

# THE VISIT OF THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM TO CAPPADOCIA (PART 2)

During the Divine Liturgy on Sunday 5th/18th 2017 in Sinassos of Cappadocia, the All-Holy Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos spoke to the congregation. On His address, the Ecumenical Patriarch referred to the quite excellent cooperation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the contribution of the Jerusalem Patriarchate as well as the contribution of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos towards the convocation of the Great Synod of Orthodoxy.

During this Divine Liturgy there was a memorial service for the repose of the souls of those of our Fathers who martyred and slept in the Lord in reverence.

Moreover, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos appointed Professor of Law at the Aristotelion University and Consultant of Jerusalem Patriarchate Mr. Theodoros Giagkos an officion bearer Lord, in recognition of his devoted ministry to the Church, to Science, the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Great Synod of Orthodoxy.

For this honourary distinction, Professor Mr. Giagkos thanked with the following address (to be posted in due course).

On the occasion of this 17th visit to Cappadocia, addresses to His All-Holiness were given by the following people:

1. A Greek Houses of Parliament representative.
2. Maximos Charakopoulos, New Democracy Political Party representative.
3. The Secretary-General of the Pan-Hellenic Union of Cappadocian organizations.

At noon, the businessman Mr. Gregory Chatzi-Eleftheriadis offered a meal at the refurbished Mansion of his Cappadocian ancestors.

During this meal, the owner and renovator of his ancestors' Manor, Mr. Gregory Chatzi- Eleftheriadis gave His Beatitude a copy of a Sigillum Letter of the memorable Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory V, which reminds things related to the operation and the general as well as the financial management of the School of Sinassos, and appoints the memorable Patriarch of Jerusalem Polykarpos to be Protector and Curator of the School, and it gives him as well as to all his successors the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, special managerial privileges and a donation to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Patriarchal letter translated from the Greek prototype is the following:

***“Gregory, by the mercy of God Archbishop of Constantinople,  
New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch***

*The joyous and philanthropic spirit of the Church, which is as ready as it is needed to act upon every other reasonable and righteous situation, much more than is inclined to act toward the addressed petitions for the establishment of Schools and common interests, from which, the living waters of God-given education spring forth as from abundant fountains, and dispel the completely dry ignorance of the human minds on existing beings, irrigate the souls of the faithful, and blossom and bring forth fruit on the realization of righteous and worthy-to-be-mentioned truths about the Holy men of God and the people.*

*Toward these, therefore, the common affectionate Mother is more prominently well-disposed and available, praising on the one hand those who have accomplished feats, while on the other hand ratifying and strengthening their God-pleasing education*

*through Sigillum Letters (Official Ecclesiastical letter with a seal), as is the case for the present issue.*

*Hence the people in the Caesarea of Cappadocia County, in one of its villages called Sinassos in Turkish, (the famous Nanzianzos town of old), having recovered at last the much praised usefulness of education, and being willing to introduce it to their own country for the enlightenment of their own children and the remaining inhabitants, established a common School of the Greek subjects. Moreover they gathered by a fundraising event among themselves, fifteen thousand piasters, the majority of which, namely ten thousand piasters, were allocated to this newly-founded School by the generosity of the friend of the nation, of education and goodness of Mr. Ioannis Varvakis, who also offered abundant sponsorships to other benevolent institutions, while the four thousand piasters with the two houses located in that parish of the Great Archangels are offerings and contributions of the Christians who abide therein, and of those who work at the fifteen Caviar workshops in Galata, while one thousand piasters were offered by the noble procurators of the chapel of the Dormition of our Lady the Most-Holy Theotokos, of which ten thousand piasters were deposited to the common repository of the Holy Sepulchre, plus the interest of forty to the pouch per annum, according to the will and provision of the donator who loves our nation, while five thousand (have been offered) from the aforementioned workshops in Galata, with interest of sixty to the pouch per annum; these have been submitted of course, and given to the School in signed and witnessed debentures of the same amounts.*

*Consequently, under their common opinion and fervent entreating, it has been appointed that Protector of the School and general Curator herein is His Beatitude and All-Holy Patriarch of Jerusalem and all Palestine Polykarpos, who is a supplicant to God and quite dear to us and a beloved brother and co-celebrant, as he has displayed an enthusiastic zeal for*

things of common interest and God-pleasing regarding education. Curators in various districts and Administrators will be the eight Elders of this country at a time, who have the permission to elect and designate also four Trustees at the School, two of whom will be at that place there, and two here in the reigning city, in order to administer and settle the finances of the School, under the dependence and constant guidance of the Trustees, and receive its main and occasional income and give a clear and detailed account to the Curators every year on 1<sup>st</sup> May, while those who receive the account and sign, have to send it here and submit it under the elaboration and confirmation of the fervent Protector and Curator of His Most Reverend Beatitude. A container has also been fabricated at the School, with two disparate keys, and they have to keep the debentures and the other documents of the School in the container, and especially those related to money that comes from occasional income (donations).

Moreover, they have to ordain two Trustees out of their compatriots for the safe, who if approved and zealous could prolong their duty up to five years, and they have to keep the two keys, one each, and for All of them should make two codes; one of which should be sent to the Curators, while the other should remain here, and in the codes they have to record in detailed writing the transactions and all the existing belongings of the School and those which are donated by friends of education, whether they are books or any other kind of donations. Having done these, and having announced them by their common reference to our Great Church of Christ, the People in charge warmly requested to confirm them by our Patriarchal and Synodical Sigillum Letter on vellum, in order that they remain irreversible and unaltered, for the sustaining of their God-pleasing achievement and the long lasting duration of their beneficial action toward the country.

Therefore, having consented quite favourably to their petition

and having blessed their intention for the public benefit, and also having crowned them with our Fatherly and Synodical approvals, and especially that par excellence brave man of similar thoughts to ours Mr. Ioannis Varvakis, we decide in Synod together with the Most-Holy Archbishops with us and our Most Honourable brothers and co-celebrants in the Holy Spirit, so that what has been ordered and designated for the newly established School of the Greek subjects by the aforementioned friends of education, noble pious indigenous men in their country Nanzianzos and Sinassos in Turkish, be reasonable and justifiable, pleasing to God and praised by the people, and sustaining of the smooth operation of this condition, having the validity and the strength and the energy unchangeable "as long as the water flows and waters the big trees," namely for the ages to come.

And the ten thousand of piasters on the one hand, which have been deposited at the common repository of the Holy Sepulchre and offered by the friend of our nation for the School, are to be kept as capital savings, worked toward forty piasters to the pouch per annum, likewise, capital savings remain the five thousand piasters, which have been offered by the Christians living there, in the manner that has been said they were offered, gained by the work in the fifteen Caviar workshops here in Galata, toward sixty piasters to the pouch per annum, on the other hand, the two houses in the parish of the Archangels shall always be witnessed and recognized by all as offerings to the School, which is ready to accommodate not only local lovers of education but also students who love to study from the surrounding areas, and in it, all Greek education is being taught, and every kind of subject that contributes to the perfection of mind, and its Protector and Curator is His Beatitude and All-Holy Patriarch of Jerusalem, our profound colleague Polykarpos, and his successors after him of the All-Holy Patriarchal and Apostolic Throne. Administrators will be the eight Elders, at that time, of this country, and Trustees four men elected by them, two of whom in

that place, and the other two here in the reigning city, administering the transactions of the School, receiving the main and occasional income, being assistants to the Curators, and acting according to their final instructions, offering on 1<sup>st</sup> May of each year a clear and concise account to the Curators there, so that when sent for, he will receive the confirmation from the fervent Protector and general Curator. And all its documents will be kept securely in the container which has been established in the name of the School, and the debentures, and the money and the two keys will be entrusted to the two local people therein, and they will be especially Trustees of the safe, elected by the other Curators and the Protector, for five years, on whom the management of the School finances is appointed, and also the two codes will be secured, one code to the Curators and the Trustees, and the other one at the place therein, and let the transactions and the land belonging to the School be recorded in it, together with any other material belongings, for a permanent record. And let any miscegenation of common and political issues be remote from the School, having none whatsoever permission on behalf of those who govern the common issues of this country to gather an assembly and assemble for the observation and management of common issues which however are foreign to the School. On all these, there should always be elected and designated teachers, by the special providence of the Protector at the time, and the care of the Curators, men capable in both words and manner of living, unenviable, so that verbatim and in good method they promote fast learning and good morals to the students, with the concurring of all the appointed Curators of the School, competing toward the improvement and increase and any possible cultivation of things favourable to it, in order to bear brave and God-pleasing fruit, for the common benefit of the nation and the continuous glory of the country.

These have been decided and confirmed in Synod, and for those who have contributed and assembled in its establishment and

for those who will later on be favourably disposed toward it, and will keep without fail all the aforementioned, we wish salvation from the depths of our heart. If however somebody by malice displays spitefulness and abruptness, so that he will surreptitiously or obviously, directly or indirectly attempt to act against it and against its smooth operation, and in any way provokes the slightest damage against it, even if he considers to change the slightest letter to what has been decided in this present synod, this man, as an enemy of the good and God-pleasing works and arrogant and peculiar and barbaric and malicious, from whichever social status, let him give an account to the unbridable Judge and God on the horrendous Day of Judgment , and may he be dishonoured and bereft of glory throughout his life, and guilty and accountable for every Ecclesiastical punishment and tribulation.

Hence, the present Sigillum letter on vellum of ours has been composed as a token and continuous security, composed moreover in the sacred code of our Great Church of Christ, it has been delivered to the newly established School of the Greek subjects, located in the country of Sinassos in the county of Caesarea.

In the year of salvation eighteen twenty one, on ninth January.

Gregory, by the mercy of God Archbishop of Constantinople New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch”

Ioannikios of Caesarea  
Ephesus

Germanos of

Meletios of Herakleia  
Constantine of Kyzikos

Athanasios of Nicomedia

Makarios of

*Nice*

*Gregory of Chalcedon*

*Ioannikios of Tyrnovo*

*Dorotheos of Andrianopolis*

*Thessalonica*

*Joseph of*

*Kallinikos of Drysta and Vraela*

*Sifnos*

*Kallinikos of*

*Gregory of Derka*

*Meletios of Veroia*

*Damascene of Farsala*

*name*

*Illegible*

*Illegible name*

Consequently in the afternoon, there was a visit to the carved inside an eroded rock monastery of Saint Nikolaos, which does not give the slightest trace that it is hidden therein. The monastery has been recently sustained by the intervention and funding of Patriarch Bartholomeos. Afterwards, a visit was paid to the underground chapel of St. Nikolaos, St. Barbara and St. Makrina.

**The 3rd and last day of the visit of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem to Cappadocia.**

On Monday, 6th/19th June 2017, the pilgrimage tour and visit of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos continued to the deserted during the exchange of populations after the Asia Minor destruction in 1922 Churches and Monasteries of Romiosyne in Cappadocia.

At the guidance of the Ecumenical Patriarch, who has completed His 17<sup>th</sup> pilgrimage to the sanctified places of Cappadocia this



year, who also knows and protects them, the invited group of the representatives of the Churches visited the Church of the Entrance of the Theotokos in the massive but deserted town of Kermira.

Having completed the aforementioned visits, H.H.B. with His entourage and the honorary entourage of the All-Holy Ecumenical Patriarch departed to Constantinople by plane, and from there to Tel Aviv, where the arrival landed at 2.30 a.m. on Tuesday 7th/20th June 2017, with their glorifying God.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **H.H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS AT THE ECCLESIASTICAL MISSION OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN JERUSALEM**

5 June 2017

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

Beloved Monastics,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As we gather to celebrate the great and holy Feast of Pentecost, we recall the words of the hymnographer, who reminds us of the fundamental theological truths of this celebration:

*Of old the tongues were confounded  
because of the audacity of building the tower,  
but now the tongues are made wise  
for the sake of Divine Knowledge...  
now the concord of tongues hath been inaugurated  
for the salvation of our souls.*

(Plagal of the Fourth Tone)

We are reminded that this Feast of Pentecost is a declaration of the fundamental unity of our ecumenical, pan-Orthodox Church, which has been revealed to us on this Feast in this Holy City. This truth has been guarded and nourished by the Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of the Churches, from the very beginning.

This same unity continues to be made manifest among us, most recently in the Holy and Great Council of the Church in Crete. It was in consonance with the meaning of Pentecost that the Holy and Great Council was opened after the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Pentecost last year, further embodying the true nature of the Church.

The unity of the Church is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and we are called to cherish and deepen this unity. To fracture this

unity is a most grievous matter, and on this occasion we take this opportunity to condemn in the strongest possible terms those who are acting against the parishes of the canonical Orthodox Church of the Ukraine. The Holy Fathers remind us with reason that such fracturing of the unity of the Church in schism is the most serious of sins.

For “Christ hath enlightened the fishermen by the Spirit”, but “condemned the impious because of their offence”. May the Holy Spirit, who descended upon the disciples on this Feast, enlighten our minds and our hearts, and give us the will to guard the precious gift of the unity of the Church that has been entrusted to us by Divine Providence.

Thank you.

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# **MESSAGE OF H.H.BEATITUDE FOR THE FEAST OF PASCHA 2017**

THEOPHILOS III

By the Mercy of God Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem

and all Palestine

to all members of the Church, grace and mercy and peace

from the All-Holy and Life-Giving Sepulchre

of the Resurrected Christ.

“Christ is risen from the dead,

The firstfruits of those that sleep:

The firstborn of all creation

And maker of all created things!"

(Stichoirion of Paschal Praises tone 3)

It was deep dawn on that day, the first of the Sabbaths, the first of the Week, after the crucifixion and the burial of Lord Jesus. The women surrounding Mariam, who had escorted Christ from Galilee and had become witnesses to His Cross and burial, ran in haste on that dawn, wondering to themselves who would remove the big stone at the entrance of the tomb, so that they would be able to anoint the body of the crucified and buried Lord Jesus Christ with myrrh, according to the custom of the Jews.

However, having reached the tomb, they became witnesses of a dazzling and marvelous sight. They found the stone rolled away, while a couple of lively angels said to them "why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen" (Luke 24:6). "Behold the place where they laid him" (Mark 16:6).

This was the gospel, the good news, of the accomplished work of God for the liberty, redemption, rebirth, regeneration, resurrection and salvation of man. The Only-Begotten Son and Word of God, having received flesh from the Holy Spirit and the Ever-Virgin Mary and willingly placed this flesh upon the cross, he died as human on the cross and was buried as mortal, to be risen from the dead on the third day by the power of His Father and His own Divine power. Death did not have power over Him, he was not able to keep Him. The God-man Jesus Christ trampled down death by death. He shattered the bonds of Hades, pulverized the seals of the tomb and left it empty but with the linen clothes to witness His resurrection.

Not only this, but the Lord who was risen from the dead confirmed the angelic vision and announcement soon afterwards, by His own resurrected presence. He appeared in His immaculate body, which was crucified, pierced with nails, brightened and deified, in many appearances He made after His resurrection. He met the myrrh-bearing women in the garden outside the tomb saying to them "All hail" (Mat. 28:9). He appeared to His disciples when they were assembled in the Upper room, when the doors were shut in the evening of that day, the first of the Sabbaths, and again after eight days when Thomas was with them (John 20:19-29). He walked alongside with Luke and Cleopas towards Emmaus, where He blessed the bread and gave it to them (Luke 24:30). He stood amidst His disciples, talking to them, and while he could not be touched he encouraged them to touch Him and make sure that being Incarnate, He had "flesh and bones" and asked them and was given to eat "a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb" (Luke 24:36-44). "To whom he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3). On the fortieth day after His resurrection, while His disciples were watching, He ascended in Heaven and sat at the right hand side of His Father, with the Incarnate nature He received from us and deified it.

From Heaven, He sent to us through the Father another Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, His Holy Spirit, which enlightened His Holy disciples and apostles and founded the Church, His Holy Body. He founded and foreordained it to continue His sanctifying and salvific mission on earth; to be the manifestation of His forthcoming Kingdom to the world; to preach His Gospel all over the world; to offer remission of sins by the power it received by Him; to preach the knowledge of Him to the ignorant world; that He is the way and the truth and the life; to preach the hope of the resurrection to the desolate people; to lighten the burden of the people bringing them to Himself, who said "Come to me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mat. 11:28); to exercise works of charity to the poor, refugees, shipwrecked

and homeless, taking as an example its Founder, Who is the source of all goodness and philanthropy. By the power of His words “take, eat and drink of it all” and in the invocation of the Holy Spirit to transmit His immaculate Body and His sacred Blood for the remission of sins and life everlasting. To contrast the fury of war violence and the illogical novel terrorist destructive atrocity to His word of sacrificial love and reconciliation, “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34) and “I say unto you, love your enemies, and bless them that curse you” (Mat. 5:44).

The Church of Jerusalem, Holy Zion, which has been granted by its Founder His ministry and redemptive mission to the places where He appeared in flesh, and especially in His Life-giving Sepulchre, of which the Sacred Edicule was recently renovated, wishes to its Christian congregation all over the world, and to the noble pilgrims who honour it, patience to the end and fruition in patience, the strength and the hope of resurrection as an antidote to the adversities and sorrows, the true peace of the Resurrected Jesus Christ, health and prosperity and a joyful resurrection paschal season, exclaiming in unspeakable joy “Christ is Risen!”

Holy City of Jerusalem **PASCHA 2017**

With Fatherly wishes and Patriarchal blessings

Fervent supplicant for all before God

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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# MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE, THEOPHILOS III, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM, FOR CHRISTMAS 2016

*It was the good pleasure of the Father:*

*The Word is made flesh.*

*The Virgin gives birth to God made man.*

*A star announces the glad tidings.*

*Shepherds are amazed, and Wise Men worship*

*And creation is filled with mighty joy.*

(Troparion of Christmas Praises)

The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ jubilantly celebrates today “*a strange and most wonderful mystery*” (Katavasie of Nativity), evangelizing it “in great joy” across the world. The Church celebrates the supernatural and magnificent event that God the Father, Creator and Ruler of the universe, acting on extreme love and compassion, recreated, revived, and redeemed the corrupt by sin man in the face of the Only-begotten Son and pre-eternal Word (Logos). The Church received by revelation that God’s promise to the Prophets had been fulfilled. That “*when the fullness of the time was come*” (Galatians 4:4), during the reign of Cesar Octavian August (Luke 2:1), the incarnate God-made-man Son and Word of God was born in flesh of Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit in Bethlehem of Judea (Luke 1:34). Jesus

Christ *“being in the form of God...made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men”* (Philippians 2:6-7), *“made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”* (Galatians 4:4), *“to become the sons of God”* (John 4:4).

Such was God’s providence for the amelioration of mankind. According to the church hymn writer *“How can a womb contain Him whom nothing can contain? How can he remain in His Father’s bosom, yet rest in His Mother’s arms”*? According to the God-bearer Church Father Athanasius the Great, *“the incorporeal and imperishable Word of God came down to us and became incarnate so that we may be deified, He revealed Himself in flesh so that we may partake of the invisible substance of the Father, and He endured the human mockery so that we may inherit eternity”*. Similarly, according to the God-bearer Father St Cyril of Alexandria, *“The Only-Begotten Word of God appeared to us, to Whom the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary gave birth, the life-giving offspring, the God-made-man, the free man in the form of a servant, the One who became incarnate for us – not man – but flesh, that means human, not repudiating his form of God, but even if He took on the human flesh, He remained as He was”* (Homily II in Ephesus PG77, 988C-989A), *“having taken the logical soul on his one (out of two) Hypostasis of the incarnate Word”* (To Nestorius, Epistle XVII, PG.77, 116C).

As the sole beneficiary to this revealed divine mystery, humanity is called as witness, participant and accomplice. Unstudied Shepherds in the fields are called by a legion of angels singing in the sky of Bethlehem *“Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, good will toward men”* (Luke 2:14). They are called to see in their familiar manger of the irrational animals the new-born Christ. But also servants of science, the Persian wise kings are called according to the hymn writer *“by a star from heaven and are offered as the*



beginning of the Church of nations to the Infant laying in a manger, and they were neither astonished by the scepters nor thrones, but by infinite humility, as there is nothing poorer than a cave, nothing more humble than the swaddling clothes through which the wealth of His Divinity shone forth”.

The incarnation and birth in flesh, kenosis (emptiness) humility and likeness in all things to the humans except sin, did the Lord take upon Him during His life on earth. He identified Himself with all human infirmity, even until death. He escaped the danger of Herod’s authoritarian fury neither by his Divine power, nor by the use of violence, but by taking upon Him the power of human infirmity, migrating from Bethlehem to Egypt and from there under an Angel’s command to Nazareth, from which He received the name Nazarene and from which having come to adulthood and baptized by John in the river Jordan, He proclaimed the era of God. He marked a new radical inflection in human life and history, that is the new period of grace of the New Testament, when He relieved and healed the sick, resurrected the dead, and offered His human body on the cross to the Father, he was risen from the dead, in order to give rise from the dead to those who believe in Him.

After ascending in Heaven, through the power of the Holy Spirit the Lord assigned His disciples – His body, the Church – with the work of His peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, sanctification and salvation. Throughout the ages the Church consists the revelation of the Kingdom of God, introduced to the world by the Lord of peace, the Incarnate Jesus Christ. The Church beautifies the morals of men, proclaims – just as it has been taught by its founder – peace for all people near and far, love for one’s neighbor but also for one’s enemies, for the transformation of the fallen world into paradise, the return of the deceived man to his original likeness to the Father and his participation in the glory of Christ by God.

The Mother of Churches Jerusalem testifies and serves the sacrament of the angelic hymn "peace on earth and good will towards men" to the very lands this was revealed. On this day of the feast of Christ's birth in flesh, the Church experiences this event in this modest and God-receiving Cave, and in this built by Constantine and Justinian Basilica, which consists a blessing and protection for all inhabitants of the Holy Land and especially those in Bethlehem.

From this sacred Church monument we denounce every act of terrorism as well as war violence, every act of conquest or usurpation of foreign territory, disrespect to the sacred beliefs of religions, torturing of men and exploiting captives, especially non-combatant women and children and we make an appeal in favor of the Christians of the Holy Land, so that they remain in their ancestral residences in the Middle East. To our pious Christian flock in the Holy Land, and to devout pilgrims from all corners of the earth, we wish the grace, strength, peace and blessing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who became incarnate for our sakes through the Ever Virgin Mary.

In the Holy City of Bethlehem, CHRISTMAS 2016

Fervent Supplicant of all before God

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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# DECLARATION OF THE COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY LEADERS IN ISRAEL.

November 2, 2016

We, the leaders of the major religions in Israel and members of the Council of Religious Community Leaders, believe in the Creator, who rules the world with benevolence and mercy, and requires of us to live with all persons in peace and mutual respect.

Our religious heritages teach that peace and the pursuit of justice are the will of God, and we as religious leaders bear particular responsibility to be attentive to the cries of the poor and the weak among us and to act to advance a more just society.

As the leaders of the official religious communities in Israel, we have decided to embark together on an historic visit to Poland, and to the site of Auschwitz–Birkenau. This visit is meant to honor the memory of millions of Jews and other victims of the Holocaust, and to express the determination of the leaders of the religious communities in Israel to do everything in their power to prevent the recurrence of such atrocities.

We call on all world leaders to act, in their countries and through the United Nations, to act with unwavering resoluteness against anti-Semitism, hatred of the other, which once again plague contemporary society,

We declare our commitment to cooperate and to do everything in

our power to carry out this important call in the Holy Land as well, to strengthen the harmony and understanding that exist in Israel among the various religious communities.

In order to establish peace and mutual respect among members of religions throughout the world and in our country, we must educate our communities and children accordingly, and prevent affront to the feelings and beliefs of others.

Here, in Auschwitz–Birkenau, the site of the most horrific crimes against humanity in history and the symbol of ultimate evil, where the murder of millions Jews and others – men, women and children – was perpetrated by Nazi Germany, we declare our commitment to the sanctity of human life. We repudiate racism, fanaticism and extremism, particularly when these are committed, allegedly in the name of religion and in so doing desecrate religion.

The Council of Religious Community Leaders in Israel calls for an end to war and a prayer for peace in keeping with the vision of the prophets: “ They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not take up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war anymore”, Isaiah 2:4.

The Council of Religious Leaders in Israel includes the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the Muslims religious establishment, the Christian churches in the Holy Land, the Druze Religious Authority, the Ahmadiyya Muslim, Bahai and Samaritan communities.

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# MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCES FROM THE HOLY & GREAT COUNCIL OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH TO H.M. KING ABDULLAH II IBN AL HUSSEIN.

At the Orthodox Academy of Crete, on the 22th of June 2016

His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein

King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

In Amman

Your Majesty,

The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church would like to express its deepest sympathies and convey its warmest prayers to the beloved Jordanian people, having been informed of the horrifying violence that took place on Tuesday, the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, near the al-Rukban refugee settlement.

It is with deepest sorrow that we the Hierarchs, who have come together at this present Holy and Great Council under our Chairmanship, express our wholehearted condolences for this inhumane terrorist attack. The violence wrought upon these already overwhelmed people, who have been driven from their homes and were seeking asylum and protection, constitutes an offense before the loving and merciful God as well as before the very dignity of human beings.

May God grant rest to the souls of the innocent victims and may He strengthen and heal those wounded, as well as grant

comfort from above to their loved ones.

We pray that the Lord and God of mercy will erase the plague of terrorism and violence from the face of the earth and grant to humanity peace, justice and reconciliation.

**BARTHOLOMEW** of Constantinople

Chairman of the Holy and Great Council

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# **MESSAGE BY H.B. THEOPHILOS, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM, ON THE OCCASION OF EASTER 2016**

24/04/2016

In the Holy City of Jerusalem, EASTER 2016

**THEOPHILOS III**

By the grace of God Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem  
and all Palestine

of all the congregation of the Church, grace and mercy and  
peace

from the Holy Sepulchre

## **of the Resurrected Christ.**

*"Hail, O Holy Sion,*

*mother of Churches,*

*dwelling of God;*

*For you were the first to receive*

*the absolution of sins*

*through the Resurrection"*

(Vesper's *sticheron* of the Resurrection, tone d).

There was, in the early matutinal hours, darkness engulfing the tomb where the Crucified Jesus Christ the Nazarene, king of the Jews, had been buried. Abounding darkness too in the minds of Mary and the other women who had gone with her to the monument. Added to the sorrow of the Cross was the bewilderment before the view of the stone taken away, perplexity at the sight of the empty tomb, and despair because *"They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they had put him!"* (Jn 20, 2).

But God was faithfully "administering salvation on earth". God, who had wanted to save mankind through the incarnation and crucifixion of His Son the Monogenes, did not leave Him in the tomb to waste away. Christ, crucified and buried, was resurrected by the power of the Father and His divine competence. He vanquished the forces of the darkness and Hades, the devil, and rose from the dead, encountering Adam and his genus.

This hopeful message *"by a pair of light-bringing angels"* inside the tomb was proclaimed to Mary Magdalene and her accompanying women, transforming their sorrow to joy. This joy

was infinitely augmented by the view of Jesus Himself, with the wounds of the nails upon His palms, resurrected, bright and glorified, telling them *"Greetings"*, upon which *"they took hold of His feet and worshipped Him"* (Matthew 18,9).

Eye witnesses of this supernatural fact of the resurrection of the Crucified Jesus Christ from the dead were not only the Myrrhbearers but also the Disciples, who had rushed to the tomb and they too saw *"the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself"* (Jn 20, 7).

To confirm His Resurrection to the apostles *"whom the Lord had chosen, He gave many convictions that He was alive"* (Acts 1, 2-3), as in the gallery *"on the evening of that first day of the week"* (Jn 20, 19), on the way to Emmaus, when *"He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself"* (Luke 24, 27), and when *"He blessed the bread"* (Luke 24, 30) on the Tiberian Sea, when He asked them for *"something to eat"* and on His instruction *"they hauled in the net full of fish"* (Jn 21 5-6) and *"He took the bread and gave it to them and He did the same with the fish"* (John 21, 13) and when *"He led them out to Bethany"* (Luke 24, 50) and *"before the eyes of the disciples, He was taken up to heavens"* (Acts 1, 9) and sat on the right of the Father and sanctified, glorified and deified our human nature.

Then, fulfilling His promise, the Lord sent from the Father another Paraclete that illuminated their intellect *"in tongues of fire and they spoke in other languages"* (Acts 2, 3) of the greatness of God, first in Jerusalem and from there to the ends of the earth, entrancing the world and attracting with their preaching several peoples aboard the ship of the Church.

The Church, the Holy Body of Christ, acquired by His honest blood, springing by Him on earth and sealed by the Holy Spirit, has been assigned to perform His redeeming work across



the world. The Church preaches dialogue, reconciliation and peace; it heals man's wounds, it sanctifies and saves him, consoles him spiritually and relieves him materially, shares its bread with the poor and the needy and offers tangible support to castaways, refugees and victims of violence and terrorism.

The Church of Jerusalem, the Holy Sion, the first to receive absolution of sins through the Resurrection, guardian of the Holy Lands as silent witnesses to the appearance of Christ on earth, extends wishes from the Most Holy and Life-giving Sepulchre, to its flock and to pious pilgrims: health, peace, stability, prosperity and a joyful festive period, proclaiming in unspoken joy "Christ Has Risen"!

With Paternal and Patriarchal blessings,

Ardently blesser in the Lord,

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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# **MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE THEOPHILOS, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM, ON THE OCCASION OF CHRISTMAS 2015**

Jerusalem, 21 December 2015

***Today Bethlehem welcomes***

***the one who sits for ever by the Father,***

***today angels godly praise***

***the born infant,***

***glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace,***

***good will to people.***

***(Idiomelon of Christmas Matins).***

The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church of Christ across the world celebrates today as it pastorally declares to its members and peacefully attests to the world a marvellous and splendid event that transcends every human concept, perception and power.

This event is the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. It is the realization of the nations' expectations. God, in His infinite love, oversaw the years of man's ignorance, forgave his committed sins and transgressions and invited him to a new divine life for which he had been made from the very beginning, "And the Lord hath sent redemption to His people" (Psalm 110, 9).

Redemption is the Only-Begotten Son and Word of God. "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as Sons"(Galatians 4, 4) according to the Apostle Paul. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us and out of His fullness we all received grace in place of grace already given" (John 1, 14&16), according to the Evangelist of love.

The incarnation of the Logos, His investment in human flesh, was not performed in compliance with the laws of nature as – *“where God wishes so, the order of nature is overcome”* – but according to the will of the Father, a Holy Spirit descended upon Mariam, the Virgin daughter of Nazareth, and she conceived the Son of God as man. The Son of God became the Son of man too, he was incarnate and personified. Mariam bore the Messiah, Christ, in the flesh. The event took place in this town of Bethlehem, at this plain Cavern under the reign of Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus Octavianus.

This *“strange and paradoxical mystery”* is indeed God’s loving and healing descent towards man. Through Jesus Christ, God *“descended into the lower parts of the earth”* (Ephes. 4, 9) so that man may be restored to the godlike beauty before the fall, and rise to the heavens. According to St Cyril of Alexandria, *“God, who exists outside the ecumene, has come to it and made the human soul alike so that it be cleansed from sin, and He took on the human form so that man be made a citizen of heaven”*.

To this mystery God had called for accomplices, helpers and witnesses. His accomplice was the ever-virgin Mary so that she might lend her flesh to His Son. Joseph was her helper and protector, the one who had accompanied Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, then Mary and the divine infant from Bethlehem to Egypt. His witnesses had been the magi, wise kings of the Persians, led by a star, and the simple shepherds dwelling in the adjacent town of the Shepherds. God had also called as witnesses angels from heaven, proclaiming the mystery with the hymn *“Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace, good will to people”* (Luke 2, 14).

This angelic hymn proclaimed God’s good will to men, *“and through Him to reconcile to himself all things”* (Colossians 1, 20) and *“to unite all things in Christ”* (Ephesians 1, 10), the Incarnate and Personified, *“because in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the deity in bodily form”* (Colossians 2, 9), *“so*

*that in Christ they shall be brought to fullness" (Colossians 2, 10) and "they are no longer foreigners and strangers but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of His household" (Ephesians 2, 19), in His body of the Church, "of which He is the head" (Colossians 1, 18).*

Opposite this mystery of man's divinization by grace where he is "co-heir" (Romans 8, 17) with the Incarnate Jesus Christ, men have took various stances. Some, as the magi and the shepherds, rejoice upon the angelic proclamation and venerate the born infant. Others, as Herod the maniac, an imitator of the devil and killer of men, doubt and question and uncritically and indiscriminately chase away men from their paternal homes, violently and *en masse*, persecuting and murdering innocent children, youth, old, in contempt of human life made by God. To escape Herod's mania, on divine encouragement, Christ fled to Egypt, demonstrating through his flee the vulnerability of His human body which, after all, would endure the holy passion on the cross before *"annulling the vulnerability with His resurrection from the dead"* according to St Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Hideous incidents of violence at the expense of Christians and other innocent fellow humans in the region of the Middle East and across the world are denounced by the Church of Christ. The Church denounces war and violence, advocating peace for those near and those far. Though persecuted, it does not persecute but prays for its persecutors. Through Baptism it accepts man in its body, the body of Christ, and blesses and cultivates and formulates man as a peaceful person believing that *"blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God"* (Matthew 5, 9).

The word of peace, justice, conciliation and exchange and the beginning of God's reign on earth, already experienced within the Church, is declared on this universal feast of Christianity by the Mother of Churches from the Sacred Cavern and the Holy Manger in the Basilica of the Nativity, preserved

through the centuries as the apple of the eye, with wishes to the congregation within its jurisdiction and pious pilgrims across the world for the blessing, strengthening and grace of the Lord of peace and justice, the Angel of God's great will, the Incarnate, Personified and Born by the Virgin in the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Holy Town of Bethlehem,

**CHRISTMAS 2015**

Ardently blesser in the Lord,

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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# **MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE, THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM, TO THE FIFTH PRE-SYNODICAL CONFERENCE**

On Thursday, the 2<sup>nd</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> of October 2015, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, addressed a message to the Fifth Pre-synodical Conference in Chambésy, Geneva, where the Patriarchate of Jerusalem is represented by the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias, His Eminence Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina, and Mr Theodoros Yangou, Professor of Canon Law at the Aristotle University of Salonika.

*To the Most Reverend John, Metropolitan of Pergamon, brother*

*in Christ of our Mediocrity and Chairman of the Fifth Pre-synodical Conference in Chambésy, Geneva, holy greetings in Jesus Christ.*

*From the holy Jerusalem, the city of Basil the Great, the city of the Cross and His Resurrection, and See of the Church of Jerusalem, we address your beloved and erudite Holiness, Secretary on the Preparation of the Holy and Great Synod, the Most Reverend Jeremiah, Metropolitan of Switzerland, and all representatives of the most holy Autocephalous Orthodox Churches at the Fifth Pre-synodical Council, with brotherly congratulatory greetings and Our warm wishes for the fruition of your collaboration in the Holy Spirit, the conclusion of deliberations towards the edification and salvation of the Lord's Orthodox people, a joint Christian testimony of Orthodoxy in the world, protection of afflicted Christians in the Middle East and the prevalence of peace in the region.*

*With sacred greetings from the All-holy and Life-giving Sepulcher*

*In the Holy City of Jerusalem, the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2015*

**Your beloved brother in Christ,**

**THEOPHILOS III**

**Patriarch of Jerusalem**

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**AN INVITATION FROM THE**

# **YITZHAK RABIN CENTER TO HIS BEATITUDE THEOPHILOS III, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM**

Tel Aviv, 21 June 2015

**His Holiness,**

**The Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem**

Shalom,

It gives me great pleasure to invite you to meet with the alumni of the Academic Exchange Mission to Israel, who participate in the 2015 mission.

As you may know, the Academic Exchange (AE) is an initiative of the Yitzhak Rabin Center in Israel. Our primary mission is to strengthen the academic community's understanding and perception of Israel via educational missions.

This summer, the Yitzhak Rabin Center will host a delegation of Political Science and International Affairs professors from leading academic institutions worldwide. This mission's interest lies within the subjects of: Regional Demographic Changes, Minorities in Israel and their implications on Regional Political Solutions. Moreover, the participants will tour the breadth and width of the country in order to gain insight into its unique and complex political, religious and security issues.

It would be an honor to meet with you and have an open discussion with the professors on Friday, Aug 14, 2015 at 9:00am-10:00pm in "The Church of Nativity" in Bethlehem.

Cordially,

Dalia Rabin

Chairwoman, Yitzhak Rabin Center

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