

# THE FEAST OF THE PROPHET ELISEUS IN JERICHO

On Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> June 2013, the feast of Prophet Eliseus was celebrated by the Patriarchate in Jericho, at the Church dedicated to St Eliseus the Prophet. The existence here of this holy church in the name of St Eliseus is explained by the fact that he, hailing from the town of Meouli in the region of the valley of the river Jordan, was active in the city of Jericho, too. One of the many miracles he had performed in divine power and fortification, was the transformation of the waters of a living spring in Jericho from bitter and deadly to sweet, drinkable and wholesome, to this very day.

From Jericho, the prophet Eliseus departed with his teacher, the Prophet Elias, and on the river Jordan he beheld him being taken up in a fiery chariot, whereupon he requested and received his grace and mantle, with which he crossed the river Jordan. The Holy Monastery dedicated to his name lies on the spot where according to tradition stood Zacchaeus' sycamore tree.

To this Monastery came His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem on the morning of the aforementioned day, and led the divine Liturgy. Co-officiating were the Most Reverend Aristarchos, Grand Chancellor and Archbishop of Constantina; the Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem, Theophylaktos, Archbishop of Jordan; Archimandrite f. Ieronymos from the Archbishopric of the Church of Cyprus; the Hegoumen of the Monastery of St Gerasimos of Jordan, Archimandrite f. Chrysostomos; the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of Hozeva, Archimandrite f. Constantinos; Archdeacon f. Athanasios and deacon f. Makarios and other Guardians of the Holy Sepulcher. Members of the Greek Orthodox Arab-

speaking Community of Jericho and pilgrims from Jerusalem and other cities participated devoutly.

To the pious congregation, His Beatitude preached God's word, an excerpt of which is cited here:

*Today's feast of St Eliseus the Prophet coincides with the post-festive period of the Sacred and Great feast of Pentecost, namely the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of fiery tongues upon the disciples and apostles of God, Our Saviour Jesus Christ. This fact truly has a great significance, as on the illustrious day of Pentecost, the Holy Church of Christ was perfected, according to the words of the Holy Chrysostom.*

*And this spirit is the Spirit of promise, and the completion of hope, in other words the Paraclete about whom the Lord said to his disciples: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (Jn 14, 16-17). "He will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning" (Jn 15, 26-27).*

*[...] This means that all Prophets through whom the truth of the Holy Triadic God was revealed to the world, as well as the Holy Disciples, through whom was preached the Gospel of Salvation, namely Christ, the Incarnate Word, across the entire world, comprise together with the martyrs of Christ's love, the cornerstones on which is build the visible and invisible house of God, namely, the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ within which the great and indeed paradoxical sacrament of man's salvation is performed". [...]*

After the Liturgy, His Beatitude read the prayer of the saint's *kollyva* [boiled wheat], blessed fruit, figs and grapes and was received at the hegoumen's quarters by the hegoumen, Archimandrite f. Philoumenos, who subsequently offered lunch to the Patriarchal retinue and the congregation.

**From the Secretariat-General**

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# **REMARKS AT DINNER IN HONOR OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY HOSTED BY THE R. REV. SUHEIL DAWANI.**

Saint George's Cathedral – Jerusalem, 26 June 2013.

*Your Grace, dear Archbishop Justin,*

*Your Grace, dear Bishop Suheil,*

*Mr Dean, dear Father Hosam,*

*Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Reverend Fathers,*

*Distinguished Guests from the wider community of Jerusalem,  
Esteemed Members of the Diplomatic Service,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Once again we are delighted to be enjoying the hospitality of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and Saint George's

Cathedral, and we wish to thank you, dear Bishop Suheil and you, dear father Hosam, for the gracious welcome that you always extend to us here. The close and warm relationship that exists between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Episcopal Diocese and the Cathedral is a long-standing one, and we give thanks to God for the ministry that you exercise on behalf not only of your local community, but also on behalf of the Anglican Communion.

Your Grace. Archbishop Justin, you have seen today some of the fullness of the life of the Christian community here in Jerusalem. Indeed our gathering this afternoon of the Heads of Churches at the Patriarchate, and our gathering this evening, are visible signs of an important truth about the life of Jerusalem, which is our common home, and which is a beacon of light and hope to the world.

By virtue of its secular and religious history, and by virtue of its spiritual significance, Jerusalem is unique among the cities of the world. Here God has made his presence among his people known in a special and particular way, and Jerusalem is a living witness to this eternal reality. In this holy city, heaven and earth have been joined, and sacred history is made visible to the eye of faith.

So it is that Jerusalem can be the exclusive possession of no single individual or group, whether secular or religious. The true nature of Jerusalem is one of unity in diversity, and essential to Jerusalem is our cultural, religious, ethnic, and linguistic richness. Clearly we, to whom the Joy and the burden of the leadership of the Churches has been entrusted, understand that a strong, vibrant and healthy Christian community is indispensable to the true life of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem without such Christian community – a community that is itself, as we see here this evening, a remarkably diverse one – is not conceivable, and we know that you, dear Archbishop Justin, know that, and will make the well-being of

the Christian community in this city and in the Holy Land a priority of your own primatial ministry. For Jerusalem is also your home.

Our region continues to face unprecedented and serious challenges and changes. You have just come from Egypt and Jordan, where we know that you have learnt a great deal about the current life of the region. For generations. Jews, Christians, Muslims, Druze, and people of other faiths have lived side by side here. Sometimes relationships have been closer; sometimes they have been more distant. But the peoples of this region share both a common history as well as a common destiny. We must find new ways of genuine co-existence and mutual respect and understanding for there to be the chance of proper justice and lasting peace.

We have no real choice. Any alternative to the truly diverse character of Jerusalem is diminishment, and this is not an option for us as Christians. Security, the protection of human rights, freedom of worship, and the possibilities for self-determination must be guaranteed for all. In the task of ensuring that Jerusalem lives its full identity, and fulfills its ancient destiny, no group, and in particular the Christian community, is dispensable.

As we seek to be faithful to our calling as the Christian community of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and as the Churches seek to find better ways of working together in this spiritual cause, we ask for your prayers, dear Archbishop Justin, as well as your partnership. We are confident that, by God's grace, Jerusalem will be maintained as a city that gathers all God's children without distinction into her wide embrace. For there is room here for all.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III,**  
Patriarch of Jerusalem.

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# **ADDRESS OF GREETING TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY AT THE PATRIARCHATE ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF CHURCHES OF THE HOLY LAND.**

Jerusalem Patriarchate, 26 June 2013.

*Your Grace, dear Archbishop Justin,*

*Dear Mrs. Welby,*

*Your Beatitudes,*

*Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Reverend Fathers,*

*Members of our Brotherhoods,*

*Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,*

We welcome you with joy, dear Archbishop Justin, along with your wife, Caroline, and those travelling with you, on this, your first personal pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land. For the Orthodox Church, this is the season of Pentecost, and

so we recall today the unifying gift of the Holy Spirit. In our liturgy we sing:

***“When the Most High came down and confused the tongues,***

***He divided the nations;***

***but when He distributed the tongues of fire,***

***He called all to unity.***

***Therefore, with one voice, we glorify the All-Holy Spirit”.***

(Kontakion for the Feast of Pentecost)

All Christian Churches and confessions recognize the gift of unity as a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and it is our prayer today, in this gathering here at the Patriarchate of the Heads of the Churches of the Holy Land, that we may know afresh the power of God’s Holy Spirit to unite all faithful Christians in a common mission for the sake of the Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

You come in the footsteps of your predecessors as Archbishop of Canterbury, all of whom have had a special care and concern for the Holy Land, for the Christian community here, for peace and reconciliation, and for mutual respect and genuine co-existence among all our peoples and traditions.

In particular, we are aware of your long-standing commitment to reconciliation from your years as a residentiary canon of Coventry Cathedral and as co-director of the International Centre for Reconciliation there. The ministry of reconciliation lies at the heart of the life of a bishop, and this experience will doubtless form a mainstay for your life and work as archbishop. All of here who bear the responsibility of leadership in our Churches in the Middle East assure you of our prayers and support as you embark on

your primatial ministry.

The pilgrimage that you and Mrs. Welby are making to the Holy Land is a blessing for you, and we hope that in making this pilgrimage so early on in your archiepiscopate, you will be formed by your prayers at, and veneration of, the Holy Places. Here our sacred history becomes incarnate, for here God has entered our human life, redeemed our common humanity, and restored our ancient destiny. May this living reality of the Holy Places be ever at the heart of your devotion, and may your memory of them be always a strength to you.

But let us not forget that your presence among us is an encouragement to the Christian community of the Holy Land. Of Christian leaders outside the Holy Land, the Archbishop of Canterbury holds a special place and is given unique opportunities by virtue of his office and the relationships with other Christian bodies, with leaders of other faiths, and with governments that few others enjoy.

We encourage you, Your Grace, to keep before the world the life and witness of the Christian community of the Holy Land, and to do all in your power to ensure the future of the Christian community here. We are native to this region, and the well-being and health of the Christian community are absolutely essential to the well-being and the true character of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. We Christians in the Holy Land bear witness to the Divine love of humanity, a love that stops at nothing to accomplish our salvation, which is nothing less than the reconciliation between God and humanity, and between all the diverse members of God's human family.

This witness brings great joy, but it also comes at a cost. For witness to God's Love is nothing less than witness to the cross of Christ, where God's love for us was shown so completely. We Christians in the Holy Land seek to be the Church of the sacrificial love of Christ, and we do our best to promote mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, lasting



peace and justice, not just in word, but in deed.

We know that the relationship between the Church of England and the Anglican Communion and our respective Churches represented here this afternoon has always been good. If our brothers will permit me, we wish to say how important the relationship between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Anglican Communion has been for both our Churches.

And yet we can all say here today that your concerns are our concerns, just as we pray that our concerns will be your concerns. As Saint Paul so eloquently reminds us:

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it;

if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it, (I Cor. 12:26)

It is our common witness to the reconciling work of the cross that unites us, exemplified for you, Your Grace, in the Cross of Nails of Coventry and for us in the very place of our Lord's crucifixion that is the place of redemption. The cross is our inspiration as well as our protection, for, as we read in the Letter to the Ephesians:

***"...our struggle is not against enemies of flesh and blood...,***

***but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places".***

***(Eph. 6:12)***

In token of our shared witness to the cross of Christ, we wish to bestow on you, dear Archbishop Justin, the cross of the Order of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher. May the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ be always your protection as well as your strength, and may this bind you to us in prayer and solidarity.

On behalf of the Heads of the Churches, let us once again

welcome you and Mrs. Welby.

We assure you of our prayers for your pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and we pray for God's blessing upon you in your primatial ministry. And we look forward to welcoming you often to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, which is your spiritual home.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III,**

Patriarch of Jerusalem.

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## **NEW ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY VISITS PATRIARCHATE**

On the evening of Wednesday, the 13<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, the newly-enthroned and elected Archbishop of Canterbury under the Anglican Church, His Grace Mr Justin Welby, accompanied by His Grace the Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Jerusalem, Mr Suheil Dawani, and associates of his Church, visited the Patriarchate.

The Head of the Anglican Church was received by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Fathers of the Holy Sepulcher, and the heads of other Churches in Jerusalem, namely: the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, the Lutheran Bishop, the Coptic Bishop, the Syrian Bishop and a priest of the Ethiopian Church.

The Archbishop, Mr Justin Welby, was given a welcome address by His Beatitude Theophilos (see link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2013/06/26/2572/> ) and was bestowed the supreme honour of the Patriarchate, specifically the Cross of the Order of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher, in recognition of his efforts towards conciliation, peace and unity.

After the decoration, His Beatitude presented His Grace with a handbook bearing an icon of St Justin, his namesake philosopher and martyr, the book of the Ecclesiastical History of Jerusalem by Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, two silver candlesticks, a golden cross for his wife, and an icon of Theotokos for his associates.

Touched by this gesture, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr Welby, thanked His Beatitude by saying that, albeit British, he found it difficult to express in English words his emotions over the honour bestowed upon him by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the other Heads of Churches.

“It is for me”, he said, “a great honour indeed, the fact that I find myself in the Holy Land during the period of Pentecost. I come to you in the fear and terror of Crucified Christ, on the word of the Apostle Paul. My first priority is personal and ecclesiastical renewal; the second, the establishment of exchange between churches; and third, the preaching of the Gospel, suffering for the Gospel, just as you suffer in this area, especially Syria. I pray for all of you, that you endure uncomplainingly and courageously. We know how much your Community suffers. Yet, the accomplishment of your mission is possible through God’s grace. You are the guardians and keepers of the All-holy sites of pilgrimage, and you too pray for us profoundly”.

Subsequently, brief addresses were given by the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, the Anglican Bishop, the Lutheran, Coptic and Ethiopian Bishops, underlying the need for accord

between Christians in the Middle East, and requesting international support to their country, so that they may enjoy equal citizenship rights in the State wherein they reside.

As for the hoary-headed Dr Ioannis Tlil, member of the Christian Community in Jerusalem, he offered the Archbishop his book "I am Jerusalem".

After a private conversation in the office of His Beatitude, the Archbishop of Canterbury left for his Church.

**From the Secretariat-General**

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## **THE FEAST OF ST ONOUPHRIOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, the feast of St Onouphrios was celebrated at the Holy Monastery bearing his name, which lies at the Gihon valley opposite the Pool of Siloam. This Monastery, dedicated to St Onouphrios of Egypt, is one of the ancient Monasteries of the Patriarchate. It lies on rocks and carved tombs of the cemetery which was "purchased for the burial of foreigners" by the chief priests of the Jews for the three hundred silver pieces the repentant Judas Iscariot, who had delivered the Lord, had returned to them (Matthew 27, 6-8).

At the church of this Holy Monastery, founded long ago by Archimandrite Metrophanes, Guardian of the Holy Sepulcher, in

1893, His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem led the Divine Liturgy. Co-officiating were the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias and Patriarchal Commissioner; Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Elder Sacristan; Priest-Monk fr. Christodoulos from the Metropolis of Patras, Priest-Monk fr. Ieronymos from the Archbishopric of Cyprus; the very Reverend Archimandrite Ieronymos, hegoumen in Fhes and Vice-President of Financial Affaris; Archdeacon fr. Athanasios and Priest-Deacon fr. Eulogios.

Monks and nuns participated in this divine Liturgy in devoutness and reverence, together with laymen and laywomen, pilgrims, and residents of Jerusalem and the Hill of St Sion.

To this pious congregation, His Beatitude Theophilos preached the Word of God, an excerpt of which is cited here:

*[...] Hosios Onouphrios, Our Father, set deification as his only purpose in life, bearing in mind the words of the Great Athanasius, that God was humanized, became a human after us, so that us humans would become deified.*

*This is precisely the purpose of the descent, on behalf of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Paraclete, namely the Holy Spirit, upon the world through His holy Church, to make us into vessels of the perceptible and heavenly light, that is the Holy Spirit, as was the case with our Hosios Onouphrios according to his hagiographer: "A light that is perceptible and heavenly you have received in your heart, of the undefiled Trinity you have become a vessel, Onouphrios. And now among the angels you are counted, crying Alleluia".*

*[...] Our Church, my dears, promotes we would say in a special manner the great figures of the martyrs and ascetics of Christ's love. And this, so that it may be known and revealed to men that the man who does not accept the light of Christ, namely the Holy Spirit, shall remain in darkness".*

*"I", says Christ, "have come into the world as a light, so*

*that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness” (John, 12, 46). I have come to the world to be a spiritual light for this man, so that no one of those who believe in me should stay in the moral darkness of sin and fallacy. [...]*

After the Divine Liturgy, a procession followed to the graves of the Monastery’s proprietors and other men entombed there, where a supplication was made for the repose of the souls of the Fathers there entombed and of the recently departed Nun Serapheima.

After the procession and the apolysis of the Divine Liturgy, there followed a brief reception at the quarters of the Mother Superior, the Very Reverend Paisia.

**From the Secretariat General**

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# **ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO H.E. BIDZINA IVANISHVILI, PR. MINISTER OF GEORGIA.**

*Holy City of Jerusalem, 25 June 2013.*

*Your Excellency, Mr. Prime Minister,*

*Madame Khvedelidze,*

*Esteemed Members of your Delegation,*

*Your Eminences,*

***Reverend Fathers,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

We welcome you, Your Excellency, on this, your first visit to our Patriarchate as you visit Jerusalem, the Holy Land, and the State of Israel. It is our prayer that your trip may be as much a spiritual one as a political one, and that you may find refreshment as you visit the Holy Places.

Your visit here is of considerable significance both for the Georgian people as well as for the peoples of our region, especially the Christian community of the Holy Land. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Mother of All the Churches, is the most ancient, continuous, religious institution in the Holy Land, and has a deep and historic relationship with the Georgia.

It is Saint Nina, Equal to the Apostles and the Enlightener of Georgia, who, according to the tradition, is the link between us. A relative of Saint George and a niece of Patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem, as a young woman Saint Nina set out from this city and eventually found her way to Georgia. There she healed and converted Queen Nana, after which the country received the Christian faith, and became one of the earliest Christian nations. As a consequence, throughout the centuries the Church of Jerusalem and the Church of Georgia have enjoyed close ties.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem occupies a unique position, and carries out a particular mission, on behalf of the Christians of this region, and on behalf of Christians from all over the world. As the servant and guardian of the Holy Places, the Patriarchate guarantees the Christian character of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and ensures that the Holy Places remain accessible to pilgrims and people of good will without distinction.

The Patriarchate is a point of special reference for Orthodox

Christians; Jerusalem is at the heart of our Orthodox faith because the Holy Places are near and dear to every Orthodox Christian. Thousands of pilgrims come here every year, and are a reminder of the beautiful words of Psalm 41:

***“As the deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God.***

***My soul thirsts for God, for the living God”, (Ps. 41; 1 -2).***

Here pilgrims encounter sacred history made real, and derive spiritual refreshment from their devotions at the Holy Places.

For Orthodox Christians, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem also stands as a unique witness to the unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Our Oneness is fully expressed and demonstrated here, as we gather under our wings, Orthodox Christians from all over the world. Here indeed we live the spirit of the Feast of Pentecost that we are currently celebrating, as those who enjoy full and complete unity and at the same time rejoice in our cultural, linguistic, and national diversity. An essential part of our mission is to embody and preserve this unity in diversity.

You are most welcome, Your Excellency, and we wish you every success in your mission to our region. In token of the close historic and spiritual ties that bind the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to Georgia, we would like to bestow on you the Cross of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. With it, come our fraternal greetings to our brother, His Beatitude Patriarch Elias, and our prayers for all the people of your beloved country.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**



# **HOLY SPIRIT MONDAY CELEBRATED AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On the Monday of the Holy Ghost, the 11<sup>th</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, the Pentecost was celebrated at the Patriarchate in special honour of the Holy Ghost, sent by the Father through the Son to the holy disciples and apostles.

## I. At the Holy Sion

The feast, dedicated par excellence to the All-holy Spirit, was celebrated at the Holy Sion, where the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles.

From the previous evening, the Vespers was held, led by the Most Reverend Dorotheos, Archbishop of Avila, at the chapel standing in the cemetery of the Holy Sion, followed by a reading out of the Genuflection prayer.

On the day of the feast, Archbishop Dorotheos led the Matins and the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Holy Trinity within the building housing the Patriarchal Hieratic School.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the procession began with the reading out of the first wish at the Church, the second at the chapel-catacomb – which a fortnight ago was broken into by young religious Jews – with a supplication at the Tomb of David and the reading out of the third wish at the Hyperoon, where the All-Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles.

From there, the procession returned to the Church, passing through the Cemetery and extending a supplication for the repose of the deceased.

## II. At the Russian Church of the Holy Trinity

In the New City of Jerusalem, at the Church of the Holy Trinity of the Russian *Missia*, the Divine Liturgy was held in celebration of the Monday of the Holy Ghost, led by His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, and co-officiated by the Grand Chancellor, Archbishop of Constantina Aristarchos, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Ieronymos, Hegoumen in Fhes and Vice-president of the Committee on Finance, the Very Reverend Ieronymos, representative of the Archbishopric of Cyprus and other priest-monks, presbyters and deacons.

During the *Koinonikon* of the D. Liturgy, His Beatitude proclaimed the word of God to the congregation. This is an excerpt from His speech:

*“In other words, the Church is the body, namely the supplement of Jesus Christ as a human being. It is the supplement of Him Who as God replenishes everything to their every need and provides each of His creations with anything they may require. This great sacrament of the Holy Pentecost, explicitly the descent of the Holy Ghost from heaven in the form of tongues of fire upon the holy disciples and apostles, declares the ineffable condescension and philanthropy of God towards us humans.”*

Archimandrite Theophanes translated the speech to Russian. (See link: [en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ru/2013/06/24/8959/](http://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ru/2013/06/24/8959/))

After the Divine Liturgy, the Head of the Russian *Missia* hosted a reception in honour of the Patriarchal delegation and other guests from the Russian-speaking, Arab-speaking and Greek-speaking congregation.

Offering a toast at the table, His Beatitude wished that the Holy Ghost replenish the mind, the soul and heart of each and every man, and guide the Church of Christ to the whole truth.

**From the Secretariat-General**

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## **PRIME MINISTER OF GEORGIA VISITS PATRIARCHATE**

In the afternoon of the Monday of the Holy Spirit, the 11<sup>th</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, the Prime Minister of Georgia, His Excellency Mr Bidzina Ivanishvilli, on a visit to Israel, arrived at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem accompanied by a delegation of approximately thirty five of his associates, including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Diaspora.

The Prime Minister and his retinue were received at the Hall of the Throne by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of the Guardians of the Holy Sepulcher, including the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Capitolas and Patriarchal Commissioner; the Grand Chancellor Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina, the Most Reverend Methodios, Archbishop of Thavorio, and the former Protosyncellus of the Holy Archbishopric of Cyprus, f. Ieronymos.

Welcoming the Prime Minister of Georgia, His Beatitude addressed him in English as follows (see link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2013/06/25/2550/> ) and

conferred upon him the supreme honour of the Patriarchate, namely the Cross of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher, for the reverence he extends towards the Holy Sepulcher and for his pioussness. A fine icon of St George and a cross were offerred to the Prime Minister's wife.

Deeply moved, the Prime Minister thanked His Beatitude, saying that the honour conferred upon him was reflected onto the Church and the nation of Georgia, and that this honour would be for him a source of strength for the accomplishment of his mission and the creation of conditions of cooperation between Church and state. He then offerred HB a plaque bearing the picture of an ancient temple of the Church of Georgia, conveying the wishes of His Beatitude Elias, the Patriarch of Georgia, and an invitation to visit the country of Georgia. Finally, he thanked HB for welcoming Georgian pilgrims to the Holy Land and supporting Christians on an international level.

After his visit to the Patriarchate, His Excellency the Prime Minister of Georgia, accompanied by His Beatitude, visited the All-holy Church of the Resurrection and paid his respect to the Holy Sepulcher and the Horrendous Golgotha.

The Prime Minister's call was concluded with a visit to the Chapel of Adam.

**From the Secretariat-General**

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**HIS BEATITUDE ADDRESS TO MR.**

# **BAHIJ MANSOUR AMBASSADOR TO THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS.**

Koufr Yassif, Friday the 21th of June, 2013

Your Excellency (Mr. Bahij Mansour),

We would like to extend our sincerest appreciation for the honor of joining you in your bittersweet farewell from your position as the director of Interreligious Affairs in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We also bid you wishes for success as you take on your new role as Israel's ambassador to the Caribbean Islands.

Throughout your years of service you have been a true asset to Israel's various communities, and especially attentive to the needs of our Christian communities. Your absence will surely be felt. As a result of your dedication to harmonious coexistence, you have managed to cultivate and promote relations amongst Israel's religious establishments, Druze, Muslim, and Christian communities, which are based on mutual respect.

We hope and pray that your new assignment will be a continuation of achievement, and that you meet it with the same fervor that you have possessed throughout your extensive diplomatic career. Your contributions will undoubtedly be significant.

May God enlighten the path ahead of you, and grant you success and longevity in your life and in your paramount career.

His Beatitude

## **THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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# **NEW BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL VISITS PATRIARCHATE**

On Friday 1<sup>st</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, the new Ambassador of Bulgaria to Israel, Mr Dimitar Mihailov, together with the Deputy Ambassador, visited His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, in order to submit his credentials on the occasion of the commencement of his term.

His Beatitude welcomed the newly appointed Bulgarian ambassador with whom he discussed issues pertaining to countries of the Middle East, where Mr Mihailov had served in the past, but also the preservation of the status quo in Jerusalem, the situation in Syria, the abduction of two Syrian prelates and the situation of Christians in the Middle East.

The Bulgarian ambassador conveyed to His Beatitude the fraternal embrace of Neophytos, the new Patriarch of Bulgaria, at the election and enthronement of whom the Patriarchate had been represented by the Most Reverend Timotheos, Metropolitan of Bostroi, and the Very Reverend Archimandrite Ieronymos.

Mr Mihailov thanked His Beatitude for the participation of the Church of Bulgaria in the Holy Light ceremony on Holy Saturday and for the stance of the Patriarch of Jerusalem in favour of the Bulgarian Church, in its hour of need.

In his reply, His Beatitude informed the Ambassador on the religious and cultural contribution of the Patriarchate since

its dawn, during the days of the Byzantine Empire, to nowadays.

Upon that, His Beatitude and the Ambassador proceeded to mutually exchange gifts.

**From the Secretariat-General**

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