

# HIS BEATITUDE SPEECH IN THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGRATION OF ST. PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH.

"Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the Prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing (LUKE 13:34,35).

Your Eminences,

Your Excellencies,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today we have gathered here as the children of Jerusalem in order to inaugurate the reopening of a home of worship that has been closed for many years.

We pride ourselves on belonging to a liturgical Community i.e. a Community of divine worship. For according to Fr. George Florofsky, the Church is above all a liturgical Community.

For Christian liturgy or divine worship is the pivotal activity that focuses and enriches life, giving meaning and purpose to existence.

Furthermore, in Christian tradition the proper relationship between the created and the creator is best expressed through the relationship of worship. God is always the gracious initiator of our relationship with Himself. Actually it is He who motivates within the human heart the desire or the "divine eros" for union with Himself.

The Church therefore as the home of (divine) worship is and

must be considered as the home of God's philanthropy expressed through the blessed acts of peace and reconciliation with our humanity.

The reopening of the Saint Paul's Church in our beloved holy city of Jerusalem is a prophetic sign of hope for justice peaceful symbiosis and reconciliation for the Holy Land's people and for maintaining Jerusalem's harmonious and ecumenical spirit.

We take this opportunity to wholeheartedly congratulate His grace the Anglican archbishop in Jerusalem Mr. Suheil Duwani for his inspirational initiative to restore St. Paul's Church, which displays his devotion and love to the Holy City of Jerusalem which has enough room to accommodate all God's children especially those of Patriarch Abraham.

Thank You.

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## **INTERVIEW WITH HIS BEATITUDE CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.**

During the morning program «*Every day a new day*» broadcast today on the Radio Station of the Church of Greece, the reporters Katerina Houzouri and Kostas Pappas spoke with His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III both about the recent convocation of the Council of Churches of the Middle East and about the current events concerning the uprisings in the Arab world. His Beatitude, questioned about the latest events in the Arab world and on the possibility of a chain reaction of uprisings replied «*The domino effect of uprisings*

worries us all; however, regarding Jordan I can assure you that what applies to the other countries does not apply to Jordan given that the situation there is completely different. This apprehension does not exist in Jordan, nevertheless this upheaval is being fueled by different situations and that is something that preoccupies everyone».

Responding to another question with regard to whether these political uprisings can assume another character His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem replied: «To be frank, it was an unforeseeable situation upon which you hear a variety of opinions and views from various analysts, but the essence is the same, that the situation is unpredictable».

Finally, following a question regarding the meeting of the Leaders of the Council of the Churches of the Middle East, His Beatitude pointed out that: «At this moment in time, the Council of Churches of the Middle East, the Orthodox Church with the Patriarchates, and the Church of Cyprus, play a leading role since they have assumed the Presidency and, moreover, Myself as the representative of the Orthodox Church, on behalf of the Orthodox Family, as the President at this moment. This Council went through a major crisis for a variety of reasons including the fact that financial support did not exist anymore and also that the Orthodox Patriarchates, for different reasons, ceased to show substantial interest. However, the political situation that has been forming in the region, and all these recent events have required us to become proactive and, thus, we have taken the initiative in re-establishing the Middle East Council of Churches since it is an institution that possesses many capabilities and can convey the problems and the voice of the Christian world in the Middle East».

*Excerpts from His Beatitude's interview broadcast on the Radio Station of the Church of Greece.*

**Chief Secretary's Office.**

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# **H. B. PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS' III SPEECH AT THE MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES SESSION HELD IN CYPRUS.**

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Dear Friends,

We give thanks to Almighty God for the opportunity to meet in this Executive Committee of the Middle East Council of Churches.

The purpose of our meeting here in Cyprus is to discuss further the process of re-organization of the MECC especially given the current political developments that our region is witnessing. It is obvious that our joint Christian voice is now more necessary than ever before. Therefore, it is time seriously and responsibly to consider our mission as church leaders, as we uphold the interests of our Churches and faithful. In addition to this we must be ready to respond to the calls that are made to us by our respective political leaderships.

We take this opportunity to re-iterate once again our commitments to this Council, a commitment, a commitment that we have already displayed in practice.

The Orthodox family has demonstrated our steadfastness in

maintaining in maintaining the fellowship to which this Council aspires. In support of this the Church of Cyprus, under the wise leadership of His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos, has taken the initiative to place the meetings of the MECC on a firm administrative and financial basis in Cyprus.

And so, We appeal to all our member Churches to overcome any misunderstanding that may exist and to reach a consensus by which we can accomplish the fundamental principles of the institution of the Council.

We would like to express our gratitude especially to Our beloved brother Archbishop Chrysostomos for his gracious and generous hospitality. And we would like to thank all of you who have responded positively to the invitation to gather here for this decisive action in leading the MECC in fulfilling our common expectations.

Thank you, and May God bless you.

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## **MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF UKRAINE VISIT THE PATRIARCHATE.**

On Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> of January/ 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2011, a team of 25 People's Deputies of the Parliament of Ukraine, under the auspices of entrepreneur Mr. Feldmann, visited the Patriarchate. They were received by His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III Who cited the religious, cultural

and conciliatory mission which was brought into fruition by the Patriarchate centuries ago and is especially important today in the midst of this tense and unstable political situation within our region. His Beatitude said that the People's Deputies also partake in this work of the Patriarchate, today, through their visit as Orthodox Christians and as representatives of the Parliament of the Ukraine.

Mr. Feldmann, in thanking His Beatitude for the reception given to the visitors and for His speeches regarding the work and mission of the Patriarchate, offered Him a national symbol of Ukraine.

His Beatitude praised Mr. Feldmann for his humanitarian work and presented him and his escort with a large silver seven-branched candelabrum – a Menorah, with an explanation of the symbolism for Jews and Christians. He also gave them a medal representing 2000 years of existence of the Orthodox Patriarchate, the book by Professor Votokopoulos about the illustrated manuscripts of the Patriarchal Library and the book by Professor Demitrakopoulos about the place of Baptism of the Lord.

The visit to the Patriarchate was followed by a visit and veneration at the Holy Sepulchre.

**Chief Secretary's Office.**

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**H. B. PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS'**

# **III ADDRESS IN THE OCCASION OF THE “WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK” .**

**02 February 2011,**

**Your Royal Highness, Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammad Bin Talal**

**Honourable and Distinguished Guest,**

It is a great honour for us, the Council of Churches in Jordan, to be amongst you today in this holy site celebrating the “World Interfaith Harmony Week”. We affirm our deep appreciation for the efforts of His Majesty King Abdullah the Second to this great initiative. We hold dearly His Majesty’s and the Hashemite Kingdom’s continued heritage and commitment to freedom of worship and for progressing the bridging and understanding between faiths.

Furthermore, we are obliged to Your Royal Highness for this gracious hospitality and of course, for Your Highness’s relentless efforts in promoting, both locally and internationally, this prudent initiative of His Majesty as well as its foundation and base represented in the “Common Word”.

There is no doubt that our common humanity is today confronted with harsh forces of injustice, disrespect and even humiliation. This is all taking place under the cover of political and religious umbrellas and in the name of All-mighty God.

We are experiencing fast growing political polarisation resulting in religious polarisation. Violence, aggression, hatred and bigotry, which produce unrest and insecurity, have taken the place of peace and justice, which produce security

and prosperity.

Nevertheless, we believe that conflict, prejudice, hatred and injustice can be turned into peace, mutual respect, love and righteousness; for the Holy Scriptures commands us to: *“turn away evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it” (Ps. 34).*

The Middle East region has historically and religiously been declared a meeting place and a host of the three monotheistic religions; that is Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This is due to the fact, that the Middle East is inextricably associated with the sacred history of these faiths.

The Council of Churches in Jordan recall and evoke that Christians constitute an essential element in the composition of the social fabric and continue to contribute effectively to various walks of life in our communities.

This fact stems from a two thousand year old heritage in which we have played key roles in the civil, cultural and political realities of the Holy Land.

This legacy was built on mutual understandings, respect and tolerance between the Church and its surroundings, especially Islam. The culmination of such understanding has been shaped and formed by “al-Ohda al-Omariya” between the two great ethno-religious leaders: Khalipha “Omar bin al-Khattab” and Our predecessor Patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronius. This almost 1400 year-old agreement is still respected until today. What is the essence of this covenant that continues to resonate its impact in our contemporary reality? It is precisely the spirit of this covenant which allowed enough room to overcome and diffuse areas of human predicament and thus allowing for harmony between Christians and Muslims to flourish as well as heal historic turbulences and political unrest.

We believe it is time for the Spirit of “The Covenant of Omar” to extend its borders and manifest itself in our modern and present times. Hence, comes His Majesty’s initiative of the



“World Interfaith Harmony Week” which was adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly back in October of 2010. We consider these honourable values, articulated by His Majesty, as extensions of “al-Ohdah al-Omariyeh” and they constitute an outcome of the direct link between the Khalifa “Omar bin al-Khattab” and Jordan’s King Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein.

Let us take advantage of all such gatherings, to encourage those who strive for peace to come and join forces with us, in order to promote peace and justice in our region and beyond, for the sake and benefit of the generations to come; for: “blessed are the peace-makers” (*Matth. 5, 9*).

We would like to jointly applaud the efforts of the Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Centre, directed by the Reverend Father Nabil Haddad and all the many volunteers that contributed to this event’s noted success.

Thank you.

**His Beatitude THEOPHILOS III**

**Patriarch of Jerusalem**

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## **HIS BEATITUDE ADDRESS IN THE OCCASION OF GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE’S VISIT TO THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCHATE.**

“Turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it”, says the Psalmist (Ps. 33/34, 14).

**“Your Beatitude, Your Eminence,**

**Reverend Brothers of the Saint James Brotherhood,**

We are here today in order to congratulate Your Beatitude, Your Eminence and the Brotherhood on the blessed occasion of the Christmas and especially the Epiphany Holy days.

We as Christian monastic orders and fraternities of the Holy Land have committed ourselves to the guardianship and service of the Holy places both in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and elsewhere.

These Holy places, which are associated with our faith in the mystery of the divine oeconomia of the Incarnate, Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus Christ, bear witness to God the Father, who is the “God of peace”, (Lom. 15:33) For according to Saint Paul “Christ’s death has accomplished peace between God and humanity, (Rom. 5:1), and peace between Jew and Gentile”, (Eph 2:14,17).

This is why Saint Paul frequently exhorts us to be at peace with one another (Rom. 14:19).

We take this opportunity to once again confirm our good intentions of seeking peace, pursuing reconciliation and living peaceably with all.

Thank you.

Blessed, prosperous and peaceful the New Year!”.

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**HIS BEATITUDE SPEECH TO THE**

# MAYOR AND THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF JERUSALEM.

Jerusalem, 26 January 2011.

Your Excellency, Mr Barkat, Mayor of Jerusalem,

Honorable Members of the Municipal Government,

Distinguished Guest,

“ Like birds hovering overhead, the LORD Almighty will shield Jerusalem; he will shield it and deliver it, he will ‘pass over’ it and will rescue it.” (Isaiah 31:5) We thank Your Excellency for this cordial invitation as we gather here by the grace of God; with all the love and commitment for the Holy City of Jerusalem.

It is an honor and a privilege to join this distinguished gathering and to convey our best wishes to all on the occasion of the New Year.

We take this opportunity to re-assure our commitment to our mission, which throughout the ages has been to first uphold Holy Places and Shrines as places of worship accessible to all the faithful, regardless of denomination and diversity; keeping the flocking of pilgrims and visitors. This in turn had tremendous impact, not only, on bringing people together and diffusing tensions, but also on economic standards by alleviating the standard of living for our local respective communities.

Our city, which is a holy shrine in itself, is equally dear and sacred to us all: Jews, Christians and Muslims; for it epitomizes the sacred history of the Holy Land. Jerusalem is the main factor for the enchantment it raises among the people of the world. But the city is also greatly valued for its

multi-cultural and ethno-religious diversity. These attributes which synthesize the identity of Jerusalem must drive us to effect the conclusion that more effort should be exerted to join our forces for turning this Holy City into a physical and spiritual bridge for peace and reconciliation.

Here the believers of the three faiths worship at their Holy Places every day. Here, at all times of the day and night, people come to pray at their shrines. Of nowhere else can it be said with such confidence that there is unceasing prayer. Here we strive with all our energy to affirm that there is room for all in Jerusalem.

Let us be reminded that this City is not an earthly reality alone, but a reflection of the heavenly Jerusalem that has enough space to accommodate all of her children with love and forgiveness; for we all are answerable to the Almighty, who in the words of the Prophet:

“... shall rejoice over you... For there shall be no one like you, O Jerusalem...” (Isaiah 62:4-7)

Thank you for this opportunity of addressing you and this gathering. We pray every day for the peace of Jerusalem, and we pray for God’s special blessing on this Holy City. May all who love her prosper.

We wish you all a very blessed and peaceful New Year.

His Beatitude

**Theophilos III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem.

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# WORDS OF GREETING TO THE DELEGATION FROM THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM.

25 January 2011

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

In this joyful season of Christmas and Epiphany, we greet you in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. At this time, we celebrate especially the love of God, the peace of God, the justice of God and the reconciliation of God for humanity. As members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher and the Brotherhood of Saint James, having oversight of our respective communities and the Holy Places, we bear witness not only to the message of Christ, but also to the role that Jerusalem plays as a model of respectful co-existence and harmonious living between different ethnic and religious groups.

As a consequence, more than ever before, no matter the size of our respective communities, our life and ministry as Churches and as guardians of the Holy Places are of crucial importance for our respective Churches and peoples to show forth the universal significance of Jerusalem.

We denounce every form of discord, and we must all work to be examples of peace, non-violence, reconciliation and true *symbiosis*.

As Saint Ignatios of Antioch says in his Letter to the Ephesians, "there is nothing better than peace, in which all strife of things is heaven and things on earth is abolished". (13:2).

To prefer peace over violence it does not imply giving up legitimate rights and privileges.

I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Old City police Commander Mr. Aviroif for his efforts to keep order and peace both for the city and the Holy Sepulcher.

May this blessed season see a new commitment to this peace, which is the joy of God and the will of God for the World.

Happy and Blessed New Year.

His Beatitude

**Theophilos III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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## **RUSSIAN SPEAKING ORTHODOX BELEIVERS FROM BE'ER SHEVA VISIT THE PATRIARCHATE.**

On Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> / 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2011, a team comprising of fifty Russian speaking Orthodox believers from the city of Be'er Sheva in Israel, visited His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III. They are among those who immigrated to various towns and villages of Israel after the collapse of the Soviet Union. His Eminence Theophylaktos Archbishop of Jordan and Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Aristovoulos have assumed the pastoral responsibility of these believers alongside His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III and the Holy and Sacred Synod.

The aforementioned Russian speakers from Be'er Sheva attended a liturgy in the morning officiated by the Archimandrite Father Aristovoulos in the Holy Church of Saint Nicolas of the Patriarchate in the Old City of Jerusalem. After the Holy Liturgy they visited His Beatitude, Who blessed them and wished them health and strength for the New Year. He assured them that the Patriarchate cares for them pastorally and that it is striving for the construction of a Holy Church for them at their city of domicile, Be'er Sheva. His Beatitude then bestowed Jerusalemite benedictions upon them.

### **Chief Secretary's Office.**

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## **THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GREECE MR. DEMITRIOS DOLLIS VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE.**

On Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup> / 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2011, the day of the Epiphany, after the ceremony of Sanctifying the water at the Church of Resurrection, the Catholicon of the Church was Sanctified. The Holy Liturgy then took place at the Holy Sepulchre following a reception for the pilgrims who congregated at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. At the Hall of the Throne His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III received Mr. Demitrios Dollis who, in his capacity as the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, was on an official visit to the State of Israel. Mr. Dollis was

accompanied by the Secretary General of his Ministry, Mrs. Niki Kamva, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr. Sotirios Athanassiou and his assistant, the Consul Mrs. Aspasia Mitsi.

Within the framework of this visit, the Deputy Minister said to His Beatitude: «It is with much respect and deep emotion that I make this first official visit to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem following the one at the Ecumenical Patriarchate. I consider it my duty to visit the Patriarchate and also to convey the wishes of the Prime Minister of Greece Mr. George Papandreou before the start of my appointments tomorrow in the State of Israel».

His Beatitude replied to the Deputy Minister: «Your visit has great significance for the Patriarchate because it is not ceremonial or formal but indicative of your interest in the different religions and the Church. This fits also with the fact that yesterday, along with other leaders of the Christian Churches you were a guest of the British Consul in Jerusalem, Sir Vincent Fean, at a dinner in honour of Mr. Alistair Burt, who demonstrated lively interest in religious matters and concerns for the Christians in the Middle East».

The Minister then said: «The language, the civilization and our creed are the three elements that have always united us. I say this having served in Australia for thirty years and having negotiated the exit of the Palestinians from the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem some years back».

«For this action and your benevolent attitude Mr. Deputy Minister,» said His Beatitude, «We have decided to honour You with the Medal of the Higher Taxiarch of the Holy Sepulchre and to give a gold cross to Your assistant, Mrs. Niki Kamva, who has previously served with dedication at the Consulate General (of Greece) in Jerusalem.».

Visibly moved and showing his gratitude, Mr. Dollis presented



His Beatitude with an ornate encolpion.

After the event at the Patriarchate, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, accompanied by Fathers, members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, hosted a meal in honour of the Deputy Minister and His escort at the American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem.

**Chief Secretary's Office.**

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