

HEADS OF CHURCHES MEET AT THE PATRIARCHATE

At 11.00 am of Wednesday the 26th of November/9th of December 2015, the Heads of Christian Churches in Jerusalem met at the Patriarchate in the context of a long-established meeting.

The representatives of the Churches were welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who went on to chair the meeting as Head of the first Church in the Holy Land.

During the meeting, the common Message of the Heads of Churches for Christmas was drafted and the visits between Churches on the occasion of Christmas were regulated. Also, reference was made on the memory of the late Coptic Archbishop of Jerusalem, Anba Abraham.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/8sAjgnBFnss>



HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM ADDRESSES EVENT ORGANIZED BY UCLAN UNIVERSITY FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

On Wednesday the 18th of November/2nd of December 2015, UCLAN University hosted a humanitarian event with the aim of

providing financial aid to Syrian refugees. The event was held at the University's Hall of Events.

His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, was invited by Mr Floros Voniatis, President of the University's Board, to participate in the event. He was accompanied by Metropolitan Timotheos of Vostra, the Holy Sepulcher's Exarch in Cyprus, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, and Archdeacon Evlogios.

On His arrival at Larnaka airport, the Patriarch was welcomed by Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus, Metropolitan Timotheos of Vostra, Archimandrite Ieronymos Pyliotis, a close collaborator of UCLAN, and other Cypriot clerics.

From the airport, His Beatitude went to the Exarchate in Nicosia, where the Exarch hosted lunch in honour of the Patriarch and the Archbishop of Cyprus.

The "event for love" opened with an address by Mr Voniatis, who underlined the highest scientific level of UCLAN University and went on to add that, during a visit to Jordan, he had witnessed how the Patriarchate of Jerusalem supported the displaced from Syria, now residing at the Za atar refugee camp. That visit provided the inspiration for the event at UCLAN, he said.

In His address to participants, Patriarch Theophilos characterized UCLAN's initiative kind and well-liked by god, adding that the Church of Jerusalem, being an undeniable witness of our Saviour's philanthropy, has never ceased to care for those in need, in alignment with the words of the Apostle Paul: *If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.* (Corinthians A, 12, 26)

"The establishment of Academic Institutions in Cyprus, i.e. the Theological School founded on the initiative of Archbishop Chrysostomos, and UCLAN University on the initiative of Mr

Voniatis, opens up new paths of closer collaboration between Cyprus and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the field of education, to the benefit of peoples in the wider region and Christians as a whole”, said Patriarch Theophilos.

Ms Wafa Gousous, head of the Patriarchate’s Office in Amman and actively engaged in the support of Syrian refugees in Jordan, praised the University’s humanitarian initiative and succinctly presented the Patriarchate’s work in Jordan.

Her address was followed by church hymns performed by the Choir of the Bishopric of Kition, under the direction of Mr Andreas Avraam Vavis. Traditional Cypriot songs and dances were also performed.

The event closed with the Philharmonic Choir of the Bishopric of Tamassos, under the blessings of its shepherd, Metropolitan Isaiah, and the direction of Mr Charilaos Nikolaides.

From the Secretariat-General



THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE IN RAMALLAH VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, the 17th/30th of November 2015, the Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to Ramallah, Mr Peter Beerwerth, accompanied by his assistant Ms Claudia Klein,

visited the Patriarchate. They were welcomed by Patriarch Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

An interesting discussion took place in the context of the visit on the theological differences causing division amongst the Christian Churches whilst their resolution is being sought in bilateral theological dialogues.

Reference was also made to the Holy Shrines, i.e. the Church of the Resurrection, their spiritual importance for Christian pilgrims and their silent work, namely the protection of Christians in the Holy Land and preservation of the status quo in Jerusalem as a guarantee of its inhabitants' peaceful coexistence, both religious and political.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/wW0mTTlBYcY>



ISRAEL'S MILITARY COMMANDER IN SAMARIA VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, the 15th/28th of November 2015, Israel's Military Commander in the region of Samaria, Mr Rami Felah, accompanied by a group Arabic-speaking judges and lawyers from the Nazareth region, visited the Patriarchate. Mr Felah and the other guests were welcomed by Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

At the meeting, an interesting discussion took place on the

need for the adherents to the three Monotheistic religions of the Middle East to coexist in peace and concord, a need made obvious since the days of Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem, who had delivered the city of Jerusalem to Umar ibn Khattab, to serve as residence for people of different nationalities and religions, without any of them claiming the city exclusively for themselves.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/7288UQ6Yz4M>



RETURN OF THE ICON OF THEOTOKOS FROM UKRAINE TO THE GETHSEMANE DEPENDENCY

On Saturday, the 15th/28th of November 2015, His Eminence Alexander, Archbishop of Pereyaslav-Khemlnytskyi and Vishniev, returned to the Patriarchate the icon of the Dormition from the Tomb of the Mother of God. On a request of Metropolitan Onouphrios of Ukraine, the icon had been sent to Ukraine for a period of approximately two months in order to strengthen the faithful.

Having travelled from Ukraine, Archbishop Alexander was welcomed by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers. At the meeting, the Archbishop extended thanks for the icon and offered gifts of love, appreciation and gratitude from the Church of Ukraine. In response, Patriarch Theophilos invited His Eminence to

officiate with Him at the Joint Patriarchal Service in memory of St Philoumenos the Holy Martyr at Jacob's Well in Samaria.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/N1pbM8zV0yc>



THE GREEK PRIME MINISTER VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the afternoon of the 13th/26th of November 2015, His Excellency the Greek Prime Minister, Mr Alexis Tsipras, visited the Patriarchate. Mr Tsipras was accompanied by political associates of his, amongst whom Foreign Minister Mr Kotzias; Infrastructure, Transport and Networks Minister, Mr Spirtzis; Minister of State, Mr Pappas; Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister and Government Spokesperson, Ms Gerovasili; and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Amanatidis. Present at the meeting were the Ambassador of Greece to Israel, Mr Lampridis, Mr Gennimatas, the Greek Consul-General to Jerusalem, Mr Zacharoudiakis, and Mr Koinis.

The Greek Prime Minister and his associates were cordially welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, Hagiotaphite Fathers and members of the Greek Parish of Jerusalem.

After addressing Mr Tsipras, the Patriarch awarded him the Cross of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher in recognition of his moral support to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The Prime Minister extended thanks for this honour and congratulated the Patriarch for promoting dialogue as a means of resolving problems in the Middle East. Mr Tsipras went on to express joy for being in Jerusalem, a sacred Biblical city, in spite of recent incidents of violence. He added that the Greek Ministry of Education had recently organized a Conference that has as participants 129 states, including the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, aiming to bring out the multi-religious and multicultural tradition of the Middle East.

“We believe that the Patriarchate’s contribution to the prevalence of peace in Jerusalem and the Middle East is of great importance. Monotheistic religions focus on the human being and for this we must promote love to humans as the link between them”, said Mr Tsipras, adding that “We pledge to support the Patriarchate of Jerusalem with every means at the disposal of the Greek Government”.

At the meeting, the Patriarch introduced Mr Antonia Moropoulou, professor at the Metsovion Polytechnic, as an authority in the conservation of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulcher. Mr Moropolou visited the Patriarchate on the occasion of the Prime Minister’s visit.

On the conclusion of the meeting, Mr Tsipras and his associates, accompanied by Patriarch Theophilos, diplomats and members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Greek Parish, walked from the Christian Street to the Church of the Resurrection, where Ms Moropoulou presented plans for the conservation works.

From there, the Greek Prime Minister left for Greece, having completed his visit to Israel and the Palestinian State.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/39tqefd9Jpc>



TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENTHRONEMENT OF HIS BEATITUDE THEOPHILOS, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

On Sunday, the 9th/22nd of November 2015, feast-day of St Nektarios the miracle-worker, Archbishop of Pentapolis, the Patriarchate celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Enthronement of His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

On the occasion of this fortunate event, Doxology was performed at the katholikon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, led by His Beatitude. Co-officiating were Hagiotaphite Primates and Hieromonks, having as concelebrants Hagiotaphites, members of the Arabic-speaking flock, and pilgrims, in the presence of Mr Georgios Zacharoudiakos, Greek Consul-General to Jerusalem.

On the conclusion of Doxology, concelebrants returned to the Patriarchates, where His Eminence Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina, addressed the Patriarch on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod.

In his speech, Archbishop Aristarchos spoke of the work performed by the Patriarch since His enthronement, work that is worthy of His predecessors, the late Patriarchs of Jerusalem. Special reference was made to the Patriarch's particular sensitivity towards the safekeeping and maintenance of the Holy Shrines, that recently led to the structural enhancement of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulcher by a group

of specialized professors from Athens Polytechnic and restoration works on the roof of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Archbishop Aristarchos also remarked on how the Patriarchate utilizes its property for the benefit of Christians in the Holy Land, i.e. building settlements in Bethlehem and Beit-Jala, and of the harmonious relations it maintains with its sister Orthodox Churches.

The Greek Consul-General then took the floor in order to express Greece's appreciation, recognition and respect for the religious and national work performed by the Patriarch, conveying the warmest wishes for success in the historical mission He has undertaken. "For Greece", Mr Zacharoudiakis said, "the protection of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its historical rights is a priority. This holy Institution symbolizes our diachronic presence in the Holy Land as well as our traditionally friendly and constructive relations and our collaboration in the region, putting into practise the spirit of the ecumenical values of Hellenism".

Representatives of the Patriarchates of Russia and Romania then addressed the Patriarch, as well as members of the flock.

His Beatitude spoke last, saying that He has been called upon to prove Himself worthy of His Hagiotaphite mission, "clothed" according to the Apostle Paul, "with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with each other... and over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity". [Col. 2, 12-13]

The Patriarch's address was translated into Arabic by the Patriarchate's Liaison with Arabic Mass Media, f. Issa Mousleh, and posted here: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2015/11/22/16147>

After those present paid their respects to the Patriarch, Hagiotaphites and guests were hosted to festive lunch.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/wjEC6QN7vtg>



THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM VISITS THE FORMER PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM, MONK IRENAIOS, AT THE HOSPITAL.

On the evening of Thursday, the feast day of St James the Brother of God, namely the 23rd of October/5th of November 2015, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, visited the former Patriarch of Jerusalem, monk Irenaios, at the hospital. The Patriarch was accompanied by Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias and Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina. Monk Irenaios had been admitted to the Hadassa Israeli hospital on Mt Scopus, where he underwent an operation.

Patriarch Theophilos and the accompanying Primates wished the former Patriarch of Jerusalem a speedy recovery, and received his thanks.

From the Secretariat-General



THE PATRIARCHATE'S ACTIVITY AS REGARDS DISPLACED SYRIANS

On Wednesday, the 22nd of October/4th of November 2015, in the context of deliberations of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), headed by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, Ms Wafa Gousous, President of the Patriarchate's Office in Amman dealing with issues of the Middle East Council of Churches, presented the Patriarchate's activity in the Zatar camp of Syrian refugees in Jordan, and the deliberations of the MECC's Assembly. The presentation was made with the use of a photo gallery, part of which is posted on the Patriarchate's website.

From the Secretariat-General



THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM PARTICIPATES IN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, IN CAIRO

Between Tuesday the 21st of October/3rd of November and 22nd of October/4th of November 2015, the Executive Committee of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) convened in Cairo.

The Executive Committee is the institution that implements the decisions of the MECC.

The Middle East Council of Churches, founded in 1974, has as participants four Christian Churches or "Families", namely: the Greek Orthodox Church that comprises the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and the Church of Cyprus; the Pre-Chalcedonian Church (Armenians, Copts, Syrians); the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches.

The Executive Committee was hosted at St Mark Center (Cairo) of the Coptic Church. His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, represented the entire Orthodox Church as President. He was accompanied by the Elder Secretary-General Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina.

The Committee discussed such issues as the unchecked situation in the Middle East and the need for the MECC to protect the region's Christian Minorities, i.e. in Syria and Iraq.

The Committee also ratified the minutes of the decisions of the previous Executive Committee, that had convened at the Marriott Hotel near the Dead Sea, and listened to the report of the General Secretary on the sound administrative, financial and communication situation of the MECC, following a crisis in its midst, as well as on the activities the Council has engaged in from the time of the previous Executive Committee to this day.

In his report, General Secretary f. Michel Jalakh made special reference to the help he had received from Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem and from the Office the Patriarchate had established in Amman, ran by Ms Wafa Gousous.

Committee members commented on the report with praises and some negative remarks and objections, to which the General Secretary tried to provide satisfactory answers to the best possible extent.

During the second meeting of the Executive Committee, on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 21st of October/3rd of November 2015,

Patriarch Theophilos addressed participants in English, see link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2015/11/03/17836>

Remarks on the general secretary's report continued until it was decided that priority should be placed on the decisions and actions the Council owes to take towards the dangerous situation in the countries of the Middle East, where the Christian hypostasis is threatened by extinction. It was correctly pointed out that without Christians in the Middle East there cannot be a Council of Churches in the Middle East, and that members need to seek and fight against the reasons that force Christians to flee the Middle East, namely: insecurity, economic poverty and destitute.

The Executive Committee also looked at the date of the next General Assembly which will convene in Amman, Jordan.

On the conclusion of deliberations, Patriarch Theophilos visited Patriarch Theodoros of the Coptic Church of Egypt. The two heads of Churches exchanged wishes and gifts: Patriarch Theophilos offered an icon of Theotokos, and Patriarch Theodoros a cross of Coptic art.

From the Secretariat-General

