

PASCHAL GREETINGS TO THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY FROM H.H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS III

10 April 2018

*This speech was not delivered in person,
but is sent to the Armenian community
via this website*

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

Your Beatitude Patriarch Nourhan,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of our Respective Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers,

Christ is risen!

We greet you, Your Beatitude, the members of your Brotherhood,
and the Armenian Community of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and
wish you the blessings of this Holy and Great Paschal Feast.
As we sing at this time;

In your light, O Master, shall we see light,

O lover of mankind;

*for you rose from the dead,
granting salvation to the human race,
that all creation may glorify you.*

(From the Resurrection Stichera)

As we keep this holy and most joyful Feast, we cannot forget that the message of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is a universal message to the world. Even as we have been entrusted with the guardianship of the Holy Places, so we have been entrusted, as were the first apostles, with this divine message. For in this Paschal Feast salvation has been granted to the entire human race, and the world looks to Jerusalem in hope in this season of Paschal light.

The glory of the risen Christ lies in the sacrificial humility of his cross. Our Lord Jesus Christ was obedient to the Father in everything, and he humbled himself, even to death on the cross, so that the world might live through Him.

As we read in the Letter to the Philippians,

Christ humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross (Phil. 2:8).

So it is for the Church, that in suffering we may come to know the risen life of our Lord, who has given us the promise that he will be with us always, “even to the end of the ages” (Mt. 28:20). When humanity suffers, so the Church suffers with her children, and the burden rests with us to keep the hope of the Resurrection alive. Once again we are experiencing violence in our region, and we face the despair that such disruption of the human community inevitably brings in its wake. We cannot rest from our spiritual mission, for it is only from the Empty Tomb that the world will receive the healing and new life which we long for.

As Saint Paul says,

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:22-23).

As we keep this Paschal Feast, we wish to express to you, Your Beatitude, our appreciation for our deepening understanding of purpose in the face of the many challenges that the Christian communities of our City and region face. We must continue to stand firm and together not for our sake, but for the sake of the spiritual mission of the Holy Places, which are the inexhaustible wells of hope and spiritual refreshment.

May the Light of the Resurrection guide your steps, Your Beatitude, and may you, your Brotherhood and the Armenian community of the Holy Land, enjoy the Paschal fruits of peace and reconciliation.

Christ is risen!

Thank you.

**PASCHAL GREETINGS TO THE
CUSTOS AND THE FRANCISCAN
FRATERNITY OF THE HOLY LAND
ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR**

EASTER VISIT TO THE PATRIARCHATE

10 April 2018

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

Your Paternity, dear Father Francesco,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of our Respected Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers,

Christ is risen!

We welcome you, dear Father Francesco, and we thank you for the Easter greetings that you have brought to us together with your Brotherhood. This is a time of great rejoicing for all people, for this is the Feast that proclaims God's salvation. As we sing today,

Come all you nations,

learn the power of this awesome mystery:

for Christ our Saviour,

the Word who was in the beginning,

was crucified for us, and was buried of his own will,

and arose from the dead,

that he might save all things.

(From the Resurrection Stichera)

It is here in Jerusalem, in the Incarnate Light that shines from the Empty Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all the nations learn the power of the new life of the Resurrection. It is here in Jerusalem that we see the vision of the gathering of the nations of the world as countless pilgrims from every land, journey here to receive this Light and to enter into this awesome mystery. It is here in Jerusalem that the salvation of the world and the fulfillment of all things in Christ has begun.

Of all this we are the witnesses. We give thanks to Almighty God that in our unity of purpose we have accomplished together so much for the sake of the Christian communities in the Holy Land and in our region, and for the integrity of the Holy Places.

And we wish to express our gratitude to you, dear Father Francesco, for your dedication and hard work in this regard. In the deepening understanding of our common mission to bear witness to the love and values of the Gospel, the world takes great hope, for they see the overcoming of prejudice and division for the sake of a higher purpose. And so they are renewed in hope, even in a time of renewed violence and strife both near and far.

The work before us continues. There is no rest from our diakonia of the Holy Places or from our pastoral and spiritual mission to our own communities in the region, especially to those who are suffering particularly at this time. The human heart longs for freedom, peace, justice, and safety from danger, and the Church embraces suffering humanity wherever the human family is in any need. It is precisely in times of doubt, uncertainty, and fear that the Holy Places are revealed most fully as the touchstones for us and for the world of

prayer. As Saint Paul exhorts us;

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

(1 Thess. 5.16)

May God give us his grace at this Paschal Feast to continue to be faithful in our vocation, and may God bless you, dear Father Francesco, your Brotherhood, and all the communities entrusted to your care.

Christ is risen!

Thank you.

PASCHAL GREETINGS TO THE APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF THE LATIN PATRIARCHATE IN JERUSALEM

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

Your Excellency, dear Archbishop Pizzaballa

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

We greet you, dear Archbishop Pizzaballa, along with the Bishops, clergy and faithful of the Latin Patriarchate, as you celebrate Easter. This is a time for rejoicing in the great mercy of God, as we sing in a Paschal hymn:

Come on this auspicious day of the Resurrection,

*let us partake of the new fruit of the vine of the divine
gladness*

and of the Kingdom of Christ,

praising him as God unto the ages.

(Ode 8, Troparion)

Even in the face of unprecedented difficulties and challenges for the Christian communities of our region, we are called always to hold fast to this divine gladness, and to the praise of God, who is our hope and our salvation.

As Saint Paul says in the Second Letter to the Corinthians;

“Therefore, since it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart...afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies” (2 Cor. 4:1, 8-10).

We share a moral obligation to the faithful to our martyria to the Empty Tomb, which is full of the divine life. Our responsibility in this matter is great, and has been laid on us by Divine Providence, and we rejoice in the deepening unity of trust and purpose that exists between our communities. We commend you in your pastoral ministry, and we wish to express once again our appreciation for your leadership in clear

vision.

If proof were needed of the supreme importance of our united efforts in the safeguarding of the Holy Sites and of the historic rights and privileges to the Churches, we need only think of our indigenous Christian communities of this region and their witnesses to the life of the Church from the very beginning. And we are constantly aware of the ever-growing influx of pilgrims, week by week, month by month, who are an evident and measurable proof that the Holy Sites, and this Holy Land, must remain open to all without distinction or discrimination, as well as of spiritual refreshment in a world that is so terribly wounded by violence, oppression, poverty, the displacement of populations, and injustice.

May we always be faithful to our spiritual vocation. Even when the situation may seem hopeless to others, may we always shine with the hope of the resurrection, radiating divine gladness, and praising the One who brings eternal life to all. In certain circumstances, when decisions are necessary, may we always have the courage to act in the strength that the Almighty God gives in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May God bless you, dear Archbishop Pizzaballa, and all those committed to your charge, and may you have a blessed and joyous Easter Feast.

Christ is risen!

PASCHAL GREETINGS TO THE

CUSTOS AND THE FRANCISCAN FRATERNITY OF THE HOLY LAND

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

Your Paternity, Dear Father Francesco,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of our Respective Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers,

As you celebrate the Feast of Feasts, we bring you the warm greetings of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and we remember these words from an Easter hymn:

Though you descended to the grave, O Immortal One,

yet you destroyed the power of Hades,

and arose a victor, O Christ our God,

calling to the myrrh-bearing women,

Rejoice, and giving peace to your Apostles,

O you who grants resurrection to the Fallen.

(Kontakion, Plagal of the 4th Tone)

Here we understand that the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ brings a new kind of peace – peace especially to the Apostles. But He also gives a new kind of peace to the world,

the peace that comes from the hope of eternal life that is given to us in the uncreated Light that shines from the Holy Tomb.

We rejoice in the peace that comes to us the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that unites us in the common spiritual mission of the Holy Places. Our two Brotherhoods have seen a deepening peace and unity of purpose through the renovation of the Sacred Edicule and now in the face of the new and unprecedented threats against the integrity of the Christian communities of our beloved Holy Land. Once again, we wish to express our appreciation for your ready co-operation with us in all these challenges.

While deeply regrettable, our recent joint decision, along with the Armenian Patriarchate, to close the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in protest to various actions by radical elements in our society, emphasised not just to the authorities here, but to the whole world, our united front. May this new harmony between us, that has been shaped and formed by unforeseen circumstances, lead us to new paths of a deeper union in Christ and mutual trust and regard. As Saint Paul reminds us in the Letter to the Ephesians:

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3).

Here again we hear of the peace that is the fruit of the resurrection, and which is the gift of Almighty God to the world and especially to his Church. It is our mission so to live in this peace of the resurrection that the world may see and know the saving truth of the Gospel.

May “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7).

We assure you, dear Father Francesco, and your Brotherhood and the communities that you serve, of our fervent prayers, and we wish you a joyous and peaceful Paschal Feast.

Christ is risen!

Thank you.

PASCHAL MESSAGE OF H.H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS III

THEOPHILOS III

**By the Mercy of God Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem
and all Palestine**

**To members of the Church, grace and mercy and peace from the
All-holy and Life-giving Tomb of the Resurrected Christ.**

Christ is risen from the dead

Having destroyed the bonds of death

Earth proclaim great joy!

Heavens praise the glory of God!

(Praises of the Octoechos, tone

7)

Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Who was made incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Ever-Virgin Mary, the Only Begotten Son and Word of God, Who was born in the flesh in Bethlehem during the reign of Caesar Augustus, was associated with the people and benefited them, preached repentance and the coming of the kingdom of God on earth, established love and even love for our enemies as a law of life, healed the sick and those suffering from incurable diseases, resurrected the dead, willingly suffered the cross by Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem, shed His immaculate blood for the remission of our sins, died on the cross in the form of a man and was buried next to Golgotha in "a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid" (John 19:41). At His burial, when "they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard" (Mat. 27:66), "the children of the redeemed ones" saw His end.

However, God's Will for His Son and the salvation of the humankind was different. "When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body" (Mark 16:1), they found themselves in front of an unheard of and marvelous sight. They found the stone of the door moved aside and heard an angel saying to them from the tomb: "'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him" (Mark 16:6).

This was God's philanthropic providence for man, the Resurrection of His Son. Having willingly endured suffering and death for our sake on the cross as a man, Christ was risen from the tomb as God-man. "The Messiah had to suffer these things and then enter His glory" (Luke 24:26). His glory lies in the humility of His cross. It was through His cross that joy came to the whole world. It was by Christ's cross that the homicide devil, was mightily conquered. "By death, Christ trampled down death". Death was trampled down completely, it had no power over Christ. Having entered Hades through the

cross, Christ was resurrected, and along with Him, He resurrected the first created couple and their descendants, and took them into paradise with Him, to which paradise He also deemed worthy in a single day the pious thief, who theologized in repentance.

This joyful angelic announcement of the resurrection was confirmed by the Resurrected Lord Himself, through His many appearances. At first He was seen by the myrrh-bearing women, "after that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles" (1 Cor. 15:6-7) in His radiant and glorified through the cross human body, speaking to them, "showing them his hands and feet, confirming that He is not a ghost, for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as He does, taking food and eating before them" (Luke 24: 39-43), "giving them His peace and the power to forgive sins by the power the Holy Spirit, Whom He breathed in them" (John 20:21-23).

"To whom [the Apostles] also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3); for forty days after His Resurrection, then He was ascended in heaven and sat on the right side of His Father, after he had received His incarnate nature and had also glorified our deified human nature through the cross. From heaven, as he had foretold, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come" (Acts 2:1), He sent to the Apostles another Comforter, the Spirit of truth "showing them forth as supremely wise, and through them didst draw the world into His net".

Indeed, the whole world was drawn into His net, through the inspired by the Holy Spirit preaching of the Apostles, on the person, the teaching and the redeeming work of the Incarnate, Crucified and Resurrected Jesus Christ. On the rock of the Apostles' confession, as He foretold, "did the Lord build His

Church" (Mat. 16:18), and sealed and established it in the world by His Holy Spirit. Ever since, the Church as His mystical body, has been offering a peaceful, reconciliatory, taming of the human morals, sanctifying and soul-and-body-redeeming mission all over the world.

This mission of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is also carried out by the Mother of Churches, "the first to receive the remission of sins through the Resurrection", around the places of grace, the places where our Saviour Christ lived as man, and during the night of the feast of the Glorious Resurrection it ardently prays from the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb for the peace of the world, of the Middle East and of the Holy Land, and wishes to its congregation in the Holy Land and in every place of the earth, as well as to all those who honour it, the noble pilgrims, health, strength and every blessing coming from the Resurrected Christ.

In the Holy City of Jerusalem PASCHA 2018

With Fatherly wishes and Patriarchal blessings

Fervent Supplicant for all before God,

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

FESTAL VISIT OF THE PATRIARCHATE TO THE ARMENIANS

The visit of our Patriarchate to the Armenian Patriarchate for their joint Feast of Christmas and Theophany, in return of their visit on our Christmas Feast, took place on Saturday morning, January 7/20, 2018.

On this visit His Beatitude and His entourage of Hagiotaphite Fathers were received by the Armenian Patriarch Manukian

Nourhan and the Armenian Brotherhood in Jerusalem. His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the Armenian Brotherhood as follows:

“Your Beatitude, Patriarch Nourhan,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of our respective Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers,

As you celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, we wish to express to you our Christmas and Epiphany greetings, and we recall the beautiful words of one of our Christmas services:

Make glad O Jerusalem,

and all you who love Zion, keep the feast.

Today the ancient bond of condemnation of Adam is loosed.

Paradise is opened to us.

(Tone 4 by John the Monk)

The Divine Logos became flesh in a particular time and place, in our very midst here in the Holy Land. Here the opening of Paradise was announced to humanity in the Incarnation of the Divine Logos. Here the Divine-human encounter restored us to our rightful relationship with God and with each other.

We to whom the Divine Providence has entrusted the guardianship and the diakonia of the Holy Places understand this. So do our communities that have lived here down the ages. And so do the many thousands of pilgrims who flock to this Holy City and this Holy Land every month for spiritual refreshment.

We have long known the importance of this place, and we have also known the supreme importance of maintaining the patterns and supports that sustain our communities and the Christian presence in the Holy Land and the Middle East. We rejoice at this season in all that we have accomplished together, especially the restoration of the Sacred Edicule and we look forward to our further co-operation in phase II of the renovation of that part of Church of the Holy Sepulchre beneath the rotunda.

The world takes great encouragement from these joint ventures and from our unity of purpose, just as our unity of purpose in the face of recent threats to the Status Quo has been of supreme importance. As is well known, and as we have emphasized time and again, the Bill of Church Land and the Jaffa Gate case are real challenges to the well-being of our communities and to the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious landscape of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. As we have been bringing our case to the international community, we have seen how our common and united efforts have affected those whom we have visited, and we have been deeply encouraged by their statements of support for us all here in the Holy Land.

We doing all this not for the sake of the Holy Places alone, but also for the well-being of Christians and their presence in the land of the Nativity. We wish to take the occasion of these holy days to express our appreciation to you, Your Beatitude, and to all the Heads of Churches for your recent statement of support in addressing the challenges we are facing.

May the newborn Christ, whose incarnation makes the whole creation rejoice, deepen our bonds and give us grace to continue our joint efforts, both in the work we are doing in maintaining the Holy Places, as well as in defending our historic rights and privileges enshrined in the Status Quo. Mutual respect is fundamental to our harmonious co-existence and is of paramount significance to our mission here.

We wish you, Your Beatitude, a blessed Christmas, and we ask for God's blessing on your Brotherhood and on the Armenian Community in the Holy Land.

Thank you."

The Armenian Patriarch replied to His Beatitude's address, wishing a peaceful and cooperative New Year 2018.

From Secretariat-General

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ADDRESS OF H.H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM TO THE ARMENIAN DELEGATION ON THEIR VISIT TO THE PATRIARCHATE FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

9 January 2018

Your Beatitude Patriarch Nourhan,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of our Respective Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers,

We welcome you to our Rum Orthodox Patriarchate and we thank you very much for your greetings on the occasion of our celebration of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this season we sing

O Christ, the true Light who enlightens and sanctifies

every person who comes into the world,

let the light of your countenance be marked upon us,

that in it we may say the light unapproachable.

(Prayer from the First Hour, Christmas Eve)

We give thanks for the true Light that has come into the world, and we take to heart the implications of the Incarnation of our world. In this Holy City and Holy Land of the divine-human encounter, we know the power of the holy places to renew and refresh the soul and give hope to all who worship God in them.

We also give thanks at this time for the support that we have received from religious and governmental leaders around the world as we have shared with them our concerns about the new pressures and difficulties that the Christian communities of this City and region are now facing. We have been heartened by their statements in support of the Status Quo and their condemnation of those radical elements in our region that would like to turn Jerusalem and the Holy Land into an exclusive, rather than an inclusive society, in blatant disregard of our historic right and privileges and of our

multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious landscape.

We are grateful that the Heads of the Churches of the Holy Land have expressed our solidarity in this matter and that we stand united. The well-known challenges, that is the Bill of Church Lands that is circulating in the Knesset and the recent judgment in the Jaffa Gate case, have alerted us all to the threat to the Status Quo that is before us. The Christian Community is of the essence of the Holy Land and the Middle East, and this presence must be upheld and supported by all.

As we keep this glorious feast, may the true Light of the Sun of Justice, that is the newborn Christ, that enlightens everyone who comes into the world, enlighten our hearts and minds and may he give us strength and resolve in our spiritual mission to guard and serve the Holy Places, and to ensure the well-being of the Christian presence here.

Thank you.

ADDRESS OF H.H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM TO THE ARMENIAN DELEGATION ON THEIR VISIT TO THE PATRIARCHATE FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

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Thank you.

ADDRESS OF H.H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM TO THE FRANCISCAN CUSTODY FOR THEIR VISIT TO THE PATRIARCH FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

9 January 2018

Your Paternity, dear Father Francesco,

Beloved Members of our respective Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers,

We welcome you to our Patriarchate for this happy Feast, and we thank you for your kind greetings as we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. We sing with jubilation

Your nativity, O Christ our God,

has illumined the world like the Light of Wisdom.

The Uncreated Light that shines from the cave at Bethlehem not only illumines us; it gives hope to our region and our world. For this is the Light that the darkness can never overcome.

As we look back over the year that is past, we recall the 800th anniversary of the arrival of Father Elia da Cortona and his friar companions at Akko in the year 1217. We were pleased to be able to be a part of your celebrations in Assisi by the presence of our representative, His Eminence Archbishop Nectarios, and we are glad that this year also saw the significant collaboration between us in the restoration and rededication of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre.

For all this we give thanks to God, and we wish to express to you, dear Father Francesco, our gratitude to you for your commitment to the security and well-being of the Holy Places. Our unity of purpose in this endeavor is of supreme importance for the good not just of our respective Brotherhoods and communities, but also for the Christian presence and witness in the Holy Land and the Middle East.

Our co-operation has not only accomplished a great deal, it has laid an important foundation as we look to phase II of the work on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and as we look to the renovation and restoration of the Sacred Grotto of the Basilica of the Nativity. Both these projects will require our ongoing relationship of trust and mutual respect.

Even as we celebrate all these good things, we share a mutual concern for threats against the Christian community that have increased in recent months. The Bill of Church Lands would, if passed, significantly alter the provisions of the Status Quo and intrude on the historic rights of the Churches. We are all deeply concerned that such legislation is even being considered at all. And the Jaffa Gate case represents an assault on the Christian Quarter by a group of radical extremists who seek to destroy the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious integrity of Jerusalem.

We are encouraged by the support we have received from the international community, both from Church and governmental leaders. There have been many public expressions of concern and support, and this is an encouragement to both our Brotherhoods to remain resolute both in our pastoral ministry to our communities and to pilgrims, and also to ensuring the Christian patrimony that Divine Providence has entrusted in our care.

The Incarnation of the Divine Logos, who deigned to accept our human nature and our human life, and who therefore knew our suffering in himself, is the source of our joy and our hope in this mission. As we celebrate the Nativity, we ask His Most Holy Mother the Theotokos to pray for us, that the one who contained within her womb the Uncontainable One, may give us strength by her prayers, that we may be embraced by the Light of Wisdom.

We wish you a happy Christmas and New Year.

Thank you.

ADDRESS OF H.H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM TO THE FRANCISCAN CUSTODY FOR THEIR VISIT TO THE PATRIARCH FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

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