

# THE CUTTING OF THE NEW YEAR CAKE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On the evening of Friday, December 31, 2022/January 13, 2023, New Year's Eve, the cutting of the New Year Cake (Vasilopita) took place in the hall of the Patriarchate, in the presence of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Greek Community of Jerusalem, the Trustees of the Cathedral of Saint James the Brother of God, the members of our Arabic-speaking flock and pilgrims.

On this occasion, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos delivered the following address:

**“And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night? and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years”** (Genesis 1:14) the Bible reads.

Our holy Church celebrates a double feast today the feast of the circumcision of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ and of the memory of our holy Father Basil the Great, and brought us all together in this holy place of our Venerable Patriarchate, that we may glorify and give thanks to the holy Triune God for the entrance of the New Year. Moreover, so that we can customarily perform the cutting of Vasilopitta, made in honour of Saint Basil.

God the Father set times and seasons in his own power (cf. Acts 1:7) says the Lord. Interpreting these words of the Lord, Saint Gregory of Nyssa says: “The Father in his own authority established the times, and from the times and everything born in the time we understand that the Father has authority over all these”. And Athanasios the Great points out saying: “about the end of all times [Christ] as the Word knows, as man is

ignorant; for the man himself is ignorant of even these things". According to Cyril of Alexandria: "one should not be curious about the very secret things and hidden in God and through them, the Lord taught".

Indeed, it is impossible for the human mind to determine the meaning of time and its change without referring to its creator, God the Father, as Saint Paul teaches saying: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible... all things were created by him, and for him" (Col. 1:16). Therefore, Basil the Great says: "and when now the time has come for the world to be introduced into the creatures ... then the flow of time was created as a basis, inherent with the world ... a flow that constantly rushes and runs sideways towards it and nowhere ends its path. Isn't Time something whose past has disappeared, whose future has not yet appeared, and whose present, before it is fully perceived, escapes immediately from the hands of the senses?"

The exit of time, i.e. its appearance after the world but also its change, indicates the course on the one hand of man's history in the world, on the other hand, of his rebirth in the Holy Spirit, of his hagiographical so-called history. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted...To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"(Is. 61,1-2/Lk. 4,18-19) says the Lord.

The Year of the Lord is not other than that, through which Jesus Christ, "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" (Tit. 3,5-6). We also hear St. Cyril of Alexandria saying: "accepted is the year which, however, we have entered into, washing away sin through holy baptism and becoming communicants with its divine nature, being born into communion through the sharing

of the Holy Spirit... as also the all-wise Paul preached "behold, now is the accepted time? behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6,2).

The Church, therefore, the divine-human body of Christ, which is not of this world (Jn. 8:23), celebrates the fact of the change of the year not in a worldly way, but in a Christ-like way. And this is because Christ is the Lord of Time distinguished into the present, past and future on the one hand, and numbered in years on the other. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, says the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. John 1:8) according to the testimony of Saint John the Theologian.

In other words, the human intellect's understanding of the outgoing old and the new incoming Year becomes possible only in the Incarnation of God the Word of Christ, because, as Saint Paul preaches, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away? behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5,17). We become partakers of this newness in Christ in the liturgical and eucharistic act of the Church, as Time becomes season.

Christ has granted us the time that is born in his Church, so that we may cleanse soul and body from all corruption and become beloved to God, as the apostle Barnabas orders in his letter: "let us therefore completely depart from all works of iniquity, lest the works of iniquity overtake us; and let us hate the error of the present time, that in the future we may love".

These divinely inspired words of the apostle Barnabas call all those who love, according to Basil the Great, "the longed-for beauty, the source of life, the mental light but also the unattainable wisdom", during this time of the change of the year and the dawning apostasy and iniquity, so that we may reflect on our transgressions, for which our Lord Jesus was delivered and raised for our righteousness (cf. Rom. 4:25).

“Let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous” (1 John 3:7) orders St. John the Evangelist.

Saluting the dawn of the new year in the Incarnate in Christ from the pure blood of the most blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, we beseech the Great Hierarch of Cappadocia, Saint Basil, the one who has adorned the things of men, that he may also intercede to the circumcised Lord God and our Saviour Jesus Christ for our souls, for the peace of the universe, especially for our tested region of the Middle East and for the cessation of schisms and the restoration of the broken unity of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church.

And after the hymnographer, we say: “God of Gods and Lord, you who are three-present nature, unapproachable, and creator of all, Almighty, we all fall to you, and we entreat you; bless this present year, as a Good one, keep in peace, Your Church, our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, our pious Christian flock, the holy city of Jerusalem and the pious nation of the Roman Orthodox. Amen.

**Happy, blessed and peaceful New Year 2023, and many happy returns!”**

Then, as the troparia of the Circumcision of the Lord and of Saint Basil were chanted, His Beatitude cut the cake and distributed its pieces to the pilgrims, praying: “Happy and prosperous New Year 2023” and the students sang the New Year carols in the Hall and later at the cells of the Hagiotaphite Fathers.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# **THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF BLESSED FORMER PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM EIRINAIOS**

At noon on Wednesday, December 29, 2022/ January 11, 2023, the funeral service of the blessed former Patriarch of Jerusalem Eirinaios was held at the Holy Monastery of the Holy Metropolis of Samos and Ikaria, under the brotherly care and supervision of the officiating the service, His Eminence Metropolitan Eusevios of Samos and Ikaria.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem was represented by His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth after the Presbyter Priest of the Holy Metropolis of Nazareth Fr Simeon and the Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Athens Archimandrite. Raphael.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem expresses its gratitude to His Eminence Metropolitan Eusevios of Samos and Ikaria, and to all the Authorities of the island of Samos, who were present at the funeral service, and prays for the repose of the soul of the Blessed Former Patriarch of Jerusalem in the land of the living. May His remembrance be ever-lasting!

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# DESTRUCTION OF GRAVES OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH CEMETERY ON HOLY ZION HILL

On the afternoon of December 18, 2022/January 1, 2023, hitherto unknown persons caused damage and destruction to approximately forty graves, inscriptions and crosses of the Anglican Church Cemetery on the hill of Holy Zion.

Among the destroyed graves is the grave of the founder of the Zion Hill Cobat School, Bishop Cobat.

On December 22nd 2022, January 4th 2023, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, accompanied by the Geronda Secretary-General His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Archdeacon Mark, visited the Cemetery and expressed His sorrow for this disaster, His disapproval of such a disrespectful act of vandalism to the detriment of the memory of the dead, and His support to the Anglican Church in Jerusalem.

The statement issued by the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches of Jerusalem regarding the matter reads as follow:

*“We, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, are deeply disturbed at the wanton desecration of more than thirty gravestones at the Protestant Cemetery on Mt. Zion on New Year’s Day.*

*Particularly troubling are the scenes recovered from the security camera footage from that afternoon. They reveal two young men wearing kippahs and tallit kattans maliciously smashing to pieces a stone carving of the second Protestant Bishop of Jerusalem, numerous stone crosses, and the tombstones of Christian police officers of Mandate Palestine. The choice of these specific targets signals to us that the perpetrators of these criminal deeds were clearly motivated*

*by religious bigotry and hatred of Christians. Moreover, we note that this is not the first such attack upon this cemetery, but part of a repeating pattern of attacks against Christian sacred sites and cemeteries on Mt. Zion and elsewhere that have been on the rise over the past decade. As we have done multiple times in the past with similar such atrocities, we condemn these terroristic acts against the Protestant Cemetery and call for the concerned authorities to tirelessly pursue, apprehend, and prosecute the perpetrators of these crimes to the fullest extent of the law, including those laws pertaining to hate crimes. Moreover, these acts cannot be seen as isolated incidents, but as a clear and systematic attempt to bring about exclusivity in favor of one side, and a fierce attack on the historical Status Quo enshrined in our beloved Holy Land and upheld by International Law, which ensures the protection of mutual respect and religious rights. We therefore invite religious and political leaders both in our region and around the world to join us in condemning and combating these and other such violent acts of defilement against sacred sites, and to actively reaffirm and recommit themselves to the promotion of an environment of safety, mutual respect, and religious tolerance in this Holy Land that is held in reverence by all three of the Abrahamic Faiths.”*

**From Secretariat-General**

---

**A STATEMENT BY THE GREEK**

# **ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM REGARDING THE ILLEGAL TAKE OVER OF CHURCH LAND IN SILWAN BY AN ISRAELI RADICAL GROUP**

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem condemned the storming of its land today, Tuesday, December 27, by an Israeli radical group in Wadi Hilweh in Silwan, south of the Old City of Jerusalem.

This radical group has no right or judicial backing in their favour to allow them to enter or occupy the land. The Patriarchate also condemns the fact that the raid took place with the protection of armed Israeli police and border guards.

The Patriarchate affirms that this piece of land, known as 'the red land', is five dunums in size (around 1.2 acres) and has been leased to the Sumrin family by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem since the beginning of the last century.

The Sumrin family is still cultivating it to this day, and this intrusion is a clear encroachment on the Patriarchate's properties in Jerusalem.

This incident represents a direct reaction of the radical Israeli groups to the Patriarchate's criticism of their expansionist practices that are being deliberately targeted against the Christian churches in Jerusalem, as His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, made it clear in his speech during the Christmas tree lighting ceremony in Jaffa Gate on Friday, December 16th.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem clarifies that an attempt was made to attack this land previously in 2008 when the municipality tried to use it. The Patriarchate went to court, fighting a judicial proceeding against the municipality, only to be surprised that an Israeli radical organization possessed documents linking this plot of land to the suspected forgery deal in 2004, which included the properties of Jaffa Gate.

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem stresses its commitment to all its rights, properties, and endowments, and that it will spare no effort to protect and defend its rights, and that it will not retreat from defending the Orthodox rights, which the Church and its people have adopted unanimously since His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III assumed his position as Patriarch of Jerusalem in 2005.



---

# THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY AT JAFFA GATE

Per the annual tradition of lighting up the Christmas tree at the entrance of the Christian Quarter of Jerusalem, the Imperial Hotel in Jaffa Gate was immersed this evening, December 16, with the colorful communities of the Holy City as His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, along fellow Heads of Churches and their representatives took to the balcony of this significant hotel, the opportunity to welcome everyone to this event.

As His Beatitude delivered a heart-warming speech from the balcony, the crowds listened attentively as the entrance to the Old City was lit with the candles of Christmas cheer and hope.

Fellow leaders of the various Churches in Jerusalem were joined by the respective members of the diplomatic cord, as several civil society organizations participated in this seasonal festivity.

A Christmas reception was held soon afterwards at the Imperial Hotel as a gratitude from the Heads of Churches for the members of the diplomatic cord.

His Beatitude's full speech can be read as follow:

*" Your Beatitudes,*

*Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Reverend Fathers,*

*Beloved Members of our Communities,*

*Respected Members of the Diplomatic Corps,*

*Sisters and Brothers,*

*At the beginning of this great festive season, as we gather here to light this Christmas tree, we recall these words from the Gospel of Saint John:*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

*(Jn 1:1-5)*

*This Light of Lights, the Sun of Righteousness, that rose in the Holy City of Bethlehem from the Cave of hope, is Christ himself, the Word made flesh. This same Light shone again in this Holy City of Jerusalem from the Tomb of hope when our Lord Jesus Christ was risen from the dead. And so today we, as the sons and daughters of the Light of the Sun of Righteousness and of the hope of the resurrection of Christ bless the lighting of this Christmas tree, which stands as a symbol of this Light and this hope.*

*We pray that this light may shine in the hearts and minds of the rulers of this world as well as in the hearts and minds of those who govern our region, so that peace, righteousness,*

*and reconciliation may reign over us all.*

*For, as Saint Paul reminds us, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us (2 Cor. 5:19). The work of peace, righteousness, and reconciliation is the responsibility of all people of goodwill.*

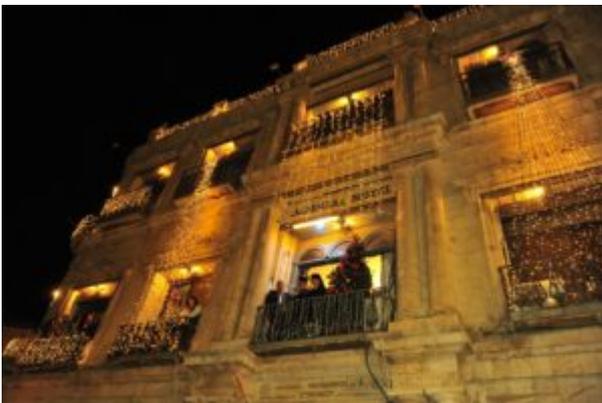
*In the lighting of this Christmas tree, we celebrate all that represents the true character of Jerusalem and the Holy Land and our centuries-old unique experience of our multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious life together and our history of co-existence and mutual respect. This is a powerful reminder that Jerusalem is a beacon for the whole world, especially in the face of the turbulence and violence that affect the lives of so many. Christians have become the target of repeated and continuous attacks by radical Israeli groups, especially in the Holy City. For the past decade, countless crimes have been committed against Christians, including physical and verbal attacks against priests and clergy, attacks have been targeted against churches, holy places have been vandalized and systematically desecrated, in addition to continuous intimidation of Christian citizens, who all they want is to live normal lives as the God-given right of all humans. These radical groups are committing their crimes in a deliberate attempt to expel Christians from Jerusalem and other parts of the Holy Land.*

*This is the society we seek so eagerly to preserve and continue to build. We long for peace, and so let us not rend this fabric of our historic common life that has provided room enough down the ages for all who call the Holy Land their home. Divine Providence has set us in this Holy Land together and given us a matchless heritage. This simple ceremony of the lighting of a tree shows us the way and shines as a sign of hope in the darkness. We stand with our good friend Abu Al-Waleed Dajani and his family in their*

*struggle to protect this pillar property. May this season of light and of the hope of new life bring us together in a new resolve.*

*We wish all our people many peaceful years and a happy Christmas season.*

*Thank you.”*





---

# THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM ATTENDS THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS RECEPTION BY HM KING OF JORDAN

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem and all of Palestine, joined the Heads of Churches in

Jerusalem today, December 14, to attend the annual Christmas reception hosted by His Majesty King Abdullah II, King of Jordan.

During the reception His Beatitude gave the following speech:

*Your Majesty,*

*Your Royal Highnesses,*

*Esteemed Members of the Government,*

*Beloved Leaders of our Religious Communities*

*Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Reverend Fathers,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*We greet you, Your Majesty, in this festive season, in which our region has the privilege of holding the festival of the light of justice, even in a world, and in a time, when there is deep confusion and despair. The words of the Holy Book remind us:*

*Arise, shine, for your light has come,*

*and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.*

*For darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples,*

*but the Lord will arise upon you,*

*and his glory will appear over you.*

*(Is 60:1-2)*

*As we emerge into a post-pandemic world, we face tremendous challenges. Most especially we are painfully aware of the deepening danger of new assaults from some quarters on the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious integrity of our region. There can be no doubt that this is an extremely sensitive time in our history, and the situation in which we are living, both in this region and around the world, is extremely delicate. We must admit that it can feel like a volcano that is on the verge of eruption. Those who are motivated by ideology rather than by our common sacred values put not just individual lives at risk, but the entire human community.*

*In the face of these harsh realities, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan remains a beacon of stability, mutual respect, tolerance, and the flourishing of different religious groups side by side. Your Majesty is well known throughout the world for your commitment to peace-building and the promotion of ordered co-existence so that all may prosper. We are fully aware of Your Majesty's firm and clear voice in defending the Status Quo of our Islamic and Christian religious institutions and also for your care for the Christian presence in the Holy Land and for the Christian character of Jerusalem. As the Heads of the Churches and Christian Communities of the Holy Land, we want to assure you once again of our full support of you in your essential role as the Custodian of the Christian and Islamic Holy Places in the Holy Land. The Status Quo has always been the key for the welfare and peaceful co-existence between all who call the Holy Land our home.*

*We wish to express our appreciation to you for gathering us*

*in this festive event, so that we may give expression, by our presence, to Your Majesty's commitment to the religious diversity of our region in general, and of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and of the Holy Land in particular, which is at the heart of our collective identity. We are gathered from the many religious communities that make up our diverse society here in Jordan and in Jerusalem, and which have lived together for generations. The future of our region depends on sustaining this diversity, so that all our peoples may have a future of opportunity, hope, and safety.*

*In times of darkness, the light shines ever more brightly. This is exactly what we are about to celebrate in Bethlehem. We are grateful for the light that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan shines in our region, and we assure you, Your Majesty, of our ongoing willingness to work with you to ensure the prosperity of all our peoples.*

*May God bless you, Your Majesty, all the Royal Family, and all those set in authority under your wise leadership, and may God bless all the peoples of our beloved Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and our beloved Holy Land.*

*Thank you.*





# THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENTHRONEMENT OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS

On the 9th / 22nd of November 2022, the seventeenth anniversary of the Enthronement of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos in 2005 was celebrated by the Patriarchate.

Due to this fact, a Doxology took place at 10.30 am at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Doxology was presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of the High Priests, Hieromonks and Deacons of the Patriarchate and the participation of members of the congregation of the Church of Jerusalem and pilgrims, along with the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and one hundred and fifty members of the Frigate Salamis of the Hellenic Navy who came from Haifa with the Honorary Consul of Greece in Haifa Mr Constantinos Zenovios and the member of the Greek Embassy – Naval Department in Tel Aviv Mr Tsiros.

After the Doxology, everybody went to the Patriarchate Reception Hall.

Then the Geronda Chief Secretary His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina addressed His Beatitude with the following address:

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

In full joy today, the Church of Zion and the Venerable

Hagiotaphite Brotherhood celebrate in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in a solemn gathering of clergy and people, a historic, very important, joyful and hopeful event, which took place seventeen years ago, in the year of our salvation 2005, of the election of Your Beatitude to the martyred and glorious Patriarchal Throne of Saint James the Brother of God in Jerusalem.

This event, in addition to its importance primarily for the formation, coherence, stability and peace of the institution of the Church, acquires particular importance also because it came to put an end to a – thankfully – short, gloomy and extremely painful-sadly- period of the life of the Church of Jerusalem. The Church and the Brotherhood were then suddenly speechless at the prospect of the conclusion of dishonourable agreements made without their knowledge. These agreements mortgaged, if not sold, the property of the Patriarchate in the Old City of Jerusalem, namely in the area opposite the Church of the Resurrection, of priceless material, much more of cultural value, and disrupted the centuries-old power and Biblical and internationally recognized Status Quo of the Old City. The Brotherhood then protested ecclesiastically, denounced the primacy of these agreements, considering itself as an active communion member of the body of the Church and respecting the institution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, opposed it, and called a Pan-Orthodox Synod – an event that takes place in critical circumstances of the church of life – and opened the way by electing a worthy Pastor, able to lead the Jerusalem Church and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood out of their impasse.

In regular elections held on the basis of the Ecclesiastical Canons and the Jordanian Law of the Patriarchate of 1957, Your Beatitude was elected by unanimous vote of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod as the Primate of the flock of the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Hegoumen of the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

Ever since, the first and main concern of this Patriarchal Office was the annulment of these agreements by the weapons of justice of the right and the left, through the judicial process, which is not specific and through legal political means, through mobilizing the protests of Churches and States, able to protect the Christian Community in the Holy Land from the challenges and pressures of extreme fanatical elements, who covet this property, so that it does not have a dwelling place but hast to remain homeless in its cradle. This burning issue of the protection of the Christians of the Holy Land was brought to the attention of the President of the USA, Mr Joe Beiden, through a special letter by Your Beatitude, when You received and guided him to the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, in July of this year.

Nevertheless, Your Beatitude was not exhausted from these efforts, but at the same time contributed to other works worthy of memory, such as, after the restoration of the Holy Tomb of the Holy Sepulchre in 2017, the active participation of the present Patriarchate in the basis of a scientific study by the Sapientia University of Rome, starting and continuing through the cooperation of the Three Major Communities, also a historical project of the maintenance of the floor of the Church of the Resurrection in the Seventh Arches and in the northern wing of the rotunda and of the consolidation of the subsoil of these spaces through scientific archaeological excavations. The decoration of the dedicated main space of the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection was and is a priority of Your Beatitude, for which You took advantage of the interest of the well-known pious businessman and Governor of Mount Athos Mr Athanasios Martinos, who visited our Patriarchate twice within a year, and was informed of the offer of sponsorship and of the other ongoing project of operating a scientific Centre for Theological Research in the Holy Monastery of the Holy Cross. In this case, the Patriarchate has already generously spent not inconsiderable sums for materials and conservation work under the expert

conservator from Cyprus, Mr Stavros Andreou, for a multitude of antiquities of the Library of the famous historical Theological School of the Cross and the treasures of the Archive of the Brotherhood.

The ever-known interest of Your Beatitude for our Orthodox Arab-speaking flock was also manifested in practice recently, through the selection, ordination and appointment of educated clergy to fill parish positions of the Patriarchate in Jordan and Israel, by sending young people for theological studies in Greece, through the financial contribution of our Patriarchate to the completion and the consecration of the Holy full-sized Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos of the Sakhin Community of the Acre region and of the Kufr Smea Community of the same region, through the Inauguration of a housing settlement in the town of Beit Jala on concessional terms of payment to four hundred and fifty families, through the external grouting of the Cathedral of St. James the Brother of God, thus securing our right of pilgrimage to the Courtyard of the Church of the Resurrection, through the offer of Mr Martinos of a modern X-ray machine for the Polyclinic of Saint Benedict, through the ongoing radical external and internal renovation of the Holy Monastery of the Prophet Elias and for the emergence of the nearby ancient Monastery of the "Seat", delayed, due to non-grant in the case of the Municipality of Jerusalem regular license. Simultaneously Your Beatitude has taken care of the Russian-speaking flock, appointing the Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth and the Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba for its immediate pastoral care, and by officiating the Divine Liturgy at the prayer house of Patriarch Abraham and the Patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronios in Beer Sheva, waiting for the construction of a decent holy temple by obtaining the required permission from the Municipality there.

The attention of Your Beatitude did not escape the lack of Fathers that has always afflicted the Hagiotaphite

Brotherhood, which You tried to cover by sequestering some of the clergy from Mount Athos or from the Church of Greece and the appointing Elder Dragoman and Managing Director of the School of Zion with the difficult task of selecting young students for the Zion School, as hope for the future.

These well-deserved memorials, Your Beatitudes, Father and Master, are only a few selected from the rich Patriarchal activity of Your Beatitude, giving us the Hagiotaphite Fathers the occasion for the celebration of this blessed anniversary day and the boast we have in Christ. This activity is the basis for our inspiration from Your example, the encouragement and strengthening of us, the clergy and the members of the flock, in the cultivation of an optimistic attitude of stewardship and enrichment of works of good in the field of personal virtues and the field of the rights of the Brotherhood and our Roman Orthodox nation at the Holy Shrines of the Holy Land.

In such an optimistic disposition of soul, I raise my glass, Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and of the entire Brotherhood and I wish You as many happy returns as possible, healthy, happy, stable, and fruitful, in the governmental power coming from above, for the glory of God and the praise of our blessed nation. So be it.”

This was followed by the Consul General of Greece, Mr Evangelos Vlioras, through his address below:

“Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen.

It is a special honour for the speaker to represent our Motherland again this year in the solemn celebration of the anniversary of your enthronement, a day of celebration for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem which takes place in the historical seat of the Mother of the Churches, with its 2,000-year history.

In the difficult and sometimes conflicting conditions that the long-suffering Holy Land and our wider region are going through, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, under your leadership, is a factor of stability, calmness, moderation and a beacon of hope for a future for this region free from intolerance and fanaticism.

Today is an opportunity, Your Beatitude, recalling your journey and your presence, on the Throne of the Zionist Church, to express our respect and appreciation for your great pastoral work and for the important and national work of the preservation and promotion of the Holy Places in the Holy Land and the safeguarding of the rights of the Patriarchate, unflinchingly and with the Hagiotaphite vigour and determination, in spite of the times, according to the best traditions of the Order of the Studious (Spoudaioi) and the Holy Common of the Holy Sepulchre.

Your Beatitude,

The Greek State surrounds you with appreciation and deep respect, recognizing the important work you are doing, as the Head of the Members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and is always a sincere and constant helper and supporter in your struggle, expressing, moreover, its unanimous, universal and all-round support of Greeks everywhere, as it is proven, and from the influx of devout pilgrims from Hellenism to the Holy Land, after the test of the recent pandemic.

For Greece, the defence of the rights and privileges of the ancient Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, as well as

of the Customary Status Quo, constitute a moral and historical debt and mission, to which we have undertaken, with a sense of responsibility, and bearing in mind that the Holy Institution it is a leading point of reference for the moral and spiritual values of our Faith, a symbol, inextricably intertwined with the Holy Land as a source of life, hope and love.

In this spirit, our Motherland, as evident from the recent visits here of our political and official leadership and donors, honestly and tirelessly takes care of strengthening and consolidating our Patriarchate and the Holy Community of the Holy Sepulchre in its high pastoral and national mission to be the guardian of the timelessness of the Greek and Greek-Orthodox presence in the Holy Land, as evidenced by the inscription on the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, after the reconstruction of 1810 'Property and dedication to Christ of the Orthodox Romans'.

On behalf of the Greek State and the colleagues who serve at the Consulate General of Greece in Jerusalem, we wish, from the bottom of our hearts, for health, longevity and the Lord's support for your high spiritual and consoling work for the good of our respective Patriarchate, Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, ministers and guardians of the Holy Shrines of the Holy Land and of your Rum Orthodox Flock."

His Beatitude was also addressed by representatives of the Orthodox Churches of Moscow and Romania and of our flock, and representatives of the Schools of the Patriarchate and the representative of the World Council of Churches Deputy Secretary Fr Ioannis Sauka and the representative of Scouts and others.

His Beatitude thanked them through the following address:

*"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation (Psalm 68:19) says the psalmist.*

*Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,*

*Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,*

*Reverend Christians and pilgrims,*

*The divine-human city of the living God, that is, the holy Church of Jerusalem, is celebrating today the Seventeenth Anniversary of the Enthronement of Our Mediocrity on the Apostolic Shroud of the Holy and righteous James the Brother of God and its First Hierarch.*

*This enthronement anniversary does not refer to Our unworthiness, but to the "God-made scene", according to Gregory of Nyssa, the holy delirium that is the institution of the Church at war in the world, which constitutes the body of the incarnate Son and Word of God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory...gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:17, 23), according to Saint Paul.*

*Being grateful, we went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with the honourable members of the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood accompanying Us, where we offered a thanksgiving doxology to the Holy Triune God "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4).*

*Hearers of the evangelical voice of Luke: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28), we*

*did not cease our concern for our tested flock, who were under our direct ecclesiastical jurisdiction and spiritual responsibility. "Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah" (John 1:23).*

*We have not lessened the observance, both of our paternal and apostolic traditions, as well as of the unceasing devotional ministry of the Holy Places, of the true testimony of our faith, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion? he hath desired it for his habitation" (Psalm 132:13), but neither of the indescribable privileges and sovereign rights of the pious and royal race and nation of the Roman Orthodox Christians.*

*By obeying the order of Saint Paul "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58) we follow the path of justice, the good cooperation with other Christian Communities, in every direction locally and internationally, demanding respect for the existing multi-religious and multinational Status Quo, both on the Holy Places and on the diplomatic "corpus separatum" of the Holy City of Jerusalem.*

*We confess after Saint Paul, "For 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). We say this because the land of Jerusalem, watered by the redemptive blood of the Righteous One, that of our Crucified and Resurrected Saviour Jesus Christ, is a refuge of comfort and the hope of all people, as the wise Paul preaches saying: "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:18), namely Christ.*

*Our Mediocrity after the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2) and remaining unchanged under the mission*

assigned to us by the divine Providence, do none other than the redeeming evangelism of love, of peace, righteousness, and the infinite philanthropy of the One who emptied himself and became a subject unto death, death on the cross (cf. *Philippians 2:6-8*).

The enthronement of this seventeen-year anniversary of Our Mediocrity calls us not to "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (*2 Cor. 10:5*), but "to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (*Col. 2:2-3*) according to the wise Paul. We say this because the throne of Christ's grace is in the Church of "the general assembly and church of the firstborn" (*Hebrews 12:23*). "As God, Christ has the eternal throne, as man, and high priest, and apostle of our confession, He hears, sit at my right hand", says Theodoritos Kyrou. According to Clement of Alexandria, "he who knows himself is the throne of the Lord" a throne of grace and mercy, according to Paul's words, "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (*Hebrews 4:16*). Saint Hippolytus commenting on the verse of Isaiah: "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud and shall come" (*Isaiah 19:1*) says: "Lord and the Word, cloud and hollow the cleanest tent, [said] where the enthroned Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the life [of man] to destroy the fallacy". In other words, today's enthronement anniversary refers to the inauguration of the throne of Christ in our hearts, and indeed in our contemporary time, of the "new order of things", about which Saint Paul said, "perilous times are coming" (*1 Tim. 3,1*). "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine? but after their own lusts they shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (*2 Tim. 4:3*). "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work" (*2 Thess. 2:7*).

We who are aware of our infirmity, that "God hath chosen the

weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27), do not stop the work on our Patriarchal, ecclesiastical and pastoral ministry of the apostolic and martyr's throne of the holy and righteous James the Brother of God. But we do not even hesitate, because we have co-ministers, the respected and beloved in Christ, our Hagiotaphite brothers, Arch Priests, Priests, Hieromonks, Deacons and Monks, distinguished by the Hagiotaphitic sacrificial self-denial and their ecclesiastical mindset, the unity and love, according to the exhortation of the Holy martyr Ignatius of Antioch: "Let us all love one another in unity, and none of us see our neighbour according to the flesh but in Christ Jesus. Let not what is possible divide you among you, but be united to the bishop, submitting to God through him in Christ".

We truly say that we do not hide our dismay at the prevailing disorder and dissension in the body of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church. For even the Episcopal and Patriarchal throne of the city, sanctified by the redemptive blood of Christ the King, is not silent prayerfully working for the observance of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (cf. Eph. 4,3).

Let us beseech the God of patience and supplication and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that H

is holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, "guide us into all truth" (cf. Jn. 16,13), through the of the intercessions of our most blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and of the prayers of our holy Father Nektarios of Pentapolis.

May the grace of the Holy and Life-giving Tomb of our Saviour Christ strengthen us all in our mission of witnessing love, peace and justice in the world and in our region.

Therefore, we call on all those praying with Us and those who, through their presence, are honouring Us on this Enthronement

*feast, power from on high, the illuminating energy of the Holy Sepulchre, patience and all God's blessing. We express our heartfelt thanks to the Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Cosntantina, who spoke on behalf of the reverend members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, and to all who addressed Us, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, His Eminence Archimandrite Alexander, representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Russia, conveying to us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow, Cyril, the Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Romania, conveying to us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania, Daniel, His Eminence the Metropolitan of Nazareth, Kyriakos, speaking on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, His Eminence the Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, speaking on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Fr Charalambos Bandour, speaking on behalf of Saint James Cathedral, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, speaking on behalf of the Russian-speaking Community of Beer Sheva, Archimandrite Philotheos, speaking on behalf of the communities in Acre region, Reverend Treasurer Fr Savva, speaking on behalf of the Community of the Shepherds Village, Deputy Secretary Fr Ioannis Soukas, speaking on behalf of the World Council of Churches, Mr Ode Kavas, speaking on behalf of the Arabic-speaking Schools of the Patriarchate and Mrs Panagiota Kafetzi speaking on behalf of the School of Saint Demetrius and all who participated in the celebration of this Enthronement anniversary.*

*Cheers to all of you!"*

At noon, a meal was offered at the refectory of the Patriarchate.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CYPRUS CHRYSOSTOMOS II

At noon on Saturday, October 30 / November 12, 2022, the funeral service of the Eminent Archbishop of the Autocephalous Church of Cyprus and ethnarch of the great island, Chrysostomos II, took place in the holy Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Cyprus dedicated to the founder of the Church of Cyprus Apostle Barnabas.

His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew officiated the service, with the co-celebration of the members of the Cypriot Hierarchy and the participation in prayer of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Alexandria Theodore representatives from other Orthodox Churches.

Among the political authorities who attended the service were, the President of Cyprus, Mr Nikos Anastasiadis and the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mrs Aikaterini Sakellariopoulou.

The obituary was delivered by His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, on behalf of the Church of Cyprus and the Holy Synod of Cyprus, His Eminence the Metropolitan Georgios of Paphos, as well as Mr Anastasiadis and Mrs Sakellariopoulou.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem was represented by the Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Cyprus, His Eminence Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra, who read the official address of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos as follows:

“To His Eminence Metropolitan **Georgios** of Paphos, governor of the Holy Archdiocese of Cyprus, a beloved brother in the Lord and co-minister of Our Mediocrity, holy greeting in Christ Jesus.

The comforting saying of the Apostle Paul, “for this perishable thing shall be clothed with incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:53), captured our minds upon hearing, after many years of painful illness, the departure in the Lord of the blessed and dearest brother of Ours Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos II.

“As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth” (Ps. 102,15), the departed wise Primate, at first decorated the Holy Monastery of Saint Neophytos, to which he dedicated himself since his childhood and served as a Hegoumen, promoting the Monastery greatly; later on he was unanimously appointed as the Shepherd and Metropolitan of the Holy Metropolis of Paphos, where he developed a rich pastoral activity, building many Holy Churches, supporting the penitent brothers and especially taking care of the formation of the holy clergy and the spiritual cultivation of His flock.

Since the year 2006, the “candle” had been placed “upon the candlestick” (Lk. 11:33) and steered the noetic ship of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Cyprus, “not giving sleep to his eyes, or slumber to his eyelids” (Ps. 131,4), in order to see the Church that was entrusted to him prosper both spiritually and materially, to be free and alive. He was involved in very important works, such as the revision of the Chart of the Church of Cyprus, the upgrading of the Synodical institution by the appointment of Metropolitans and Regional Bishops and the establishment of the Theological School of the Church of Cyprus, so that the work of the Church of Cyprus can be fully carried out as an Autocephalous Apostolic Church. It is worth remembering that he was a warm supporter of the unified State of Cyprus, free of occupation and other alien powers.

Nevertheless, we can attribute Paul's words to Him: " Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:28). Indeed, the blessed Primate practically manifested His interest on behalf of the Venerable Patriarchates of the Middle East to support the needy Christians of that region and the majority of the meetings of the Council of Churches of the Middle East were hosted by Him, on the great island of Cyprus. His interest in Our Venerable Patriarchate was also manifested, on the one hand, through the approval of the re-establishment of the Exarchate of the Holy Sepulchre in Nicosia, thus continuing the work of the occupied, until now, Exarchate in the Holy Monastery of Saint Chrysostomos Koutsoventis, and on the other, through the granting of scholarships to young people of Our flock to study in the School for Priests of the Church of Cyprus. The fraternal ties and the loving cooperation of our Churches yielded spiritual fruits.

Being present and witnesses of Christ's Resurrection in Jerusalem, let us make haste to address the blessed Primate through "Christ is Risen!". "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (1 Thess. 4,13). This perishable body, " is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15,43-44). Being certain of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we also believe in the prophetic saying that " Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise" (Isaiah 26,19).

We send prayers and beseech Christ our God Who rose from the Tomb, for the repose of the blessed soul of the departed Archbishop in the land of the living and the tents of the righteous, as in that day of Judgment, "may he shine like the

sun with his angels in eternal life along with our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing him and being seen and reaping the joy from Him” (John Damascene).

Wherefore, deeply condoling with your Eminence, the honourable members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and all the pious congregation of the Holy Church of Cyprus, we greet you from the Holy and Life-giving Tomb with a holy kiss and remain.

In the Holy City of Jerusalem, October 25, 2022

Beloved brother in Christ,

**THEOPHILOS III**

**Patriarch of Jerusalem”**

In the middle of the solemn events by the Cypriot Church and State and the representatives of the State and the Church of Greece and the other Orthodox Churches, the body of the late respected Primate was taken up and buried in the underground tomb for which he had made provisions, under the Cathedral.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

**STATEMENT BY THE HEADS OF  
CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM  
REGARDING THE BRITISH EMBASSY**

# IN ISRAEL

*We, the Council of the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, have noted with grave concern the recent call of the new British Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Liz Truss, for her government to review the placement of the British Embassy to Israel.*

*This directive was in response to the request of the Conservative Friends of Israel, who seek to have the Embassy moved from its present location in Tel Aviv to a new site in Jerusalem.*

*As a city holy to the three Abrahamic Faiths representing more than half the world's population, Jerusalem has long been recognized by the International Community, including the United Kingdom, as having a special status (Corpus Separatum), one aimed at safeguarding the freedom of religion, the sacred character of Jerusalem as a Holy City, and the respect for, and freedom of access to, its holy places (UN Report, "The Status of Jerusalem," 1997).*

*As Churches, our ecclesiastical jurisdictions cover all of the political territories of the Holy Land, a region where Christians have lived for 2,000 years, under many different empires and governments. The religious Status Quo in Jerusalem is essential for preserving the harmony of our Holy City and good relations between religious communities around the globe.*

*Implicit to the recognition of this Status Quo is the aforementioned Corpus Separatum that most of the world's governments have applied by refraining from locating their embassies in Jerusalem until a final status agreement on the Holy City has been reached. The contemplated movement of the British Embassy to Jerusalem would severely undermine this key principle of Corpus Separatum and the political negotiations that it seeks to advance.*

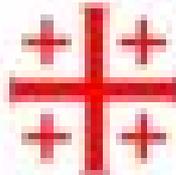
*Indeed, the very act of reviewing the placement of the British Embassy not only suggests that negotiated agreements*

*regarding Jerusalem and the West Bank have already resolved the ongoing disputes between the involved parties—when in fact they have not—but also implies that no such negotiations are needed: that the continuing military occupation of those territories and the unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem are both acceptable. We cannot believe that this is the message that the British government wishes to send to the world.*

*In view of these considerations, the Council of the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem regards this Embassy Review as a further impediment to advancing the already moribund Peace Process. Rather than commit valuable governmental resources to such a counterproductive endeavor, we encourage the British Prime Minister and government to instead redouble their diplomatic efforts towards facilitating the restart of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in order to move forward with a time-delimited and phased Peace Initiative, all in accordance with International Law and relevant UN resolutions.*

*Only through such an Initiative, we believe, will a just and lasting peace ever be established in Jerusalem and throughout the Middle East.*

*—The Council of the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem*



## PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

### Statement on the Call for a Review of the Placement of the British Embassy in Israel

October 10, 2022

We, the Council of the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, have reacted with grave concern to the recent call of the new Israeli Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Naftali Bennett, to his government to relocate the placement of the British Embassy in Israel. This directive was in response to the request of the Conservative Friends of Israel, who seek to have the Embassy moved from its present location in Tel Aviv to a new site in Jerusalem.

As a city holy to the three Abrahamic Faiths representing more than half the world's population, Jerusalem has long been recognized by the International Community, including the United Kingdom, as having special status. It enjoys international recognition as safeguarding the freedom of religion, the sacred character of Jerusalem as a Holy City, and the respect for, and freedom of access to, its holy places (UN Report, "The Status of Jerusalem," 1977).

As Churches, our ecclesiastical jurisdictions cover all of the political territories of the Holy Land, a region where Christians have lived for 2000 years, under many different empires and governments. The religious Status Quo in Jerusalem is essential for preserving the harmony of our Holy City and good relations between religious communities around the globe.

Applied to the occupation of the Status Quo is the internationally-recognized *Cyprus Agreement* that most of the world's governments have applied by refusing to locate their embassies in Jerusalem until a final status agreement on the Holy City has been reached. The contemplated movement of the British Embassy to Jerusalem would severely undermine this key principle of *Cyprus Agreement* and the political implications that it seeks to advance.

Indeed, the very act of reviewing the placement of the British Embassy not only suggests that negotiated agreements regarding Jerusalem and its West Bank have already occurred (a sweeping dispute that can be involved parties – when in fact they have not – but also implies that no such negotiations are needed, that the continuing military occupation of these territories and the unilateral construction of East Jerusalem are both acceptable. We cannot believe that this is the message that the British government wishes to send to the world.

In view of these considerations, the Council of the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem regards the Embassy Review as a further impediment to advancing the already established Peace Process. Rather than commit valuable governmental resources to such a counterproductive endeavor, we encourage the Israeli Prime Minister and government to instead redouble their diplomatic efforts towards facilitating the return of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority as well as more engaged with cross-denominational and plural Peace Initiatives, all in accordance with International Law and relevant UN resolutions.

Only through such an initiative, we believe, will a just and lasting peace ever be established in Jerusalem and throughout the Middle East.

—The Council of the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem

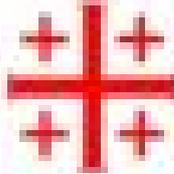
---

# STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF HM KING ABDULLAH II FOLLOWING HIS SPEECH AT THE UN ASSEMBLY IN NYC

*We, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, express our utmost gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan, the Hashemite Custodian of Christian and Muslim Holy sites in the Holy Land, for his true and honest description of the Christian reality in the Holy land, especially in Jerusalem, during his highly respected speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 20th of September, 2022.*

*We also applaud His Majesty's public commitment to protect our communities' historical and legal status quo, thus preserving our safety and future. His Majesty's spearheading efforts to ring the bells of warning over the deteriorating situation of Christian basic human rights sends a strong message to the world regarding the clear and present dangers surrounding the Christian heritage and presence in Jerusalem and the rest of the Holy Land.*

*We call on the International Community as a whole, and all peace-loving people around the world, to act upon His Majesty's warning addressed in his United Nations speech.*



## PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

---

**A Statement in Support of HM King Abdullah II  
Following his Speech at the UN Assembly in NY  
27 September, 2022**

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan, the Hashemite Custodian of Christian and Muslim Holy sites in the Holy Land, for his true and honest depiction of the Christian reality in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem, during his highly respected speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September, 2022.

We also applaud His Majesty's public commitment to protect our communities' historical and legal status quo, thus preserving our unity and future. His Majesty's unequivocal efforts to bring the fullness of meaning over the deteriorating situation of Christian holy sites and rights sends a strong message to the world regarding the clear and present danger concerning the Christian heritage and presence in Jerusalem and the rest of the Holy Land.

We call on the International Community as a whole, and all peace-loving people around the world, to act upon His Majesty's warning addressed in his United Nations speech.

—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem