

MEETING OF H.H.B. WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AFTER DIPLOMATS OF STATES OF LATIN AMERICA

On Thursday, April 29th / May 12th, 2022, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received a group of representatives of the Christian Churches, the Latin Patriarchate, the Custodian of the Holy Land, the Anglican Church and the Lutheran Church after the Diplomats representatives of the Latin America States.

His Beatitude spoke to them about the work of the Churches, having to deal with the challenges which the Christian flocks have recently faced, and asked for their support, to which they committed themselves.

Regarding the question about the hotel "Small Petra", His Beatitude replied that the court decided that its occupation by extremist elements is illegal, however, it did not decide on their eviction, nor their eviction from other hotels that they have seized.

"Nevertheless," said His Beatitude, "we are fighting together and with hope for the change of such hidden situations."

From Secretariat-General

A GROUP OF GREEK PARLIAMENT MEMBERS VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the afternoon of Tuesday, April 27 / May 10, 2022, a group of Greek MPs, accompanied by the Ambassador of Greece to Tel Aviv Mr Kyriakos Loukakis and the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras visited the Patriarchate.

This group was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of this visit, replying to their questions, His Beatitude informed them about the last tense situation for political and religious reasons, and the attempt by the Patriarchate along with the other Churches of Jerusalem for the prevalence of recession, conciliation and peace for the safeguarding of the multi-religious and multicultural character and of the Status Quo of Jerusalem, as well as of the Old City.

To the question regarding the division in the Orthodox Church nowadays, His Beatitude said that the Patriarchate as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy Land makes many efforts to mitigate and narrow the created schism, projecting dialogue as a means of achieving unity.

For the preservation of the Status Quo, it recommends the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan which has sustained the Custody over the Holy Land.

To the question, of how Greece can help, His Beatitude said that this is possible if it fulfils its role, which was given to Greece as the successor of the Byzantine Empire.

For this visit, the MPs offered His Beatitude a painting with

the House of Parliament, while the latter offered them a silver painting of Jerusalem and an icon of the Theotokos of Jerusalem.

From Secretariat-General

VISIT OF CARDINAL FERNANDO FILONI THE GRAND MASTER OF THE EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

On Tuesday 27 April/ 10 May 2022, the Cardinal His Most Rev. Eminence Fernando Filoni, the Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre visited the Patriarchate, accompanied by His Beatitude the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem and the Apostolic Delegate to Jerusalem and other associates of him and the clergy of the Latin Patriarch.

The Most Reverend Cardinal was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers, welcoming him amidst a festal period and a tense situation in Jerusalem.

On this visit the Cardinal addressed His Beatitude, underlining the philanthropic and educational activity of the Order of Knights where He belongs.

Thanking him His Beatitude said that his words is encouraging for the Christian presence in the Holy Land and referred to the contribution of the current Patriarch in Jerusalem,

Pierbattista Pizzaballa, former Custos of the Holy Land, to the Christian cooperation and the renovation of the Edicule of the Holy Sepulcher. This cooperation, His Beatitude said, continues to this day in a genuine Ecumenical Spirit and genuine dialogue. Through this cooperation, we face the recent known challenges and pressures by radical extremist elements against the Christians, who are the living stones of the body of Christ, the Church. His Beatitude wished the Cardinal success in his visit and offered him a silver painting of Jerusalem and blessings from Jerusalem to his companions. The Cardinal offered His Beatitude an emblem of the Order of Knights and a precious notebook.

On the afternoon of the same day, the Cardinal had an official entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, according to the existing Status Quo.

From Secretariat-General

MR JORDAN PERRY VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, 27 April/ 10 May 2022, Mr Jordan Perry of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of G. Britain visited the Patriarchate. The political analyst Mr Perry was received by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers. At this meeting, His Beatitude explained to the political analyst the situation that the Churches of Jerusalem and their faithful members have been facing recently, due to the pressures from the radical elements of Ateret Cohanim, who had recently seized the "Little Petra" hostel and some years ago they also seized and still hold to

this day the guest house of Saint John near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

His Beatitude also referred to the difficulties the Churches and especially the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem faced on Holy Saturday, at the Service of the Holy Light. These were the Police restrictions, following a Governmental law, which reduced the number of incoming faithful to the minimum, resulting in the inability of the faithful Christians to enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The reason behind these situations is that the Jewish people lack knowledge of the Christian cultural heritage.

These difficulties are dealt with by each one and altogether the Churches, and with their meetings that took place at the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem under the care of His Beatitude.

Mr Perry was attentive to His Beatitude's words and promised to contribute to the solving of this situation with all the available means in his power.

From Secretariat-General

MEETING OF THE MAYOR OF JERUSALEM WITH THE HEADS OF CHURCHES

On Monday afternoon, 26 April/ 9 May 2022, the Mayor of Jerusalem Mr Moses Leon met with the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem at the Monastery of the Franciscans in Jerusalem – Custody of the Holy Land.

At this meeting the Abbot of the Franciscans Fr Francesco Patton addressed the Mayor, underlining that the Jewish Passover was celebrated recently, during which the Jews remember the freedom God gave them from the bondage of Egypt. The Christian Easter was celebrated as our transference from the bondage of sin to the freedom of the Resurrected Christ. Ramadan was also celebrated as a period of acquiring the virtues of fasting, abstinence and the help of the poor.

All these happened in Jerusalem, setting an example to remind us not only of the co-existence but also the brotherhood, the community of values and principles of life. "Believing these, we wish you Mr Mayor, wisdom and power to work toward the prosperity of all citizens of Jerusalem regardless their religion or nationality".

On this occasion, the Franciscan Brotherhood offered its emblem to the Mayor.

After the Custos, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed Mr Mayor as follows:

"Mr Mayor,

Your Beatitudes,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Ladies and Gentlemen

We thank you, Mr Mayor, for your kind invitation to this gathering in this festive season. This is a time of the year when the eyes of the world are turned toward Jerusalem, and when we are most aware of the importance of Jerusalem not just for those of us who live here, but for the whole of humanity.

As the focal point of the divine-human encounter, Jerusalem has a universal significance that transcends all human

boundaries and divisions. We are all sons and daughters of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem is the spiritual home of all people of goodwill, regardless of their origin or creed. As we read in the Scriptures, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings" (Luke 13,34).

This Paschal season makes visible the mission of the Church in maintaining this special character of Jerusalem and in upholding the multicultural and multifaith heritage that we share. As you are well aware, this unique identity of Jerusalem and its universal vocation are the serious peril from Israeli radical groups whose actions threaten the very fabric and foundation of this Holy City. So egregious is their activity, that it is catching the attention of religious and governmental leaders around the world, who recognise the dangers of such groups, and we cannot but express our deep concern to you.

The Churches are willing to work together with you for the common benefit and common good of all our people, but this work must rest upon mutual respect and the security of the historic rights and privileges of the communities that make up our society. We wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our fellow Heads of the Churches, especially His Paternity Father Francesco, who has been instrumental in building up our common witness.

We are living in challenging times, and the role of Jerusalem is of greater significance to the human family than ever before. We understand fully the complexities of the issues that we face, and we are committed to finding appropriate solutions that will contribute to the well being of all our people.

May God bless you, Mr Mayor, and your colleagues, in the work that you do on behalf of our Holy City and all who live here and come here on pilgrimage.

Thank you.

From Secretariat-General

A GROUP OF GREEK-AMERICAN PILGRIMS VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday morning, 26 April/ 9 May 2022, a group of twenty-five Greek-American pilgrims visited the Patriarchate, accompanied by their Priests Fr Ioannis and Fr Mihail from the Holy Archdiocese of America.

The group was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers. His Beatitude spoke to them about Jerusalem, being the spiritual capital of the whole world and about the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ being “blessed” because it received the immaculate Body of our Lord and God Jesus Christ and it is a source of power from the Resurrected Christ.

His Beatitude’s words concluded by offering Priest’s crosses to the two Priests and souvenirs/blessings from Jerusalem to the pilgrims.

Both Priests thanked His Beatitude for His words and hospitality.

From Secretariat-General

A GROUP OF GEORGIAN PILGRIMS VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday morning, 24 April/ 7 May 2022, a group of two hundred Georgian pilgrims led by Mr Lasa-George Zvania and accompanied by the Ambassador of Georgia in Israel visited the Patriarchate.

The group was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers and spoke to them about the mission of the Church of Jerusalem and its relation with the Patriarchate of Georgia and other Churches.

On this visit these pious pilgrims offered His Beatitude an icon and addressed Him as written below:

“We glorify the distinguished Georgian Holy Fathers Prochoro, Luke and Nickolao the Holy Martyr. We beseech God for the protection of His Beatitude the Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and All Palestine Theophilos III, all the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, our father His Beatitude Catholic-Patriarch of all Georgia Elias II. May He protect our people from any irreverence and guide all to the path of truth.

We offer this icon of the three Georgian Fathers from Jerusalem in love and offer it for the protection of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

The commemoration of the Holy Fathers is on 25 (12) February.”

His Beatitude gave them souvenirs/blessings from Jerusalem.

Asking for His Beatitude’s blessings, the group left to venerate the Holy Sepulchre.

VISIT OF AMERICAN SENATORS TO THE PATRIARCHATE

On the morning of Wednesday, April 21 / May 4, 2022, a group of US Senators led by Mr Andy Harris and Mr Jose Luis Correa visited the Patriarchate.

This group was received by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers. His Beatitude said "Our joy, is to welcome you at this occasion of our Feast of Easter, along with the Jewish Passover and the feast of Ramadan in Jerusalem, the spiritual capital of the three monotheistic religions, a point of blessing but also a point of political controversy.

In this context, the Patriarchate holds a significant pastoral, religious but also a pacifying and conciliatory mission in Jerusalem and the wider Holy Land, since the first centuries of Christianity, but also since the 7th century with the agreement between Patriarch Sophronius and Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab.

Throughout the centuries the Patriarchate has preserved not only the Christian but also the Jewish holy places and keeps their functional role despite the war it faces from extremists. For this reason, despite being attacked by the

extremists, the Patriarchate receives the respect and honour by many. The Holy Sepulchre is the heart of Jerusalem”.

Listening carefully to His Beatitude’s words, the American Senators expressed their honest interest to help the Patriarchate and the Christians of the Holy Land through their efficient actions toward the Israeli Government. Thankfully accepting the souvenirs/blessings of His Beatitude, among which a silver painting depicting Jerusalem, they left to venerate the Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General

DECORATION AWARDING BY THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, 19th of April / 2nd of May 2022, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, in the presence of Mr. Joseph Nasser, his wife and son, as well as Hagiographite Fathers, honoured Mr Admon Faraj with the medal of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, for his quite important financial aid during the construction of the Holy Church of Saints Constantine and Helen at the Kufr Smea community in the Acre-Ptolemais district, of the Patriarchate’s jurisdiction. Asking His Beatitude’s blessing, Mr Admond Faraj and his companions left to venerate the Holy Sepulchre.

From Secretariat-General

A GREEK GROUP FROM AMERICA VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday of Renewal Week, 17/30 April 2022, a group of Orthodox Christian Greeks from America of AHEPA, led by Mr Jimmy Kokotas, Jimmy Kokotas, Supreme President, Mr Louis G. Atsaves, Supreme Vice President, and Mr James Lagos, visited the Patriarchate.

The group was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and spoke to them about Jerusalem as the centre of the world, due to Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre and about the Patriarchate, as the incarnation of the Sacred History of the Holy Bible, the Old and the New Testament.

Moreover, His Beatitude spoke about the pressure against the Patriarchate by extreme elements as it is a Christian institution that preaches the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ. Despite these adverse conditions, the Patriarchate carries out its pastoral, pacifying and conciliatory mission in modesty, truth and power.

Hearing His Beatitude's words, the pilgrims from America expressed their faith and asked His blessing to venerate the Holy Sepulchre, promising their contribution from America in solving the Patriarchate's problems.

They offered His Beatitude the emblem of AHEPA and of the AMERICAN HELLENIC INSTITUTION.

From Secretariat-General