

# **HIS BEATITUDE EASTER GREETINGS TO THE CUSTOS OF THE HOLY LAND AND SUPERIOR OF THE FRANSISCANS.**

**Jerusalem, Holy Tuesday the 10th of April 2012.**

Easter Greetings

to the Custos of the Holy Land  
and Superior of the Franciscans  
Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa

Your Paternity,

Dear Brothers,

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed!

We are here today to give you our greetings on this great feast, the Feast of the Resurrection – the Anastasis – of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which took place here in Jerusalem. We have been blessed to be the guardians and servants of the Holy Places and the Holy Land, and at the same time to bear living witness to his saving passion and death and his glorious resurrection.

This Paschal celebration is of particular importance not only for our brotherhoods and our communities, but for the whole Christian world. Even as we experience in this life the battle of darkness against light, of falsehood against truth,

and of death against life, we proclaim Christ himself to be our light, our truth, our life and our way. Ours is the mission to show Christ's way to a world that longs for the salvation of God.

Having been entrusted by Divine Providence with this sacred trust and responsibility, our care of the Holy Places that constitute the earthly Jerusalem is a reminder to us all of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is our common longing.

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we recall also the mystery of his incarnation, the eternal Logos made flesh, and his nativity in Bethlehem. Just as we are to maintain the Christian character of Jerusalem, we have an equal moral obligation to safeguard the Christian character of Bethlehem.

There the Grotto of the Nativity was ennobled by the Church of the Nativity by great and pious emperors, and there countless faithful over the centuries have unceasingly venerated the mystery of the incarnation. This testifies to our sacred and ecumenical heritage, and it falls to us to ensure that this original testimony is maintained clear and unadulterated.

Now more than ever before we are called to work together as fraternities in the name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ, as we have done for years now, to uphold all the Holy Sites as places of pilgrimage and worship. In our day the Holy Places have become the focus in international and regional affairs of unpredictable developments. However, we are confident that by safe-guarding the spiritual and worshipful integrity of the Holy Places, they will remain beacons of hope and reconciliation, and effective means of promoting peaceful co-existence among all peoples.

We wish you, Your Paternity, and the Franciscan brotherhood and your community, a blessed and joyous Pasha. May our shared and firm witness show that we proclaim to our region and to

the world the life -giving message of our Lord Jesus Christ, who assumed our common humanity and delivered us from the power of death and the tomb, that our human nature might be restored and glorified in and through his resurrection.

Christ is risen!

Thank you.

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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## **PASCHAL VISITS OF THE WESTERN AND EASTERN CHURCHES TO THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM.**

On Tuesday, the 17<sup>th</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2012, the visits of the Western and Eastern Churches to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem took place on occasion of our Easter. This is followed by the years-long established order of exchanging visits during the feasts.

Firstly the Brotherhood of the Franciscans visited the Patriarchate followed by the Churches namely the Latin, Lutheran, Anglican, Coptic Syrian, Ethiopian, Maronite and finally the Armenian.

His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III addressed

the representatives of the Latin, Lutheran, Anglican, Syrian, Maronite and Ethiopian Churches at 10:00 o'clock at the Throne Hall as follows, in the English Language, (please see the following [link: https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2012/04/17/1972/](https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2012/04/17/1972/))

**Chief Secretary's Office.**

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# **HIS BEATITUDE ADDRESS AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW WING OF A SCHOOL IN TAYBE**

His Beatitude Theophilos III address at the inauguration of the new wing of the Orthodox School in Taybe, Tuesday the 3th of April 2012.

Your Excellency Mr Basam Rifai,

The U.S. Aid Commissioner,

Dr. Leila Ganam, Mohafez of Ramallah and Bireh,

Your Eminences,

Dear Friends of the Taybe Rum Orthodox School

It is a great honour for Us to inaugurate the new section of this educational institution.

Knowledge is the key to freedom and truth. This is precisely

what the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate has been promoting throughout the ages, despite the many difficulties and complexities through which it exercises its ministry and mission here in the Holy Land and the broader area of the Middle East.

The cooperation and mutual understanding between the Patriarchate and the US. Aid Organization has been fruitful and productive in helping the Palestinian youth without any discrimination communal or religious, to attain to its aspirations of a national and independent identity within a democratic social and political context.

The Rum Orthodox Patriarchate and its Taybe Community takes pride of the fact that all pupils and students enjoy the fruits of a shared common cultural heritage and a diverse religious affiliation.

We are looking forward to further Our cooperation with the U.S. Aid building new institutions that will encourage such initiatives that bring about progress in social, national and even economic flourish.

We would like to express Our deep gratitude to the USA administration and its U.S. Aid organizations for their support and confidence to Our Patriarchate.

Last but Not least We would like to thank all those who participated in this aspiration becoming a reality.

Thank You.

His Beatutide

***THEOPHILOS III***

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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# **THE NAME DAY OF HIS BEATITUDE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS III.**

On Thursday, the 9<sup>th</sup> / 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2012, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem celebrated according to the order of the rite and the Status Quo, the Feast of the Forty Martyrs and in this context celebrated particularly the Name Day of His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, named after one of these glorious Martyrs.

On the eve of this Feast, the 9<sup>th</sup> Hour was read at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, followed by the solemn descent via the Christian Road to the Church of Resurrection.

In front of the Shrine of the Stone of the Anointing our Father His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III venerated. His Beatitude was then received in front of the Holy Sepulchre by priests and deacons, members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, dressed in full vestment and offered thymiama-insense. His Beatitude venerated the Holy Sepulchre followed by the Archbishops and Hieromonks.

The entrance to the Catholicon took place and then the veneration of the Holy Calvary by the Archbishops and the hieromonks, members of the Holy Synod. The Vespers then initiated with the ceremony of the Blessing of the Bread presided over by His Beatitude, whilst the deacons offered thymiama to the surrounding Holy Shrines.

After the Vespers where concluded the solemn ascent of the Brotherhood to their Central Monastery took place.

The morning of the Feast Day started with the solemn descent to the Church of Resurrection where the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts was initiated, presided according to the order, only by His Beatitude, whilst the Archbishops of the Brotherhood were praying in the Holy Altar of the Catholicon. His Eminence Anthimos Metropolitan of Alexandroupoleos was also present as the representative of the Church of Greece. Present at the celebration were: the General Consul of Greece in Jerusalem His Excellency Sotirios Athanasiou, the Ambassador of Greece in Amman of Jordan His Excellency Heracles Asteriadis and the Ambassador of Belarus to Israel. Numerous hieromonks, members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, participated devoutly along with married Priests of our local community, pilgrims and local faithful.

When the Holy Liturgy was completed it was followed by the Doxology – Te Deum, presided by His Beatitude, concelebrating with Hierarchs dressed with Epitrahilio & Omoforio.

After these ceremonial events at the Church of Resurrection, an official and panegyric ascent took place to the Patriarchate, where at the Throne Hall; the Elder Chief Secretary His Eminence Aristarchos Archbishop of Constantina addressed His Beatitude, in the name of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.

Address of the Elder Chief Secretary His Eminence Aristarchos Archbishop of Constantina on the occasion of the Name Day of His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III at The Throne Hall:

“Your Beatitude,

Today on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March, in the middle of the Lenten period, the Orthodox Church is spiritually rejoicing and solemnly exalts on the Feast day of the Fourty Saint Martyrs; in memory of their martyrdom death at the lake of Sevasteia in Pontos. In addition, the Church of Jerusalem is celebrating the Name

Day of its Father and Shepherd, worthy to bear the name of one of these crowned martyrs.

This double Jerusalemite feast was celebrated with the sacrifice of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts and the Doxology-Te Deum taken place at the Church of Resurrection. Participating were pious priests and believers of our Lord's people from nearby areas, but also from those afar areas of the Church of Jerusalem. Present was the whole of the August Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre whose superior – Your Beatitude – was elected with the canonical and unanimous votes of the Holy and Sacred Synod six years ago.

We manifest our joy at this historic hall of the Patriarchate and congratulate Your Beatitude adding 'whatsoever things are true and just, lovely and of good report' (Phil.4,8). This is declared by Your works with the cooperation and assistance of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and that of the Holy and Sacred Synod.

From this cooperation, and despite the imperfections and deficiencies that accompany all human works, resulted in good deeds, liturgical, sanctifying, heraldic, pastoral, philanthropic and social.

Your Beatitude responded positively to the invitations received from the numerous churches of Our flock and willingly visited them in addition to the ones Your Beatitude deemed necessary to, or the ones that imposed Your guidance for the resolution of a problem and for providing aid morally or materially, where needed. Likewise Your Beatitude advocated to representatives of state Organisations and to those of Non Governmental Organisations for the needs of the flock of our Sion Church and for the presence of the Christians in the Middle East in general. Your Beatitude advocated for their education and the protection of their rights; in favour of their survival in conditions of prosperity and dignity at their respective countries of birth. This support of the



Middle East Christians is rendered at present stronger through the Middle East Council of Churches. The Patriarchate played a paramount role in the reorganization and upgrade of the Council. For this purpose, of collectively supporting the rights of the Christians as a minority in their birthplace, the Holy Land, Your Beatitude directed properly and with agility numerous meetings of the Leaders of the Christian Churches of the Middle East realised at the Patriarchate under Your Beatitude's auspices. These rights of the Christians Your Beatitude properly presented them, during last December's meeting in Fhues to the King of Jordan and at the Presidential Palace during Your address to the President of the State of Israel, on behalf of the Christian Communities on occasion of the new secular year of 2012.

Regarding the section of the inter-Orthodox Ecclesiastical Cooperation there was considerable improvement. Between others, the recent visit to the sister Autocephalous Church of Cyprus, was marked from the laying of the foundation stone for the restoration of the Exarchate of the Holy Sepulchre, nearby the Archbishopric of Cyprus. Fruit of this cooperation is also the enrollment of five members of our Arab-speaking flock at the Religious Seminary of the Church of Cyprus.

Our historic rights on the Holy Shrines stipulated by the prevailing Status Quo where safeguarded and where exercised entirely. This was demonstrated by successfully protecting these rights from the provocation of the Armenians which caused problems during the yearly cleaning of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. With the cooperation of the Franciscans and the support of the Palestinian Authority, the damage caused by the Armenians on the floor of the Holy Grotto in Bethlehem, was restored.

There was also success in the efforts to staff the Holy Shrines and due to the creation of a climate of trust and security, new students arrived at the Patriarchal School of Holy Sion as well as new members were admitted to the

Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.

These are mentioned as the fruits of the common efforts of Your Beatitude and of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, not for the boast and not for repose, but for the just praise which deservedly accounts for whoever demonstrates good deeds. Thus the members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre be encouraged to advance creatively in performing and fulfilling our duties for the years to come, reinforced by the grace of God.

Your Beatitude in the name of the Holy and Sacred Synod and of our Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, we wish You from our heart many healthy years to come, power, peace and constancy with joy in the view of the good deeds for the glory of the Trinity, our God and praise of our blessed genus. Amen.

With these, the Church of Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of the Fourty Martyrs and the Name Day of His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

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**Chief Secretary's Office.**

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# **HB THEOPHILOS III REMARKS AT THE INTERFAITH CLIMATE AND ENERGY CONFERENCE.**

Jerusalem, 19 March 2012

## Remarks at the Interfaith Climate and Energy Conference

Sponsored by the Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development  
at the Konrad Adenauer Event Center

**Mishkenot Sha'ananim.**

Rabbi Neril,

Distinguished Fellow Panelists,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for this opportunity, to make a few remarks to this Conference and to participate in this panel. The subject of climate and energy is a vast and crucial one for our time, our region, and our world. All thoughtful people are concerned about the integrity of the environment and the careful human stewardship of our natural resources. The earth is the common home of all humanity, and we have a moral responsibility to ensure that all humanity is able to share our earthly home. As the prophet David says in the Psalms, *"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it"*, (Ps.24:1).

There is in the Christian tradition a profound understanding of the goodness of creation, and the central place of creation in the sacred story of salvation. Not only do we read in the Book of Genesis that *"God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good"*, (Gen, 1:31). Christians also affirm that God, the Eternal Logos, took on our flesh in Jesus Christ precisely to make holy this creaturely life and to show us that, as those made in the image and likeness of God, we may attain to union with God himself. This pilgrimage to union with God, this theosis, begins in this life, set in the midst of creation, of which we human beings are a part.

In the Christian understanding, on the one hand creation groans with the birth pangs of the world to come. What is to

be, the fulfillment of all things in their original purpose, is not yet. As Saint Paul says in the Letter to the Romans, *"we know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now"*, (Rom. 8:22). This is born out in our human experience, for, as we read in the First Letter of John, *"Beloved, we are God's children now: what we will be has not yet been revealed"*, (Jn. 3:2).

And yet on the other hand, creation is also jubilant. We read in The Song of the Three Young Men in the Book of Daniel a great hymn of creation, and how the creation itself -the cosmic order, the earth and its creatures, as well as human beings- glorifies the Creator:

*"Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord;*

*Sing, praise to Him and highly exalt him forever.*

*Bless the Lord, all you winds;*

*Sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.*

*Let the earth bless the Lord;*

*Let it sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.*

*Bless the Lord all that grows in the ground...seas and rivers, springs...and all animals"*, (Dan. 3:57 and passim).

This is an understanding of creation that is not a means to an end. but part of the essential life that God brought into being out of nothing.

In the Holy Tradition of the Church, too, we see a reverence for creation, and a celebration of the intimate relationship between creation and the Creator.

For example from the Church Fathers we read this passage from Saint Basil's reflections on the Book of Genesis:

*"In the beginning God created." What a glorious order! He*

*first establishes a beginning, so that it might not be supposed that the world never had a beginning. Then he adds "created" to show that which was made was a very small part of the power of the Creator. In the same way that the potter, after having made with equal pains a great number of vessels, has not exhausted either his art or his talent; thus the Maker of the Universe, whose creative power, far from being bounded by one world, could extend to the infinite, needed only the impulse of His will to bring the immensities of the visible world into being. If then the world has a beginning, and if it has been created, enquire who gave it this beginning, and who was the Creator". (The Hexaemeron, Homily 1 .2).*

For the Church Fathers, there was a clear understanding of the wonder of creation, as well as of reverence for the Creator of all.

And In the Service for the Great Blessing of the Waters on the Feast of the Theophany -the Baptism of the Lord in the River Jordan- we read these words written by our great predecessor. Patriarch Sophronios of Jerusalem:

*"Today the grace of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove dwelt upon the waters. Today the Sun that never sets has dawned and the world is made radiant with the light of the Lord. Today the Moon with its radiant beams sheds light on the world. Today the stars formed of light make the inhabited world lovely with the brightness of their splendour. Today the clouds rain down from heaven the shower of justice for humankind. Today the Uncreated by his own will accepts the laying on of hands by his own creature. Today the Prophet and Forerunner draws near, but stands by with fear seeing God's condescension towards us. Today the streams of Jordan are changed into healing by the presence of the Lord, Today all creation is watered by mystical streams. Today the fallings of humankind are being washed away by the waters of Jordan. Today Paradise is opened for mortals and the Sun of justice shines down on us. Today the bitter water as once for Moses' people*

*is changed to sweetness by the presence of the Lord”.*

The entire liturgical tradition of the Church rings with the imagery of creation, and uses such imagery to underscore the message of salvation.

However, what is also crystal clear in the Christian tradition is the distinction between the Creator and the creation. The opening chapters of the Book of Genesis underscore this point, as does the great so-called Prologue of the Gospel of Saint John, where he writes:

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Cod, and the Word was Cod. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came Into being”, (John,1:1,3).*

We read also in the Psalms the Important verses in Psalm 101:

*“Long ago, (O, God), you laid the foundation of the earth,  
and the heavens are the work of your hands.*

*They will perish, but you will endure;*

*they will all wear out tike a garment.*

*You change them like clothing,*

*and they pass away;*

*but you are the same,*

*and your years have no end”. (P5 101: 25-27).*

Respect for creation and effective sustainability depend on the necessary differentiation that we must make between Creator and the creation. They are not the same. And in our concern to ensure the stewardship of the creation and the proper and just use of our natural resources, we function in a kind of priesthood. Priests live on the border. This does not mean that we must be distant. On the contrary this implies a

deep and divine intimacy, and we respond to this intimacy as to a commandment.

The care of the environment begins with our own purification and stillness. How many deserts have been turned into both spiritual and physical oases, where in the restored relationship between human beings and creation we see the harmony that we are seeking, in this respect, our proper treatment of the environment, which means harmony with creation, is also a reflection of our equally necessary commitment to the harmony of the human community.

Thank you.

His Beatitude,

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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# **MESSAGE OF HIS ALL HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW TO THE ICSD**

**His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew**

To the Interfaith Climate and Energy Conference Of The  
Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development (Jerusalem,  
March 2012)

“Dear friends, beloved conference participants,

It is a joy and privilege to address you from the venerable See of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as you assemble for the Interfaith Climate and Energy Conference.

For the Orthodox Christian Church, the protection of the environment as God's creation is the supreme responsibility of human beings, quite apart from any material or other financial benefits that it may bring, in the Book of Genesis, we are told that God gave the gift of this "very beautiful" world to humanity together with the commandment to "serve and preserve" it. There is an intimate relationship between the Creator and the creation. Our understanding of salvation is not other-worldly, but involves the transfiguration of this world. The natural environment cannot be separated from personal piety and spirituality.

This means that environmental awareness and sustainable development constitute a profoundly moral and spiritual problem. To persist in the current path of ecological destruction is not only foolish. It is suicidal and – as we have repeatedly emphasized – sinful. It is an act of arrogance against God and defiance against nature.

Indeed, the care for and protection of Creation constitutes the responsibility of everyone on an individual and collective level. Moreover, the political authorities of each nation have a greater responsibility to evaluate the situation in order to propose actions and legislate measures.

This is why, over the last two decades, the Orthodox Church has prayed throughout the world for the protection and preservation of the natural environment.

More specifically, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has organized eight interfaith and interdisciplinary ecological symposia throughout the world -including the Mediterranean Sea, the Arctic Ocean, and the Mississippi River -to gather scientists and theologians, politicians and policy makers, business



leaders and NGOs, as well as activists and journalists, to explore the impact of our actions on the waters of the world.

We must recognize the inseparable connection between ecology and economy, between global poverty and environmental pollution. Conservation and compassion are interdependent. The web of life is a sacred gift of God -ever so precious and ever so delicate. We must serve our neighbor and preserve our world with humility and generosity, in a spirit, of simplicity and solidarity. The footprint that we leave on our world must be lighter, much lighter.

Faith communities must first put their own houses in order. Therefore, on a more practical and pastoral level, we have reached out to our parishes throughout the world in order to inspire and assist them to become “greener” as communities and individuals. In local parishes, we have developed educational resources and are urging our faithful to learn to sacrifice and live with less instead of more. This is the balance that we require if we are going to acquire a new way of living.

Let us remember that, whoever we are, we all have our part to play, our sacred responsibility to the future, it is not too late to heal – as a people and as a planet. We can steer the earth toward our children’s future. But we cannot afford to wait or to waste time. We must act now”.

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**REMARKS AT A DINNER GIVEN BY  
DR. WALID HASEN AMBASSADOR OF**

# THE PALESTINE DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN NICOSIA.

Nicosia- Cyprus, 11 February 2012.

Your Excellency, Mr. Ambassador,

Your Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos

Respected Members of the Staff of the Mission,

Your Eminences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We bring you the greetings of the Church of Jerusalem and the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate, which by Divine Providence extends its pastoral mission throughout all Palestine. We are honoured to be here on our official visit – the *eirenike* – to the ancient and venerable Church of Cyprus.

Founded by the apostle Saint Barnabas, the Church of Cyprus has had an intimate relationship with the Church of Jerusalem down the ages. Indeed as long ago as the year 367, Saint Epiphanius came from the Holy Land to be Bishop of Salamis and Metropolitan of this Church. Both Churches share a common religious and cultural heritage – the so-called “ Rum” heritage of the ancient Christian Church of this region.

Cyprus and Palestine are also connected by the bonds of history that include important economic and trade relationships.

By virtue of this Rum Orthodox identity and our relationship with our fellow citizens of this region, the Arab Islamic word participates also in this unique heritage.

The Rum Orthodox Church – which is the Orthodox Church

throughout the Middle East – has played, and continues to play a vital role in cultivating and maintaining the cultural and religious *symbiosis* of the region. The Church functions both as a link between the political and the cultural life of our peoples and is also a force for reconciliation and peaceful co-existence.

In today's complex political climate we are witness of new realities and serious developments in our region. It is the firm commitment of the Church that what looks impossible in purely political terms to secular-minded people does not look impossible to people of faith. The Orthodox Church is the religious institution with the longest continuous history in this region and our experience down the ages has taught us this.

This means that the spiritual leadership of the Abrahamic landscape, which itself inclusive of all our peoples, has an important say in helping to bring about deeper understanding, mutual respect, and the co-existence of all our ethnic and religious communities.

Under the wise leadership of His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos, the Church of Cyprus has been host to many significant ecumenical and inter-religious conferences and dialogues. Not the least of these has been the recent meeting of the General Assembly of the Middle East Council of Churches, at which Your Excellency was present. We know that you appreciate this crucial work.

We mention all this because the Rum Orthodox Church of this region is aware of our mission, precisely because of our long experience. The Orthodox Church has given itself in maintaining the multi-ethnic and multi-religious landscape of the Middle East and to supporting a peaceful resolution to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

Political instability and financial crisis are intimately

connected. This much we know. Therefore the co-operation of the nations of the Middle East and beyond is fundamental to the well-being of all our people. Your work in Cyprus, Mr. Ambassador is evidence of this commitment.

By definition, an *eirenike* is a mission of peace. In this spirit we commend all who work for peace in our region.

We wish to acknowledge the efforts of President Mahmood Abbas, who is deeply sensitive to the mission of the Church in the Holy Land, and we pray for wisdom in his leadership.

We thank His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos for his warm welcome to Cyprus and to the Church, and we assure him of our brotherly prayers for arch pastoral ministry as he spares neither time nor effort in furthering the cause of peace.

And we thank you, Your Excellency, for your gracious hospitality, and for all that you and your staff do to maintain the close relationship between Cyprus and Palestine, which is essential for the peace and stability of our region.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem.

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**HIS BEATITUDE SPEECH OF  
WELCOME TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF**

# CANTERBURY.

Holy Sepulcher, 2 February 2012

Your Grace, Dear Archbishop Rowan,

Your Eminences,

Dear Bishops,

Beloved Members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre,

Reverend Fathers

*“You who were lifted upon the Cross of your own will, O Christ our God, bestow your compassion upon all who are called by your Name”.*

With these words from the *Kontakion* of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, we greet you, dear Archbishop Rowan. In this most sacred place, where “for us and for our salvation” Our Lord Jesus Christ gave up his life on the Cross, we welcome you on the occasion of this pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We greet you not as a stranger, but as a member of the Jerusalem Church family. For Jerusalem is our common spiritual home.

As we gather here before the King of Kings to pray for the Christian communities of the Holy Land, on behalf of all, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the concern that you have always shown for the Christians of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Your tremendous endeavors in support of all who call the Holy Land their home are well known by all, and we acknowledge your considerable contribution to peace in this region, and to dialogue among the Abrahamic faiths.

We are pleased that your visit is being carried out as a pilgrimage, and we appreciate your concern to listen and to understand. The posture of discernment is a great spiritual

practice about which the hermit fathers have so much to say, and it is grounded in the virtue of humility. As Saint Seraphim of Sarov, whom you revere, once said, "let us love humility and we shall see the glory of God."

Someone once asked a Desert Father, "How can I find God," to which the holy monk replied, "In fasting, in watching, in labours, in devotion, and, above all, in discernment," Discernment and humility remind us that we are intimately related to each other, and that our common humanity is gathered up in our common human destiny. All this is known to you, for you are inspired by Saint Anthony, whom you have quoted, and who said, "Our life and our death are with our neighbour".

We, the Heads of the Churches and Christian communities of the Holy Land, commit ourselves to join with you in our commitment together on behalf of the Christian communities of this region, for we know that the well-being of the Holy Land depends in no small measure on the well-being of the historic Christian presence here.

We Christians here welcome the brotherly support of fellow Christians around the world, for this is a support not only for Christians alone, but for our sisters and brothers who make up the Abrahamic landscape of Jerusalem. We have a moral obligation from God to be the messengers of the incarnate Love of God and to be the light of reconciliation and peace. As Our Lord said, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God", Matt 5:16.

Needless to say, the world looks to Jerusalem in hope, for Jerusalem is a reminder to us of the eschaton. This is why Jerusalem is considered the beacon of hope and peace, of justice and genuine co-existence.

In our turn, we take this blessed opportunity to assure you of our love and prayers for your own ministry, especially in

these challenging and complex times.

May God richly bless your pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and may God hear the prayers we offer here for the well-being of all in our beloved Middle East.

*No longer does the angel's fiery sword guard the gate of Paradise, for the Tree of the Cross has extinguished it wonderfully. The power of death has been broken, the victory of Hades wiped out, and you, my Saviour, have arisen and called out to those bound in Hades, "Come now and enter into heaven." (Kontakion for the Sunday of the Holy Cross).*

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem.

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# **SPEECH TO THE MAYOR AND THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF JERUSALEM.**

Holy City of Jerusalem, 24 January 2012

Your Excellency, Mr Mayor,

Honorable Members of the Municipal Authority,

Your Eminences,

Distinguished Guests,

We greet you with joy and hope as we begin this New Year. We

are honored to be amongst our fellow Jerusalemites and on behalf of the Christian Churches, the communities of Jerusalem and all people of faith and good will, we express our best wishes to you, Mr Mayor, and to the members of the Municipal Authority for your important tasks serving our beloved Holy City.

Jerusalem is considered to be the special Capital for the whole world, and Jerusalem is the only city in which inter-religious dialogue is a lived and living reality. Here Jews, Christians and Muslims have been living together for generations; a fact that prompts us to overcome challenges that lie ahead of us.

We cannot underestimate or disregard the example that is ours to set. All over the world, people know trouble, uncertainty, violence and distrust as they face an unpredictable future. They are looking for hope, for a concrete example of what is possible for the human community.

To be this beacon of hope is the vocation of Jerusalem, its civic and religious leaders, and all her inhabitants. In her unique mission, Jerusalem should shine as a genuine example of respectful co-existence. We of diverse heritages should be able to show the world that peoples of different faiths, cultures, and ethnicities can live together in peace and harmony.

We appreciate the efforts of the municipal authorities to ensure safety, order and quiet living conditions for all, and for helping to guarantee freedom of worship for all. Inclusiveness in this and every regard, not exclusiveness in any form, should be the maxim of our city.

Our different religious, ethnic, and cultural communities are the flavour of Jerusalem. They are what give this city its very distinctive "life". Just as Jerusalem is a city for all; its well being is the responsibility of all. Therefore, it is



the moral obligation of all who represent common religious values and principles to join forces, if we are genuine in our search for peace, prosperity and reconciliation for all.

The building of bridges and the healing of wounds demand a sacrifice – the sacrifice of the self. This is an understanding that lies at the heart of the Abrahamic traditions, and we know that violence can only be eradicated by this powerful act of humble self-sacrifice for the sake of the good of all.

In this spirit must we act. Pilgrims testify to us of the mystical power of Jerusalem, not only as a city in which our local communities live together in diversity, but also to the power of Jerusalem to stand as an example for the rest of the world, to live fully our common human nature, and realize our common human destiny. As the great Desert Father of the Holy Land, Saint Anthony said, ‘Our life and our death are with our neighbour.’”

Once again, we wish to extend to you, Mr Mayor, to your family, to your colleagues and to the members of the Municipal Authority of Jerusalem, our best wishes for this New Year, and to assure you of our commitment to preserving the idiosyncrasy of our beloved Jerusalem.

Hag Sameach and Shanah Tova.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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# **AN ADDRESS OF GREETING DURING H. B. THEOPHILOS III VISIT AT THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCHATE.**

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father”, says Saint John the Evangelist (John 1:14).

Your Beatitude, Your Eminences,

Members of the Brotherhood of Saint James:

It is precisely this very fact that “the Word became flesh” i.e. of the Mystery of the divine economy, that we celebrate in this festive Christmas and Epiphany season.

We as monastic fraternities and Christian communities have been blessed to be a living and worshiping witness of the sacred history, the history of the salvation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Holy Land.

Today, Your Beatitude, we have come to congratulate you personally, and your venerable fraternity on the occasion of Christmas, according to your ancient liturgical tradition.

Bethlehem and Jerusalem are synonymous with feasts and celebrations related to Our Lord Jesus Christ’s salvational earthly life. Ours is the task to guard and sustain this unique Christian heritage and sacred tradition. For the eyes of the world community, regardless of race or religious affiliation, are turned to us for moral encouragement and spiritual refreshment, especially over the great festival of Christ’s birth.

In the wake of unprecedented challenges to our region and the unforeseeable future, we must keep at the forefront of our minds our common goal and spiritual mission.

We take this opportunity to wish you a blessed Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year with full health and strength from above.

May the Incarnate Word, the Light of Knowledge and the Sun of Justice enlighten your mind and warm your heart so that you may lead your flock for many years.

Christ is Born!

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem