgent meeting of the Heads of Churches of the Holy Land,

to co-ordinate our opposition and response to these alarming and serious developments that will affect not only the indigenous Christian community of the Holy Land, but each and every Christian around the world for whom Jerusalem and the Holy Land are of the utmost spiritual significance.

We remain fully committed to upholding Our pastoral and spiritual mission as it has been entrusted to us by Divine Providence. Even as We face these unprecedented and shocking developments, We assure Our beloved Christian community in Our Holy Land as well as in our region of the Middle East, and abroad, that, as the Patriarchate of the Jerusalem, and the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, We shall remain true to our mission to be the guardians and the servants of the Holy Tomb of Christ and all the Holy Sites. We shall do all in Our power to uphold the status of the properties of the Patriarchate and our fellow Churches, and We shall be constant in the protection of the Christian presence in our region, against which, both, the judgement in the "Jaffa Gate" case, and, the proposed bill in the Knesset are such grievous assaults.

We cannot stress too highly the extreme seriousness of this situation.

We call upon President Trump, President Putin, King Abdullah II, President Abbas, President Rivlin, Prime Minister Tsipras, President Anastasiades, General Secretary Guterres, President Juncker,

As well as all Our Brethren Heads of Churches in the world and upon the international community,

to intervene to ensure that justice and freedom prevails in these matters.

Justice in this case benefits not just the Christian community here, but all the citizens of the Holy Land; so that all who call the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Holy Land their home may live in freedom and peace.

We pray to God Almighty to strengthen Us and Our brethren in these harsh and difficult times. May God crown our efforts with success, so that justice is done and peace is attained.

Thank you.

ADDRESS OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AT THE UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS IN NEW YORK

On Tuesday, 5th/18th July 2017, a conference with the title "The Role of Religious Leaders in Peace-building in the Middle East" took place at the Headquarters of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) in New York, with representatives of the United Nations, Islam, Judaism and Christians, as sited on the schedule of this event: UNAOC

His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, having being invited as the representative of the Christians of the Holy Land and the Middle East, gave the address below:

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

18 July 2017

Mr Secretary General,

Mr. Al-Nasser,

Your Excellency Mr. Dastis,

Rabbi Melchior,

Distinguished Fellow Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a privilege for us to participate in this important gathering on peace-building in the Middle East. As the oldest continuous religious institution in the Holy Land, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem has long been committed to this mission, and we bring the experience of what we call the Greek *symbiosis* – live together in respectful co-existence – to the urgent task of finding new ways to establish and deepen a lasting peace in our region. There has never been a more crucial time for this work, and we applaud both the United Nations and the Alliance of Civilizations for your focus on this.

From our perspective, we would like to take this opportunity to articulate what we believe to be several foundational aspects to enduring peace-building in the Middle East.

The first point we wish to emphasize is in the title of this colloquium. The building of a lasting peace in the Middle East is not simply a matter of political will or expediency. Without a proper understanding of the role of religion and of the responsibility of religious leaders in this process, we shall continue to stumble in our efforts for peace. We cannot

pretend that religion is not a factor in the complexity of our life, nor can we ignore the significant role that religious leaders across the board in the Middle East must play if peace is to be given a real chance of emerging from our present extreme difficulties.

To pretend that religion is not important, or to think of the religious aspects of our common life in the Middle East as an inconvenient distraction from what others see as purely a political or diplomatic exercise is naive, and undermining of genuine peace-building at worst. Our region cannot be separated from its religious character. It is a place of prophets and saints, a meeting place of the human with the divine, and a source of spiritual refreshment for the entire world. All of this transcends states and man-made authorities. We must articulate, and soon, a proper understanding of the central role of religion and religious leaders in helping to create a new future for our region. The title of our meeting today, therefore, captures a truth of which we must not lose sight.

For generations in the Middle East, we have striven to find common ground on which all may stand – or perhaps better put – on which all may live in the full appreciation of our uniqueness as well as our shared heritage.

Once we accept the central importance of religion in the creation of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, so much more falls into place.

We acknowledge our common faith that the Creator is One. However, we articulate our respective theologies, we are together the children of a great monotheistic tradition that is formative of the Abrahamic faiths, and unites different religious groups as this does, and while we have long recognized this phenomenon, we have never lived its fullness with respect to creating a society that completely appreciates its force for good.

From this common belief in the One God flow many other uniting factors. We understand each other's reverence for our Holy Books. We understand each other's commitment to our ancient and living sacred Tradition. We understand each other's formation in a liturgical life. We understand the strands of our life that are shaped by mysticism. We understand the instinct for personal and corporate prayer and piety. We understand the emphasis that we all have on the life of the community as a whole. And we understand the commitment that is deep in our respective traditions for the uniqueness and infinite value of the human person and the duty of service to our fellow human beings. While the details of our practise may vary, even within our respective groups, we recognise in each other these familiar aspects of our lives. This is of no small importance, and nor is this list complete.

Our understanding of our common humanity is derived from our faith in the One God. Our traditions witness. Our tradition witness the belief that we are created in the image and likeness of God, and the God has invested in each human being infinite worth and inalienable dignity. In our respective traditions, after our faith that God is One, next in importance is our doctrine of the human person. Our traditions share the conviction that each person is capable of an intimate and eternal relationship with God, and that God has created human beings for fruitful, intimate, mutual community, even across our God-given diversity.

For this understanding of our common humanity, which is not first and foremost a political or biological reality, but a fundamental theological truth, derives our commitment to the further truth that we share a common home. In the first instance, the earth is our common home, but with respect to our discussion today we must emphasise that the Middle East is the common home to Jews, Christians, and Muslims, as well as to other religious traditions and communities. Needless to say, this means also that we share a common history and a

common culture.

This understanding of the Middle East as our common home is of supreme importance. We are all without distinction – Jew, Christian and Muslim – children of this Holy Land, and without, for a example, a robust and vibrant Christian community in the Middle East, the region would lose its authentic identity. We Christians are not merely inhabitants of the Holy Land. In Jerusalem, for example, which is the spiritual heart, the *intima*, or place of belonging as it is called in Arabic, we have had a special place and role for millennia.

As the heirs of sacred history a physical heritage, our unwavering mission has been to ensure that the Holy Places are open to all people regardless their ethnic, cultural, religious, or national identity. We ardently promote inclusiveness, knowing full well that claims of exclusiveness always produce conflict, and do not do justice to our peace-loving and merciful God.

None of us are guests or intruders; our respective traditions were born in the Middle East, and we are natives of that land. As strange as it may be to have to be clear about this, there are still those who believe otherwise, and who resort to violence to attempt to make the Middle East a mono-cultural or mono-religious group. The Middle East has never been this.

And the last point that we wish to promote flows naturally from these considerations, for we share a common destiny. We share a common destiny with respect to the political, economic, cultural, and religious life of our region. But our Abrahamic traditions also attest that we share a common eternal destiny, a destiny in which Jerusalem, a city that is equally holy to us all, plays a significant spiritual and emotional role. Jerusalem is considered to be the spiritual capital of the whole world; the ceaseless flow of pilgrims who come on a daily basis is ample evidence of this.

As the Holy Land is home to us all, so too is Jerusalem. We many inhabit them, but in a real sense we can never possess them; rather they “possess” us they embrace us in this eternal destiny that demands that we find ways to live in peace, harmony, and mutual respect in this present life. This is what our reality demands of us. *For the Lord makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous* (Mat. 5:45).

When we stop to understand all that we share in common, we grow in respect for each other’s symbols, practises, and daily lives. We begin to perceive each other’s true humanity. In time, with patience and resolve, we begin to recognise ourselves in each other.

Here are the roots of true dialogue. In the Middle East, dialogue is a way of life. It is not a theory, but a practise. With such dialogue we know that, especially in times of grave difficulty, enemies can become allies, and hatred can be turned into reconciliation.

In this regard, we call to mind one of the most significant events in our shared history; the famous covenant between the caliph Omar ibn Al-Khattab and Patriarch Sophronios, after Oman entered Jerusalem. The soil was fertile for a transformative and fruitful peace. They envisioned a future in which everyone could share in the sacredness and richness of the Holy Land, recognising a common father in Abraham. They were able to stand firm in the integrity of their respective identities and histories, thereby eschewing fear and embracing truth.

There are two approaches to knowing truth and seeing justice; the divine way, which is the ideal; and the human way, which is circumscribed by our shortcomings. Our approach is a pragmatic one, by which common sense and observable reality show the way. For as the Scriptures say, *Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from*

heaven (Ps. 85:11).

This is the appropriate climate in which both the activity and the fruits of peace-building will ripe. We know this, because we have seen it before. We are always inspired, first by the prophets and revered personalities of our respective traditions, but also by the great leaders of the world now memorialised by all humanity. From their struggles and sometimes untimely deaths have sprung forth courage, peace, and progress, and they have inspired countless ordinary men and women, who in their local communities, where there has been violence and enmity, have been prepared to take risks for a new future – a new future of reconciliation.

The reconciliation of which we speak does not mean depriving each other of our national, cultural, or religious identities. We readily admit that reconciliation demands sacrifice, but it does not demand the loss of our uniqueness. This is the path to realistic, mutually respectful co-existence, which is a far more enduring life than mere tolerance.”

From Secretariat-General

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HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH

OF JERUSALEM AWARDS THE SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATES TO THE GRADUATES OF THE COMMUNITY OF REMLA SCHOOL

On Thursday evening, 16th/29th June 2017, the graduation ceremony of the School leaving certificates of the Arab-speaking Greek-Orthodox Community of Remla Graduates took place at the School reception hall.

This School of the Community of Remla runs all levels of Primary and Secondary Education, Nursery School, Secondary School and Lyceum, was founded by the aforementioned Community in the beginning of the 1990s, by the funding of the memorable Patriarch of Jerusalem Diodoros. In it, students are of Palestinian descend, Christians and Muslims, who abide in Israel since its foundation in 1948. The School students are taught in the Arabic language, with Hebrew and English as foreign languages and with an approved curriculum by the Ministry of Education of Israel.

The ceremony was honoured with the presence of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, escorted by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos, the Manager of the Arab-speaking Patriarchate Schools Elder Issa Musleh and Archdeacon Marc. The ceremony was also honoured by the presence of the Mayor of Remla Mr. Michael Vindel, who in his address committed to the equality between the Israeli and Palestinian citizens of the town, as addresses were made by the representative of the Ministry of Education of Israel, the President of this Arab-speaking Community Mrs. Frieda and others.

The ceremony began with a prayer and was followed by the entrance-parade of the 47 Graduates of the twenty-second year of the School's operation.

The President of the Community Mrs. Frieda underlined in her address the moral support of the Patriarchate for the good and successful operation of the School. The Manager of the School Mrs. Iham Mahil referred to the high grade scores of the last year School Graduates, to their entrance into Universities and wished the same high scores to this year's Graduates together with the preservation of their Orthodox identity.

The ceremony was enriched with Palestinian patriotic songs accompanied by musical instruments which were performed by the Scouts.

The ceremony was sealed with His Beatitude's address, read by Fr. Issa Musleh in Arabic (posted in the Arabic version of this website).

Finally, the ceremony ended by the awarding of the School leaving certificates by His Beatitude, the School Manager and the President of the Community, with the wish of successful university studies and a good professional career.

From Secretariat-General

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THE VISIT OF THE PATRIARCH OF

JERUSALEM TO CAPPADOCIA (PART 2)

During the Divine Liturgy on Sunday 5th/18th 2017 in Sinassos of Cappadocia, the All-Holy Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos spoke to the congregation. On His address, the Ecumenical Patriarch referred to the quite excellent cooperation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the contribution of the Jerusalem Patriarchate as well as the contribution of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos towards the convocation of the Great Synod of Orthodoxy.

During this Divine Liturgy there was a memorial service for the repose of the souls of those of our Fathers who martyred and slept in the Lord in reverence.

Moreover, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos appointed Professor of Law at the Aristotelion University and Consultant of Jerusalem Patriarchate Mr. Theodoros Giagkos an officion bearer Lord, in recognition of his devoted ministry to the Church, to Science, the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Great Synod of Orthodoxy.

For this honourary distinction, Professor Mr. Giagkos thanked with the following address (to be posted in due course).

On the occasion of this 17th visit to Cappadocia, addresses to His All-Holiness were given by the following people:

1. A Greek Houses of Parliament representative.
2. Maximos Charakopoulos, New Democracy Political Party representative.
3. The Secretary-General of the Pan-Hellenic Union of Cappadocian organizations.

At noon, the businessman Mr. Gregory Chatzi-Eleftheriadis offered a meal at the refurbished Mansion of his Cappadocian

ancestors.

During this meal, the owner and renovator of his ancestors' Manor, Mr. Gregory Chatzi- Eleftheriadis gave His Beatitude a copy of a Sigillum Letter of the memorable Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory V, which reminds things related to the operation and the general as well as the financial management of the School of Sinassos, and appoints the memorable Patriarch of Jerusalem Polykarpos to be Protector and Curator of the School, and it gives him as well as to all his successors the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, special managerial privileges and a donation to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Patriarchal letter translated from the Greek prototype is the following:

“Gregory, by the mercy of God Archbishop of Constantinople,

New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch

The joyous and philanthropic spirit of the Church, which is as ready as it is needed to act upon every other reasonable and righteous situation, much more than is inclined to act toward the addressed petitions for the establishment of Schools and common interests, from which, the living waters of God-given education spring forth as from abundant fountains, and dispel the completely dry ignorance of the human minds on existing beings, irrigate the souls of the faithful, and blossom and bring forth fruit on the realization of righteous and worthy-to-be-mentioned truths about the Holy men of God and the people.

Toward these, therefore, the common affectionate Mother is more prominently well-disposed and available, praising on the one hand those who have accomplished feats, while on the other hand ratifying and strengthening their God-pleasing education through Sigillum Letters (Official Ecclesiastical letter with a seal), as is the case for the present issue.

Hence the people in the Caesarea of Cappadocia County, in one of its villages called Sinassos in Turkish, (the famous Nanzianzos town of old), having recovered at last the much praised usefulness of education, and being willing to introduce it to their own country for the enlightenment of their own children and the remaining inhabitants, established a common School of the Greek subjects. Moreover they gathered by a fundraising event among themselves, fifteen thousand piasters, the majority of which, namely ten thousand piasters, were allocated to this newly-founded School by the generosity of the friend of the nation, of education and goodness of Mr. Ioannis Varvakis, who also offered abundant sponsorships to other benevolent institutions, while the four thousand piasters with the two houses located in that parish of the Great Archangels are offerings and contributions of the Christians who abide therein, and of those who work at the fifteen Caviar workshops in Galata, while one thousand piasters were offered by the noble procurators of the chapel of the Dormition of our Lady the Most-Holy Theotokos, of which ten thousand piasters were deposited to the common repository of the Holy Sepulchre, plus the interest of forty to the pouch per annum, according to the will and provision of the donator who loves our nation, while five thousand (have been offered) from the aforementioned workshops in Galata, with interest of sixty to the pouch per annum; these have been submitted of course, and given to the School in signed and witnessed debentures of the same amounts.

Consequently, under their common opinion and fervent entreating, it has been appointed that Protector of the School and general Curator herein is His Beatitude and All-Holy Patriarch of Jerusalem and all Palestine Polykarpos, who is a supplicant to God and quite dear to us and a beloved brother and co-celebrant, as he has displayed an enthusiastic zeal for things of common interest and God-pleasing regarding education. Curators in various districts and Administrators will be the eight Elders of this country at a time, who have

the permission to elect and designate also four Trustees at the School, two of whom will be at that place there, and two here in the reigning city, in order to administer and settle the finances of the School, under the dependence and constant guidance of the Trustees, and receive its main and occasional income and give a clear and detailed account to the Curators every year on 1st May, while those who receive the account and sign, have to send it here and submit it under the elaboration and confirmation of the fervent Protector and Curator of His Most Reverend Beatitude. A container has also been fabricated at the School, with two disparate keys, and they have to keep the debentures and the other documents of the School in the container, and especially those related to money that comes from occasional income (donations).

Moreover, they have to ordain two Trustees out of their compatriots for the safe, who if approved and zealous could prolong their duty up to five years, and they have to keep the two keys, one each, and for All of them should make two codes; one of which should be sent to the Curators, while the other should remain here, and in the codes they have to record in detailed writing the transactions and all the existing belongings of the School and those which are donated by friends of education, whether they are books or any other kind of donations. Having done these, and having announced them by their common reference to our Great Church of Christ, the People in charge warmly requested to confirm them by our Patriarchal and Synodical Sigillum Letter on vellum, in order that they remain irreversible and unaltered, for the sustaining of their God-pleasing achievement and the long lasting duration of their beneficial action toward the country.

Therefore, having consented quite favourably to their petition and having blessed their intention for the public benefit, and also having crowned them with our Fatherly and Synodical approvals, and especially that par excellence brave man of

similar thoughts to ours Mr. Ioannis Varvakis, we decide in Synod together with the Most-Holy Archbishops with us and our Most Honourable brothers and co-celebrants in the Holy Spirit, so that what has been ordered and designated for the newly established School of the Greek subjects by the aforementioned friends of education, noble pious indigenous men in their country Nanzianzos and Sinassos in Turkish, be reasonable and justifiable, pleasing to God and praised by the people, and sustaining of the smooth operation of this condition, having the validity and the strength and the energy unchangeable "as long as the water flows and waters the big trees," namely for the ages to come.

And the ten thousand of piasters on the one hand, which have been deposited at the common repository of the Holy Sepulchre and offered by the friend of our nation for the School, are to be kept as capital savings, worked toward forty piasters to the pouch per annum, likewise, capital savings remain the five thousand piasters, which have been offered by the Christians living there, in the manner that has been said they were offered, gained by the work in the fifteen Caviar workshops here in Galata, toward sixty piasters to the pouch per annum, on the other hand, the two houses in the parish of the Archangels shall always be witnessed and recognized by all as offerings to the School, which is ready to accommodate not only local lovers of education but also students who love to study from the surrounding areas, and in it, all Greek education is being taught, and every kind of subject that contributes to the perfection of mind, and its Protector and Curator is His Beatitude and All-Holy Patriarch of Jerusalem, our profound colleague Polykarpos, and his successors after him of the All-Holy Patriarchal and Apostolic Throne. Administrators will be the eight Elders, at that time, of this country, and Trustees four men elected by them, two of whom in that place, and the other two here in the reigning city, administering the transactions of the School, receiving the main and occasional income, being assistants to the Curators,

and acting according to their final instructions, offering on 1st May of each year a clear and concise account to the Curators there, so that when sent for, he will receive the confirmation from the fervent Protector and general Curator. And all its documents will be kept securely in the container which has been established in the name of the School, and the debentures, and the money and the two keys will be entrusted to the two local people therein, and they will be especially Trustees of the safe, elected by the other Curators and the Protector, for five years, on whom the management of the School finances is appointed, and also the two codes will be secured, one code to the Curators and the Trustees, and the other one at the place therein, and let the transactions and the land belonging to the School be recorded in it, together with any other material belongings, for a permanent record. And let any miscegenation of common and political issues be remote from the School, having none whatsoever permission on behalf of those who govern the common issues of this country to gather an assembly and assemble for the observation and management of common issues which however are foreign to the School. On all these, there should always be elected and designated teachers, by the special providence of the Protector at the time, and the care of the Curators, men capable in both words and manner of living, unenviable, so that verbatim and in good method they promote fast learning and good morals to the students, with the concurring of all the appointed Curators of the School, competing toward the improvement and increase and any possible cultivation of things favourable to it, in order to bear brave and God-pleasing fruit, for the common benefit of the nation and the continuous glory of the country.

These have been decided and confirmed in Synod, and for those who have contributed and assembled in its establishment and for those who will later on be favourably disposed toward it, and will keep without fail all the aforementioned, we wish salvation from the depths of our heart. If however somebody by

malice displays spitefulness and abruptness, so that he will surreptitiously or obviously, directly or indirectly attempt to act against it and against its smooth operation, and in any way provokes the slightest damage against it, even if he considers to change the slightest letter to what has been decided in this present synod, this man, as an enemy of the good and God-pleasing works and arrogant and peculiar and barbaric and malicious, from whichever social status, let him give an account to the unbridable Judge and God on the horrendous Day of Judgment , and may he be dishonoured and bereft of glory throughout his life, and guilty and accountable for every Ecclesiastical punishment and tribulation.

Hence, the present Sigillum letter on vellum of ours has been composed as a token and continuous security, composed moreover in the sacred code of our Great Church of Christ, it has been delivered to the newly established School of the Greek subjects, located in the country of Sinassos in the county of Caesarea.

In the year of salvation eighteen twenty one, on ninth January.

Gregory, by the mercy of God Archbishop of Constantinople New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch”

*Ioannikios of Caesarea
Ephesus*

Germanos of

*Meletios of Herakleia
Constantine of Kyzikos*

*Athanasios of Nicomedia
Nice*

Makarios of

Gregory of Chalcedon

Ioannikios of Tyrnovo

*Dorotheos of Andrianopolis
Thessalonica*

Joseph of

*Kallinikos of Drysta and Vraela
Sifnos*

Kallinikos of

*Gregory of Derka
Meletios of Veroia*

*Damascene of Farsala
name*

Illegible

Illegible name

Consequently in the afternoon, there was a visit to the carved inside an eroded rock monastery of Saint Nikolaos, which does not give the slightest trace that it is hidden therein. The monastery has been recently sustained by the intervention and funding of Patriarch Bartholomeos. Afterwards, a visit was paid to the underground chapel of St. Nikolaos, St. Barbara and St. Makrina.

The 3rd and last day of the visit of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem to Cappadocia.

On Monday, 6th/19th June 2017, the pilgrimage tour and visit of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos continued to the deserted during the exchange of populations after the Asia Minor destruction in 1922 Churches and Monasteries of Romiosyne in Cappadocia.

At the guidance of the Ecumenical Patriarch, who has completed His 17th pilgrimage to the sanctified places of Cappadocia this year, who also knows and protects them, the invited group of the representatives of the Churches visited the Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos in the massive but deserted town of

Kermira.

Having completed the aforementioned visits, H.H.B. with His entourage and the honorary entourage of the All-Holy Ecumenical Patriarch departed to Constantinople by plane, and from there to Tel Aviv, where the arrival landed at 2.30 a.m. on Tuesday 7th/20th June 2017, with their glorifying God.

From Secretariat-General

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THE VISIT OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM TO CONSTANTINOPLE / CAPPADOCIA

The visit of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos at the Ecumenical Patriarchate and later on to Cappadocia began on Friday, 3rd/ 16th June 2017.

His Beatitude was invited by the All-Holy Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos for this visit, as the latter has undertaken pilgrimage tours to Churches and Holy Monasteries of our nation which have been deserted since the exchange of populations in 1922.

The Entourage of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem for this visit was the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina – Geronda Secretary-General, the Patriarchal

Commissioner in Constantinople Most Reverend Archbishop Nectarios of Athedona and Archdeacon Marc, and the Honoured Mr. Theodoros Giagkou, Law Professor at the School of Theology in Thessalonica with his respected wife.

Upon His arrival to Constantinople airport from Tel Aviv, His Beatitude was welcomed by the Metropolitan Theoliptos of Ikonion of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Patriarchal Commissioner of Jerusalem Patriarchate in Constantinople Most Reverend Archbishop Nectarios of Anthedona.

At noon of the same day His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem was most warmly received by the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Fener Generals, at the Reception Hall of St. George the Triumphant Cathedral in the Fener district, while an honourary for Him and other guests meal was offered by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

In the evening the Ecumenical Patriarch offered His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem dinner at the Intercontinental Hotel where He was hosted.

DEPARTURE TO CAPPADOCIA – 1ST DAY OF THE VISIT

The departure from Constantinople airport to Caesarea with Cappadocia as the final destination, took place on Saturday 4th/17th June.

Escorts of the All-Holy Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos to this pilgrimage were, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and His Entourage, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Germanos of Tranoupolis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Vassilios of Constantia from the Church of Cyprus and His Entourage, and the Roman-Catholic Church Delegation.

From Constantinople, His Beatitude landed in Caesarea, from where He was driven to the archaeological site of Korama valley. On site, still preserved are God-naturally-created

buildings which have undergone pyramid shaped interior alterations, in order to serve as houses, or Churches and Holy Monasteries for our ancestors. The Patriarchal Entourages were received there by the Museum Manager of the Archaeological site of Korama valley. During this guided tour he mentioned that Korama is the third most visited archaeological site in Turkey after Ephesos and Hierapolis. There are 250 Churches preserved in the area, for which maintenance attempts are being made through donations. In one of these two Churches there are preserved marvellous 10th century frescoes on the rocks. The one of these two Churches is currently named "The Dark Church" due to the lack of light. Out of the many frescoes, most vividly visible are the icons of Christ the All Mighty, the Holy Communion, the Holy Transfiguration, and that of St. George the Great Martyr.

On the same Saturday afternoon, Vespers was officiated by the Ecumenical Patriarch at the deserted Church of St. Demetrius of Aravissos Community.

SUNDAY, 2ND DAY OF THE VISIT IN CAPPADOCIA

On Sunday, 5th/ 18th June, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Holy Church of Saints Constantine and Helen in Sinassos town. This Divine Liturgy was led by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the participation in prayer of the All-Holy Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos.

During this Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem gave the following address:

"All-Holy and Most Reverend Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch in Christ God, Bartholomeos,

By the inspiration, instruction and consolation of the Comforter Spirit, after a multiannual and laborious preparation, at the initiative and coordination of Your most dear and respectable All-Holiness and the Synodic cooperation of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, one year ago, we were

gathered at the Great Synod of Orthodoxy at the Apostolic Church of Crete and thoroughly considered essential matters of the life of our Orthodox Church, we participated in daily Eucharistic experience, denoting by the communion of the common Chalice our unity in our Orthodox Apostolic faith and tradition and bore witness of righteousness, peace, reconciliation and love to the world.

With the collaboration of the Divine Grace, Our Humbleness together with the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood around us, were deemed worthy only three months ago to celebrate the event of the restoration of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre at the Pan-Christian Ceremony which Your All-Holiness honoured with Your presence, and Your inspired address, by which You reconfirmed the inscription on its facade, that the Sacred Edicule is indeed "Possession and oblation to Christ of the Orthodox Romans, 1810". The completion of this project was supported by the Ecumenical Patriarchate also by its financial contribution.

In addition, these days, the Grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered Us again, at Your invitation, to a brotherly meeting in Christ and visit of the blessed places of Cappadocia, where the life-giving and salvific Evangelic word has been sown since the Apostolic years, and where, among others, great Church Fathers such as the Saints Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory the Theologian, Amphilohios of Ikonion, lived and progressed in life in Christ and asceticism and Theology writings, interpreted and defended the doctrine of the one substance of the Son with the Father and the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. Following their path Roman Orthodox ancestors of ours had lived for centuries, in these very places, established Communities and Holy Monasteries, erected splendid marble churches, masterpieces of the Byzantine Architecture, which painstakingly they had to abandon together with their ancestral places of residence, when this was imposed by the transitions of the human history.

One of these Communities was Sinassos town. It was overly and exceptionally distinguished in faith and reverence, in education and writings, in merchandise and art, in social and charitable action. Rightly the memorable Metropolitan Cleovoulos of Caesarea says that it is: "An Oasis in the desert, a Star in the darkness, Athens in Asia Minor".

Its Cathedral had been that of Saints Constantine and Helen, the Patron Saints of the All-Holy Shrines of our Zion Church and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, and founders of Romiosyne. Celebrating the Divine Liturgy in it today, we are blessed, sanctified and we pray for the repose of the souls of our fathers who sleep in the Lord herein, certainly rejoicing with Us this day. Likewise, we pray for the peace and good condition of the whole world, the cessation of wars and abhorrent terrorist acts, the consequence of which is the loss of the lives of many of our fellow men, for whom Christ died.

For this prayerful and Eucharistic offering of our Most Merciful God, we glorify Him gracefully, as we also thank Your All-Holiness, who kindly invited Us, and we pray that God may grant You longevity and undiminished health, so that in Your distinguished experience and wisdom You may direct the Ecumenical Throne matters and rule and coordinate the matters of the Orthodox Churches and continue in Your initiatives for the protection of these Cappadocian monuments of our tradition, which have been recognized to be preserved as parts of the worldwide cultural heritage, until their restoration to the condition and purpose to which they were initially founded, in due course, that our Lord knows, for the glory of His worshiped Name and praise of the blessed nation of the Romans. So be it."

From Secretariat-General

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THE VISIT OF MR. DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE U.S.A. AT THE CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

On Monday morning, 9th/22nd May 2017, the President of the U.S.A. Mr. Donald Trump arrived at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel-Aviv.

Present at the official welcome was His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, as a representative of our Venerable Patriarchate.

In the afternoon of the same day, the President of the U.S.A. visited the Church of the Resurrection, coming from David's Gate with his wife and associates.

At his arrival at the Courtyard of the Church of the Resurrection he was welcomed by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Elder Sacristan Most Reverend Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, together with Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos, the Assistant Sacristan Archimandrite Polykarpos, the Custos of the Holy Land Fr. Francesco Patton and the representative of the Armenian Patriarch in Jerusalem His Beatitude Nourhan Manougian.

From the Courtyard, the President was guided by His Beatitude, Fr. Francesco Patton and the Armenian representative, to

venerate the Holy Sepulchre and the Horrendous Golgotha.

Consequently, the President headed for the Office of the Church of the Resurrection where His Beatitude offered him an icon of the Nativity. The President expressed his emotions on his visit at this oldest and holiest shrine of Christianity and wished peace for the Middle East region and the whole world.

From Secretariat-General

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GRADUATION CEREMONY AT THE PATRIARCHATE'S ST. DEMETRIOS SCHOOL

On Thursday afternoon, 5th/18th May 2017, the graduation ceremony of the Patriarchate's St. Demetrios School graduates took place at the Notre Dame Hotel reception hall, by the New Gate.

This Arab-speaking School is kept by the Patriarchate with classes ranging from Nursery School up to the C Lyceum class, since the days of the memorable Diodoros Patriarch of Jerusalem, at the building next to the Patriarchate, by St. Demetrios' Chapel. That building used to host the Patriarchate's School for Priests until 1972, which is presently accommodated at the building of the Holy Zion hill.

The ceremony honoured with His presence H.H.B. our Father and

Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Dragouman and Chairman of the Arab-speaking Schools Board of the Patriarchate Archimandrite Mattheos, the Consul Mr. Vassilios Koenis, Mr. Fanti Abdelnour, member of the Educational Commission, the author of the book "I am Jerusalem" Dr. John Tleel, an elderly and honoured member of the Greek Community, Vestry men and members of the Greek Orthodox Arab congregation, such as Mrs. Noura Kort and Mr. Ibrahim Salfiti and Mr. Nabil Metzali and others, as well as the parents and relatives of the eleven graduates at the School of the twenty nine years of function.

This well organized ceremony by the thoroughness of the School Manager Mr. Samir Zananiri and his associate teachers and the graduates, included the welcoming of H.H.B. and His Entourage by Scouts at the Hotel entrance and then at the reception hall.

The ceremony continued with the prayer "Christ is risen" and the reciting of the Palestinian and Greek National emblems, and the Hymn of the School. The address of the School Manager Mr. Samir Zananiri followed. In it, he thanked His Beatitude for His support to the School, the former Chairman of the School Board Archimandrite Ieronymos and the present Chairman Archimandrite Mattheos. At the end of his address, Mr. Zananiri offered His Beatitude a painting of the recently renovated Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, a project completed under the supervision and by the actions of His Beatitude.

The ceremony also included Palestinian traditional dances and songs, as well as snapshots on screen of the graduates' school life. Important were also the addresses of the graduates, one in Arabic, one in English and one in Greek. In them, the graduates' representatives, emotional by their School leaving after twelve years, thanked the Patriarchate, the School Manager, their teachers and parents for their care in the

graduates' upbringing and education for twelve years until they reached this point of their opening to the future, in their life in Society.

The above mentioned activities of the teachers and students were met with His Beatitude's address, read by Fr. Issa Mousleh, the M.M. representative of the Patriarchate in Arabic (to view, visit the Arabic version of the site).

The addresses were followed by the awarding of the School leaving Certificates of the graduates by His Beatitude, Fr. Mattheos and the School Manager to each one of the graduates, with the wish to succeed in their university entrance exams and have a successful career in their lives.

From Secretariat-General

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THE AWARD OF SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATES TO THE LYCEUM GRADUATES OF BEIT SAHOUR

On Thursday afternoon, 28th April/11th May 2017, there was an award ceremony for the Patriarchate Lyceum Graduates' School-Leaving Certificates, in the town of Beit Sahour.

The ceremony was honoured by the presence of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, escorted by the Most

Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Dragouman and Chairman of the School Board of the Arab-speaking Patriarchate Schools Archimandrite Mattheos, the Hegoumen of the H.Monastery of Beit Sahour Archimandrite Ignatios, Beit Sahour Priests, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, the representative of the Ministry of Education of the State of Palestine, the Beit Sahour representative of the Mayoralty, the Beit Sahour Police representative, the Cypriot Democracy representative in Palestine, the parents and the Beit Sahour Priests.

The ceremony included: honorary entrance of the 23 Lyceum Graduates, one-minute silence in honour of the Palestinian heroes, reciting of the Palestinian and the Greek National Anthems, reading of verses from the Lord's Sermon on the Mount "you are the salt of the earth", a speech by the School Manager Mr. George Saade, patriotic and Palestinian songs and Palestinian dances, through the music, which, as the saying goes, is the language of understanding, cooperation and communication among nations.

The ceremony also included addresses of the School Graduates' representatives in Arabic, English and Greek. They stressed the fact that the Graduates leave the school after 12 years of studying, equipped with all necessary skills in order to study in Higher Education and work in the arena of life, and they expressed their gratitude towards the Patriarchate and the School for their complete schooling in the Romeo-Orthodox Education and the Romeo-Orthodox Church, to the town of Beit Sahour where the mystery of the birth in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ was first revealed to their ancestors the Shepherds.

The ceremony was concluded by His Beatitude's speech, read by Fr. Issa Mouleh – School teacher and the Patriarchate Mass-Media representative, and the award of the Certificates to each one of the Graduates with the Fatherly wish for successful studies and orientation and a good career.

Finally there was an honorary distinction to the Greek Consul General, the Cypriot Democracy representative, the Hegoumen of Beit Sahour Archimandrite Ignatios, Fr. Issa Mouleh, the Police and Mayoralty representatives and a bouquet of flowers was offered to His Beatitude. The event finished by the reciting of the School Hymn and the State of Palestine Anthem.

From Secretariat-General

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THE PRIME MINISTER OF ROMANIA VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday afternoon, 21st April/4th May 2017, the Prime Minister of Romania Mr. Sorin Grindeanu visited the Church of the Resurrection, escorted by the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Romania, under the former Ambassador of Romania in Israel Mrs. Andreea Păstârnac, the Archimandrite delegates of the Romanian Church in Jerusalem Fr. Theophilos and Fr. Ioannis, and by staff members of the Romanian Embassy in Israel. They were received by the Patriarchal Commissioner

Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias and the Assistant Sacristan Archimandrite Polykarpos, Fr. Nikolaos and other Templar Fathers. The Prime Minister venerated the Horrendous Golgotha, the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord and the Sacred Wood at the Reliquary of the Church.

Consequently Mr. Grindeanu visited the Patriarchate where he was warmly received by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with Hagiotaphite Fathers, among whom were the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos and the Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew.

Therein, speaking to the Prime Minister, His Beatitude referred to the mission of the Patriarchate in the Holy Land both in the past and at present, and to the relationship between the Jerusalem Patriarchate and the Romanian Patriarchate, especially during the Patriarchal service of the memorable Patriarch Dositheos, who developed a pastoral activity in Iasion where he also founded a printing shop. His Beatitude also referred to the project that was recently completed by the Patriarchate, the restoration of the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre.

In his reply, the Prime Minister said that he was astonished and touched by what he had heard and seen in the Church of the Resurrection and had a difficulty in finding the right words to express the feelings that were created in his soul.

Appreciating the Romanian Prime Minister's attitude, His Beatitude offered him the medal of the Grand Commander of the Order of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, in recognition of his own support as well as that of his country to the Christian authorities within the European Union, where Romania also belongs. His Beatitude offered the Prime Minister an icon of the Theotokos, in order to help him in his mission in favour

of his country and asked him to convey His brotherly wishes to the Patriarch Daniel of Romania.

Deeply touched, the Prime Minister thanked His Beatitude and committed himself to continue projecting the Christian values in the European Union. Moreover, the Prime Minister asked His Beatitude's prayers for the success of his visit in the state of Israel.

From Secretariat-General

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H. B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM PLACES THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE CULTURAL CENTRE IN DIBIN

On Sunday afternoon, 17th/30th April 2017, after the festal Liturgy at the Holy Church of the Annunciation in Amman, Jordan, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited the Holy Monastery of the Life-giving Spring in Dibin, which is one-hour drive from Amman. The Spiritual Father of the Monastery is Archimandrite Christophoros and Nun Eirinaia is the Abbess.

There, His Beatitude was most warmly welcomed by many young people and others, and was addressed by the Spiritual Father of the Monastery Archimandrite Christophoros. He was hosted for a meal by the Holy Monastery, where present was also the representative of the Royal Throne of Jordan Emir Gazi, and members of the delegation of the "Harmony" week in Jordan.

The Spiritual Father Christophoros in his oral address underlined the honour for the Holy Monastery of the Life-giving Spring to host H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and His Excellency the Prince Emir Gazi, and thanked His Majesty the King of Jordan for His democratic administration in the country, in which the Christians enjoy prosperity and righteousness, living peacefully with their Muslim fellow citizens.

After the meal, His Beatitude placed the foundation stone of the newly-founded Orthodox Cultural Centre, where there will be camping areas, as well as areas for many other activities, for the Patriarchate Sunday Schools in Jordan. His Beatitude awarded the sponsor of this project Mr. Aissa Nassif Ode with the distinctive honour of the Grand Commander of the Order of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. Mr. Ode is also willing to contribute to the continuation of the restoration project of the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General

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