

MEETING BETWEEN THE KING OF JORDAN AND HEADS OF CHURCHES ON THE OCCASION OF CHRISTMAS 2013

On Monday the 10th/23rd of December 2013, a meeting took place between His Majesty, King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein, and the Heads of Churches of the Holy Land and their retinue, on the approaching feast of Christmas. The meeting was held in the city of Madaba, Jordan, at the Hall of the American University.

During the meeting, which is indicative of the stance of the Royal family and the Jordanian Government towards the Christians of Jordan, the speaker addressed guests to the event by pointing out that the Christian society constitutes an inseparable part of the country of Jordan and of the Jordanian land. Here, Christianity draws its beginnings through the baptismal of our Lord Jesus Christ in the river Jordan by John the Baptist; it therefore coexists with the Jordanian society to the benefit, progress and prosperity of the Jordanian homeland.

In the context of this meeting, which is indeed an honour for Christians, His Beatitude made a speech in Arabic, which may be reached here:
<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2013/12/23/2994>

Both His Beatitude during His address, as well as subsequent speakers, i.e. the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, Mr Fouad Twal, the former Minister of Water and Irrigation of Jordan, Mr Munther Haddadin, the Mayor of Madaba and others, underscored the affluent and diverse tradition of the city of Madaba, the center of which is the Byzantine mosaic map. The

map, which has been dated to the 6th century, provides a precise and miraculous geographic representation of the Holy Land during the years of Christ's life on earth.

From the Secretariat-General

HEADS OF CHURCHES INVITED TO CHRISTMAS LUNCH BY PRESIDENT ABU MAZEN

On Saturday the 8th/21st December 2013, the Heads of Churches of the Holy Land and their retinue were invited to lunch at the Intercontinental hotel, near Bethlehem, by the President of the Palestinian Autonomy, Mr Mahmoud Abbas Abu Mazen. Mr Mazen was represented by the Chairman of the Palestinian Committee of Christian Affairs, Mr Hanne Amire, and Committee members.

The Patriarchate was represented by His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, accompanied by the Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem, His Eminence Theophylaktos, Archbishop of Jordan, and by presbyter f. Issa Musleh, liaison with the Arabic Mass Media.

During lunch, His Beatitude addressed the Chairman and the members of the Committee of Christian Affairs, as well as their lunch-guests, in Arabic. His speech may be reached here: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2013/12/24/2992>

From the Secretariat-General

GREEK DEFENSE MINISTER VISITS PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday the 2nd/15th of December 2013, the Minister of Defense of Greece, Mr Demetrios Avramopoulos, visited the Patriarchate in the context of a political visit to the state of Israel. Mr Avramopoulos was accompanied by his associates, political and military alike, Mr Aristeidis Kalogeropoulos, European Affairs Secretary, the Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff, Mr Michael Kostarakos, the Greek Ambassador to Israel, Mr Spyridon Lambrides, and the Consul-General of Greece to Jerusalem, Mr Georgios Zacharoudiakis.

The Minister was warmly received by HB Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the company of Hagiotaphite members.

During his visit, the Minister told His Beatitude that “we are here at the Patriarchate with great love and respect for You, in order to receive Your wish and declare our support, because You have upgraded the representation of the Patriarchate, and brought peace to it; and for this we congratulate You”.

In His response, His Beatitude said “we happily welcome you as the representative of our country, Greece, the protector of the Patriarchate, of the Rum Orthodox in Israel, the Palestinian Autonomy, Jordan, and Qatar. This position of Greece was achieved owing to the efforts of the late Benedict, Patriarch of Jerusalem. The place of Christians as a religious entity in the Middle East is indeed crucial. For them, and for the future of Jerusalem, the role of the Patriarchate is of great importance. The Patriarchate preserves the religious and political status of Jerusalem. The sites of pilgrimage lie at

the core of international interest”.

“As a result of its position, the Patriarchate is involved in the problems of the city of Jerusalem, yet being impartial itself, greatly contributes to their solution, drawing on its moral and material power and property”.

The Minister responded by expressing his joy over the upgraded level of life and action of the Patriarchate and its relations with the local authority.

“Greece is aware” said the Minister, “of the historical, religious and national role of the Patriarchate and, despite the country’s adversities, stands by the Patriarchate’s heavy heritage. Greece is content over the reestablishment of peace in the life of the Patriarchate. The Patriarchate lies in an area that is at the crossroads of several peoples, nations and interests. We ask for Your blessing”.

His Beatitude also referred to the role of the Patriarchate in the promotion of peace negotiations, to its active participation in the renovation of the roof of the Basilica in Bethlehem, and the renovation of the Monastery of John the Baptist in the Jordan.

In this framework, the Minister offered His Beatitude a silver box, whilst His Beatitude offered Mr Avramopoulos a large icon of Theotokos Jerusalemite, a mother-of-pearl representation of the Nativity, and the book “History of Jerusalem” by Chrysostomos Papadopoulos. The Minister’s associates were offered icons of the All-Holy Sepulcher and other Jerusalemite eulogias.

Seen out by His Beatitude, the Minister and his retinue continued on foot to venerate the All-Holy Sepulcher.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/8cpVy0kkhR4>



HEADS OF JORDAN CHURCHES MEET TO SET UP A COUNCIL

On Thursday, the 22nd of November/5th of December 2013, a Council of the Heads of Jordan Churches was convened in Amman.

The Council has been recently established and recognized by the state of Jordan as the legitimate body authorized to deal with issues pertaining to Christians inhabiting its dominion.

His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, made a speech at the meeting, commenting on the modus operandi of the Jordanian Council of Churches and its purposes. In English, the speech may be read here:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2013/12/05/3350>

From the Secretariat-General



CHRISTMAS MARKET OF THE HOLY ARCHBISHOPRIC OF QATAR

The Holy Archbishopric of Qatar organized on Friday the 16th/29th of November 2013, a market exhibiting gifts and other seasonal handworks, memorabilia, items of Christian worship

and foodstuff in the forecourt of the Church of Sts Isaac and George in Doha.

The Orthodox Fraternity of the Myrophorae, made up of Arab-speaking, Greek-speaking, Greek-Cypriot, Serbian, Romanian and Ukrainian women, members of the congregation, participated in the organization of the event, in collaboration with the Youth Association and pupils at the Catechism Schools of the Parish.

The market attracted a great crowd, as the multinational congregation was given the opportunity to participate in artistic performance and delicious cookery.

From the Holy Archbishopric of Qatar



THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM DECORATES PROFESSOR IOANNIS KONIDARIS

On Friday the 16th/29th of November 2013, His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, conferred the medal of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher on Mr Ioannis Konidaris, Professor of Canon Law at the University of Athens Faculty of Law. The humble ceremony was held in recognition of Mr Konidaris' services, both past and present, to the Church, the nation, and even more so to the Church of Jerusalem.

Deeply moved, Mr Konidaris thanked His Beatitude, pledging to carry on as eagerly offering his services to the Church as a

whole and to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/SZal8lNF7vE>



HIS BEATITUDE DECORATES DISTINGUISHED PERSONALITIES FROM UKRAINE

On Tuesday the 9th/22nd of October 2013, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, decorated distinguished personalities from Ukraine, in the presence of the friend of the Patriarchate, Mr Feldmann, and the Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem, His Eminence Theophylaktos, Archbishop of Jordan, who translated into Russian.

Decorated were the Mayor of the city of Kharkov, Mr Fennadiy Kernes, who offered land for the erection of a church in Kharkov, Ukraine; and Mr Pavel Fuks, who sponsored the construction of the church, together with co-sponsors, his brother, Roman Fuks, Mr Pipia Roman and Mr Valeriy Pisarenko, who were also decorated.

During the ceremony, His Beatitude pointed out that this honour is conferred upon them for their contribution to the Church and interreligious coexistence.

Touched, the decorated men thanked His Beatitude and pledged to carry on their work of support to the Church, before setting out to venerate the Holy Sepulcher.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/xiWAgRIECWg>



DELEGATION OF GREEK MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT VISITS PATRIARCHATE

On the afternoon of Tuesday the 9th/22nd of October 2013, Mr Constantinos Triantis, Special Secretary for Water Resources at the Greek Ministry of the Environment, accompanied by a small group of his associates at the Ministry, Mrs Vasiliki-Maria Tzatzaki, Mr Nikolaos Mamaloungas and others, visited the Patriarchate in the context of their cooperation with executives at the Israeli Ministry of Water Resources.

The delegation was received by His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers, and were informed on the Patriarchate's work as well as current adversities, due to the lack of adequate water in the narrower area of the Middle East, where Patriarchal Monasteries require a greater supply of water.

On this occasion, His Beatitude also referred to the now resolved matter of the Church of the Resurrection irrigation.

The delegation, having received gifts from His Beatitude, left in order to venerate the Holy Sepulcher.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/vDGld4WXEoI>



“INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ON ORTHODOXY” AT DINNER WITH HIS BEATITUDE

On Sunday the 7th/20th of October 2013, the Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy, following its visit to the Holy Sepulcher, the Patriarchate and the Cave of the Nativity, and having completed its assignments in the city of Bethlehem, hosted dinner in honour of His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem. His Beatitude was accompanied by Patriarchal Commissioner Isychios, the Most Reverend Metropolitan of Kapitolias; Elder Secretary-General Aristarchos, His Eminence the Archbishop of Constantina; Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem, His Eminence Theophylaktos, Archbishop of Jordan; Archimandrite f. Theophanes, Substitute Chief of MISSIA, the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, and other Fathers. Dinner was held at the hotel Manger Square, near the Basilica of Bethlehem.

Invited to dinner were representatives of Churches, and high-ranked officials of the Palestinian Autonomy.

In the course of dinner, His Beatitude addressed those present in English. His speech may be read here: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2013/10/20/3160>

Further details on what was discussed during the visit of the

Secretariat of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy to the Patriarchate as well as during the aforementioned dinner, will be posted here in due course.

From the Secretariat-General

SECRETARIAT OF INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ON ORTHODOXY VISITS PATRIARCHATE

On the afternoon of Saturday the 6th/19th of October 2013, the Secretariat of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy visited the Patriarchate.

The delegation, consisting of approximately thirty-five members, was received by His Beatitude Theophilos in the presence of Fathers of the Holy Sepulcher.

During the visit, Secretary General Mr Anastasios Nerantzis pointed out that the Inter-parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy consists of distinguished members from twenty-five Orthodox countries, with Greece and Russia being the Assembly's pillars and guarantors.

In his address to His Beatitude, the President of the General Assembly, Mr Sergei Popov said:

“We are especially pleased to visit the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the most ancient religious institution in the Holy Land. Its peacemaking, conciliatory and political role, since 451 AD onwards, we deeply appreciate, alongside the personal work of Your Beatitude”.

“We are also pleased over the fact that our paths cross, namely the path of the Patriarchate and the path of our organization, as we too aim and pursue the promotion of peace, change which is personal and social alike, and reconciliation. It is with emotion that we visit the Holy Sepulcher and the Patriarchate, in solidarity to its work in the flaring region of the Middle East and beyond”.

In His reply speech, His Beatitude expressed his joy over the fact that the Orthodox Church is today assigned with an important role in the life of humanity. Its foremost task is man’s healing, change, conciliation; it does not promote political interests or the objectives of globalization. This is the work of the Orthodox Church in its entirety, especially so of the Church of Jerusalem from where the Christian truth emerged as a message of peace, change and justice.

For its work the Patriarchate enjoys the respect and appreciation not only of the other Churches but also of political governments and religions in the area, Judaism and Islam. That is why the Patriarchate expects support and solidarity, not undermining. It maintains the sanctity of the All-Holy Sites of Pilgrimage which are not to be visited only as museums but also as functional spaces.

“The sites of pilgrimage are worthy of respect for Christians, Muslims and Jews”, His Beatitude pointed out.

“Political and religious groups claim exclusivity to Jerusalem. Jerusalem, as we all know, is internationally a corpus separatum. For us, Jerusalem is the spiritual capital of the whole world” said His Beatitude and went on to add:

“[...] For this reason the Patriarchate plays a role in the settlement of the political status of Jerusalem. That is why we have been trying to convince our Orthodox brothers to support the Patriarchate and not use it to achieve political goals. I mean that the Patriarchate has offered blood and

money for Christians. We happily receive both Orthodox and non-Orthodox pilgrims because their presence attests to the fact that the sites of pilgrimage belong to the whole world. There is in Jerusalem the paradox of multicultural tension and at the same time peaceful coexistence. The Patriarchate is the only autocephalous and indigenous Church, hence in it meet the most extreme with the most moderate elements”.

At the end of his speech His Beatitude offered the President of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy, Mr Sergei Popov, and Secretary General, Mr Anastasios Nerantzis, the “History of the Church of Jerusalem”, a depiction of the Nativity and icons of the Holy Sepulcher; He also offered Jerusalemite *eulogias* to all members of the Assembly.

Subsequently, the Inter-parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy left for two-day assignments in the city of Bethlehem where they visited the Basilica of the Nativity.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/U2xJriV-qw>

