THE CONSUL OF BRITAIN IN ISRAEL VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE.

On Thursday the 1^{st} / 14^{th} of October 2010 the Consul of Great Britain to Israel, Mr. Richard Makepeace, visited His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III at His office on the occasion of the conclusion of his diplomatic duties in this position.

Within the framework of this visit both sides expressed full satisfaction for the existence of a truly excellent cooperation in order to tackle affairs of mutual interest and also the wish and the willingness that this cooperation be continued by the successor of Mr. Makepeace.

His Beatitude blessed him with the grace of the Holy Sepulchre for the successful support of his diplomatic career.

Chief Secretary's Office.

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THE GREEK MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE.

On Monday, the 5th/18th of October 2010, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs His Excellency Mr. Demetrios Droutsas visited His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III at the

Patriarchate. On this visit, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs was accompanied by the General Secretary of his office, Mr. Ioannis-Alexios Zepos, and other officials namely the Greek Ambassador to the State of Israel His Excellency Mr. Kyriakos Loukakis, and the Consul of Greece to Jerusalem His Excellency Mr. Sotiris Athanasiou.

His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III congratulated the Minister on his official appointment. "We recognise", He said, "the difficult mission you have undertaken. We thank the Greek Government for showing its concern for the Patriarchate which is demonstrated by your visit. Furthermore we enjoy very good cooperation with the diplomatic representatives of Greece to Israel. The Patriarchate plays a significant conciliatory role in the ongoing religious and political issues of the Holy Land".

The Minister conveyed the greetings of the Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. George Papandreou and praised the work of the Patriarchate and His Beatitude personally. "I saw", he said, "the Patriarchate's work in Jordan and I heard plenty of commendatory words from the King of Jordan about Your work as President of all the Heads of the Holy Land's Churches".

His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III decorated the Minister with the Order of the Grand Commander of the Holy Sepulchre as a sign of recognition of his service to Greece and the Patriarchate.

Moreover, His Beatitude offered His Excellency the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Hellenic Republic a publication by Professor Votokopoulos on the illustrated manuscripts of the Patriarchate's Library and Professor Demitrakopoulos' book entitled 'The Site of The Baptism of Our Lord on the River Jordan'.

The Minister proceeded to visit the Church of Resurrection to venerate the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy Shrines therein.

Chief-Secretary's Office.

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MEETING OF THE LEADERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN THE HOLY LAND AT THE PATRIARCHATE.

On Wednesday the 30th of September/ 13th of October 2010 the meeting of the Leaders of the Christian Churches in the Holy Land, which is regularly scheduled and called under the patronage of His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, took place at the Patriarchate. One of the topics which the Leaders concerned themselves with was the case of the suspension of the identification cards of His Eminence Suheil Dawani, Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, both from him personally as well as from the members of his family on the basis of false accusations made against him.

Chief Secretary's Office.

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THE ADVISER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY FOR CHRISTIAN AFFAIRS AT THE PATRIARCHATE.

On Friday the 25th of September/ 8th of October 2010, the Adviser to the President of the Palestinian Authority for Christian Affairs, Mr. Ziyiad Bandak along with his associate Mrs. Claudette Isa Habash visited His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III. Within the framework of this visit matters concerning the Status Quo of the venerable Church of the Nativity were discussed such as the problem created by the Armenians during the last Christmas holiday which the Patriarchate has since addressed with the Palestinian Authority.

Also discussed was the problem of the unfinished building in front of the Church in Bethlehem and specifically the inactivity of Mr. Isa Taouil who rented this property from the Patriarchate in order to construct the aforementioned building.

Chief Secretary's Office.

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REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION AT THE PATRIARCHATE.

On Friday the 25th of September / 8th of October 2010 His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III received a team of representatives of the Protestant Churches of the Swiss Confederation (Confoederatio Helvetica). Within the framework of this meeting His Beatitude spoke to them regarding the religious, ecclesiastic, social and philanthropic work of the Patriarchate mentioning the important pacifying role that the Patriarchate demonstrates in the peace process of the Middle East.

His Beatitude offered the visitors a book authored by Professor Votokopoulos on the illustrated manuscripts of the Library of the Patriarchate and the book by Professor Demitrakopoulos entitled 'The Site of The Baptism of Our Lord on the River Jordan'.

Chief Secretary's Office.

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THE NEW SWEDISH CONSUL TO ISRAEL VISITS THE

PATRIARCHATE

On Friday the 25th of September / 8th of October 2010 the new Consul of Sweden {Konungariket Sverige} to Israel His Excellency Mr. Axel Wernhoff visited His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III on the occasion of the assumption of his new duties as Consul.

Within the framework of this visit an interesting discussion took place regarding the role of the Patriarchate and about the Library of the Patriarchate which he visited, along with the Librarian, in order to see a manuscript with a text of Job which his son is researching and been involved with.

Chief Secretary's Office.

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MEETING BETWEEN HIS BEATITUDE AND THE PRIME MINISTER OF JORDAN.

On Thursday, 10th/23rd of September 2010, a meeting took place between His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III and the Prime Minister of Jordan, Mr Samir Rifai, at the Prime Minister's office in Amman, Jordan. The meeting was also attended by notable personalities of Jordan's state as well as active members of our Orthodox Community: the ex-minister of Foreign Affairs for Jordan, Kamel Abu-Jaber, the ex-minister of Water and Irrigation for Jordan, Munther Haddadin and the ex-minister Samir Kawar.

His Beatitude was escorted by His Eminence Isychios Metropolitan of Capitolias, His Eminence Venedictos Metropolitan of Philadelphia, His Eminence Dorotheos Archbishop of Avila and Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Ieronymos and Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Filoumenos.

His Excellency the Prime Minister conveyed to His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, the wishes and appreciation of His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan for His Beatitude's contribution to the interreligious dialogue between Christians and Muslims and His cooperation in establishing peace and welfare in the Middle East and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Chief-Secretary's Office.

A MESSAGE OF GREETINGS TO THE MIDDLE EAST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL OF CHURCHES.

A MESSAGE OF GREETINGS TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE PRESIDENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AT THEIR MEETING IN DAMASCUS.

His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem
22 September 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and We send our prayers and blessing for your meeting in Damascus. We apologize for not being able to be with you ourselves, but the demands of other commitments keep us away. We would like first & foremost to express Our thankfulness and appreciation to Our Brother, His Beatitude Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, Kyrios Ignatios the forth, for hosting Our executive Committee meeting here in Sydanaya. We are happy, however, to send Our delegation, which consists of His Eminence Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela, Father Ibrahim Dabour, and Mrs. Wafa' Ksous, who have Our confidence.

We rejoice in the good work for the future of the MECC that was accomplished recently in Cyprus, and We express Our gratitude to His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos II of Nova Justiniana and All Cyprus for his welcome and encouragement. We remain firm in our commitment to the decisions that were made at the meeting of the Executive Committee in Amman, and We support the determination that resulted from the meeting of the Presidents of the Christian families last week in Nicosia.

We hope and pray that all our member Churches will join in these sincere efforts to reconfigure our Council for the common benefit both of the Christian population of the Middle East and the Holy Land and to ensure that our Christian voice is heard. It is time for us to overcome our misunderstandings and move ahead in the strength of our common purpose, especially at this critical time in the history of our region. Let us grasp the momentum and advance the Council's mission.

Once again We re-affirm the commitment of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to the significance and mission of our Council, which is important not only for the co-operation of the Churches in the region, but for the ongoing well-being and security of the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

THEOPHILOS IIIPATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

MEETING OF THE ORTHODOX PATRIARCHS OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CYPRUS IN NICOSIA.

Between the 2nd / 15th and the 3rd / 16th of September 2010, a meeting between His Beatitude Theodoros Patriarch of Alexandria, His Beatitude Ignatios Patriarch of Antioch, His Beatitude Theophilos III Patriarch of Jerusalem and His Beatitude Chrysostomos Archbishop of Cyprus took place in Nicosia.

The Heads of the Patriarchates and of the Church of Cyprus were escorted as follows; His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III escorted by the representative of the Patriarchate in Cyprus His Eminence Timotheos Metropolitan of Vostron; the Elder Chief Secretary His Eminence Aristarchos Archbishop of Constantina, and His Eminence Dorotheos Archbishop of Avila. His Beatitude Ignatios Patriarch of Antioch escorted by His Eminence Loukas Metropolitan of Seidanayias and the Chief Secretary Rev. Archimandrite Father Ibrahim Daoud; His Beatitude Patriarch of Alexandria Theodoros escorted by His Eminence Georgios Metropolitan of Zimbabwe and His Eminence Nicolaos Metropolitan of Hermopolis; and His Beatitude Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos escorted by the assistant Bishop of Carpassia Christoforos and the Coadjutor Archimandrite Father Ieronymos.

Upon the arrival of the dignitaries at Larnaca airport on the morning of Wednesday, the 2^{nd} / 15^{th} of September 2010, they

were received by His Beatitude Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos. His Beatitude Patriarch of Alexandria Theodoros arrived during the evening on this day.

The aforementioned dignitaries met in their capacity as Representatives of the Orthodox Churches of the Middle East in the Council of Churches of the Middle East (CCME) as it is known. In this Council, four so called "families" take part, that is the families of the Orthodox, the Pre-Chalkedonian, the Latins and the Protestants. His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III is the President of the family of the Orthodox which includes the Patriarchates of Alexandria, of Antioch, and Jerusalem and also the Archdiocese of Cyprus for the current four year term.

Upon their arrival at Larnaca airport, the Dignitaries gave a brief interview. Firstly the Archbishop of Cyprus expressed His joy at receiving the Dignitaries in order to discuss subjects that will assist and that will be of benefit to the Christians of the Churches of the Middle East. Then the Patriarch of Antioch stated that he is particularly delighted about His meeting with the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III for the first time and, furthermore, that this meeting will contribute towards the solution of problems that beset the Christians of the Middle East. Finally, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III explained that the purpose of this meeting is to tackle, primarily, the problem of the crisis which currently assails the CCME and also the status of the Christians in the Middle East.

Concerning the first topic, they held a meeting on the morning of Wednesday, the 2^{nd} / 15^{th} of September 2010, with the representatives of the Orthodox family of the CCME at the Hilton Park Hotel, where they were also lodged by the kind and polite gesture of the Holy Archdiocese of Cyprus.

At noon on this day, His Beatitude Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos hosted dinner for all of the representatives of

the CCME that came to the Archdiocese.

During the course of the meal His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III thanked the Archbishop of Cyprus for His kind hospitality and for the support offered by the Archdiocese of Cyprus to the CCME and congratulated Him on the recent ratification by the Government of Cyprus of the Charter of the Church of Cyprus.

In the evening on this day a meeting of the Presidents of the four families, namely His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, the Most Reverend Armenian Catholic Patriarch of Cilicia Aram Kisisian, the representative of the PreChalkedonian Churches, the Most Reverend Maronite Metropolitan of Beirut Boutros Matar, a representative of the Latin family, and a representative of the Protestant church the Most Reverend Bishop of the Lutherans in Jerusalem Mounib Yunan took place in a hall at the Hilton Park Hotel where the representatives were lodged.

After an intensive discussion they decided that the efforts for the redress, reestablishment and strengthening of the CCME as a union of expression of justice and peace in the Middle East and of support of the status of the Christians should be continued. Furthermore the mission and deed should be continued with the Coptic Church, which is expected to be reconnected with the CCME. The General Assembly of the Council will be convened in Cyprus around the end of February 2011. These decisions by the four Presidents were relegated, according to the bylaws of the CCME, to its Executive Committee, which will convene on the 24th of September of the current year in Damascus.

Following this, a meeting between His Beatitude Patriarchate of Jerusalem Theophilos III, His escorts, and the representative of the Patriarchate in Cyprus, His Eminence Timotheos Metropolitan of Vostron took place concerning matters of property of the Patriarchate in Cyprus.

Later, His Beatitude Theodoros Patriarch of Alexandria and the whole of Africa arrived at the hotel, accompanied by His Eminence Georgios Metropolitan of Zimbabwe and His Eminence Nikolaos Metropolitan of Hermopolis.

His Beatitude Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos hosted a banquet dinner for all the dignitaries and their escorts at their lodging hotel.

On the morning of Thursday, the 3rd / 16th of September, the Heads of the three Primal Patriarchates visited the Archdiocese of Cyprus where His Beatitude Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos cordially welcomed them.

There, between the Heads of the three Patriarchates and their representatives, as well as His Eminence Nikolaos Bishop of representative of the Church of Cyprus to the and the Reverend European Union, Father representative in the CCME, an intensive discussion took place regarding the causes of the financial and administrative crisis of the Council of Churches of the Middle East (CCME) and the measures which are warranted in order to overcome this crisis. As one means of assistance, it was proposed to accept the offer from the Archdiocese of (the Church of) Cyprus of the premises to house the offices of the CCME in Cyprus and to accommodate their Secretarial personnel together with the hospitality for all meetings of o f Council representatives whenever and as often as they take place in Likewise, the insistence on the convening of the General Assembly as agreed and the determination of the Orthodox Churches to continue to take an active part in and to confront the problems of the Churches which they represent in unanimity, and to contribute to their spiritual progress and the amelioration of their terms of life, was highlighted and emphasized.

During this meeting the three Primuses paid particular attention to the status of Christians in Israel, Palestine,

the Holy Land and, generally in the Middle East, as well as to Christians' problems, the expatriations, the emigration, the education, their coexistence and their symbiosis with adherents of other religions. It was decided to bring into effect the cooperation between the Churches of the Orthodox family, but also the Churches of the other three families of CCME, for the purpose of helping and assisting the Christians whom the various Churches represent.

This help will be delivered through the improvement of the level of the schools already in existence via the establishment of new ones and the granting of scholarships to young Christians either for studies at Universities in the Holy Land or at institutions abroad on the condition that, upon completion of their studies, they will return for employment to their birth place. Furthermore, Christians will be offered assistance through their Churches with the creation of jobs and via the establishment of works projects with funding from the European Union and other organizations.

At the close of this meeting, the Dignitaries gave an interview to the Cypriot Media, the communiqué is as follows:

The Primuses of the three Primal Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem Their Beatitudes Patriarchs Theodoros, Ignatios and Theophilos III met by themselves in Cyprus following the initiative and the invitation of His Beatitude Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos. They discussed ways and concrete measures in order to resolve the problems and overcome the crisis of the Council of Churches of the Middle East, so that the Council will be able to continue to deservedly fulfill the purpose of its establishment, that is to support the Christians in Jerusalem, Palestine and the wider Middle East and, simultaneously, to continuously strive for peaceful coexistence and symbiosis of Christians amongst the people of the region and for the prevalence of a just and peaceful solution in the Middle East, Jerusalem, the Holy Land and on the martyred island of Cyprus.

The Heads held a private meeting the central subject of which was the status of Christians in the Middle East.

During the afternoon of the last day of the visit in Cyprus, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III along with His Beatitude Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos and His escorts went from the Archdiocese of Cyprus to the area nearby where the Hexarchy of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was situated and where it will be reestablished and will be erected. The current representative of the Patriarchate at the Exarchate is His Eminence Timotheos Metropolitan of Vostra.

After this visit His Beatitude Theophilos III Patriarch of Jerusalem along with His escorts returned via Cyprus Airways to Tel—Aviv airport and from there to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Chief Secretary's Office.

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H.B. PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS ADDRESS AT THE MEETING WITH THE HONORABLE TARJA HALONEN, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND.

His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem
Helsinki, 13 September 2010

Your Excellency, Madame President,

Your Eminence, Archbishop Leo,

Your Eminence, Metropolitan Amvrosios,

Your Eminences,

Distinguished Civic and Governmental Leaders,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for us to be received by you today, Madame President, and it has been a great joy for us to be in your beloved country on this, the first fraternal visitation of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to the Finnish Orthodox Church. We have visited the Church's many holy sites and historic churches, and we have been heartened by the devotion of the people and the active ministry of the Orthodox Church.

Christianity first came to Finland almost 1000 years ago, and your Christian history has helped to shape the unique character of the Finnish people. Indeed it was the notable Lutheran pastor of the New Testament in 1548, became known as "the father of the written Finnish language".

Yet Finland is unique among the nations of the world in recognizing not one, but two established State Churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church. This is a public recognition of the remarkable history of this nation and of two great Christian traditions that have shaped the life of the people.

In the course of the history of the last century, Finland has played a crucial role in the struggle of the nations, and in the survival of Orthodoxy in this region. Indeed the Finnish Orthodox Church has known within the intimacy of its own life something of the pain and difficulty of these wider

international struggles. The monastery of New Valamo, which we visited last week, is but one shining testimony not simply to the determination of Orthodox believers, but also to the strength of the spirit of the Finnish people in the face of immense challenges.

But through the determination of many over the years, both in Church and State, the Finnish Orthodox Church has emerged from the position of a foreign jurisdiction to be a true local Orthodox Church of the Finnish people. The Church enjoys autonomous status under the omophorion of the Patriarch of Constantinople and worships in the Finnish language. It has its own monasteries and a seminary, its deepening unique spirituality, its beautiful musical tradition, and its growing list of significant Orthodox leaders, both among the clergy and the laity. We rejoice at the living witness of the Finnish Orthodox Church and its place in the world-wide Orthodox oikoumene, as well as in the special relationship that exists between the Finnish Orthodox Church and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

In recognition, therefore, of the Orthodox history of your country, and of the role of the Finnish Orthodox Church as a state Church, we desire to bestow upon you the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

This Order is a sign of the special place that the Finnish Orthodox Church and all the people of Finland have in our heart, and of the fraternal affection that our visitation of the Finish Orthodox Church represents.

We pray that the warm personal ties that now bind the Finnish Orthodox Church with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem may continue to deepen. We look forward to the possibility of welcoming you, dear Madame President, to the Holy City of Jerusalem in due course, and we commit ourselves to the pastoral care of all Finnish people who come to the Holy Land on pilgrimage.

May God bless you, the government of this noble Republic, the Finnish Orthodox Church, and all the people of your nation, who are also dear to us.

Than you once again for your gracious welcome and reception.

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