VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE 2024_03_06

On the morning of Wednesday, February 22/March 6, 2024, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received:

- 1. The distinguished professor of the Arabic language literature and steward of the Kufr-Smea Community of the northern Israel region of Acre Ptolemais, Mr Youssef Nasser, with his lawyer son, Mr Kais, who thanked His Beatitude for His historic visit. Thanks to His many efforts, the newly built Church of Saints Constantine and Helen hosted the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy, which solved the long-standing conflict in the Community of Kufr Smea.
 - 2. Representatives of the youth of the Armenian Community of Jerusalem, who expressed their gratitude for His Beatitude's support in the problem created for the Armenians by the opaque multi-year lease of land within the borders of the Armenian Community.

From Secretariat-General

VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE

On Saturday, February 18/March 2, 2024, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received the people attending the Churches of the Community of Taybe, a county neighboring Ramallah, and was informed about the ecclesiastical, liturgical, social, and other various activities of their Community.

From Secretariat-General

VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE

On Tuesday, February 14th / 27th 2024, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received:

- The German Archaeologist Dr.Dr.Dr. h.c. Dieter Vieweger for a discussion on the continuation of the archaeological excavations in the area of the hill of Holy Zion, where the Last Supper and Pentecost took place and where the Patriarchal School is housed.
- 2. The new Ambassador of Georgia to Israel Mr Zaza Kandelaki for the credentials at the beginning of his diplomatic service as the representative of the country of Georgia in Israel and for the continuation of the relations of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem with the country of Georgia and the expression of thanks, because the Patriarchate agreed for the establishment of a cultural centre on the Eastern bank of the place of the Baptism of the Jordan River, with the agreement of the Jordanian Government. On the subject of the establishment of this cultural centre, His Beatitude said that the Patriarchate agreed on the condition of safeguarding its rights in the Holy Land, for which the Ambassador committed himself, thanking him for the visit.
- 3. The Priest of the Zababde Community of the Samaria region Fr Lucas with his wife to discuss matters of the Zababde parish.

From Secretariat-General

VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE

On Monday, February 13/26, 2024, His Beatitude received:

- 1. His Eminence Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra, Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Cyprus for issues of the Exarchy of the Holy Sepulchre in Cyprus.
- 2. Mrs Maria Zozonaki, working in the Jerusalem department of the European Union, for a discussion of support issues for the Patriarchate.
- 3. Fr Yiannick Provost, Priest of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in France, with his wife Anastasia, who came to visit the Holy Places.

From Secretariat-General

VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE

On Saturday, February 11 / 24, 2024, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received:

- 1. A twenty-member group of the Turan Community of northern Israel led by their priest Fr Nektarios Raja and the Church attendants of this Community, who sought the blessing of His Beatitude and His moral and material support. His Beatitude responded to their request.
- 2. The Inspector of Arabic Schools of the Patriarchate in Israel and Palestinian Authority and former member of the Jordanian Parliament, Mr Yonde Kawas and Mr George Sahar, working in the department of the World Council of Churches for matters of schools and the Patriarchate's

cooperation with the World Council of Churches.

- 3. A group of thirty people from the youth of Kufr Yassif, a county in the north of Israel, led by their priest Fr Sabba Mahouli, the Elder and their son, who presented to His Beatitude in audio-visual material with the youth activities of their parish and expressed their gratitude. His Beatitude blessed them and strengthened them with a financial blessing.
- 4. A three-member group of Trustees of the Zdeide Community of Northern Israel under their Priest Fr Antonio Azini, who discussed issues of their Community and praised His Beatitude for His initiative in the solution of the Kufr Smea Community issue of northern Israel.

From Secretariat-General

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF BULGARIA VISIT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, February 9/20, 2024, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received the Bulgarian Ambassador to Israel Ms Slavena Gergova and the head diplomatic representative Mr Vesselin Delchev.

These honourable representatives of Bulgaria were informed by His Beatitude on the centuries-long and today's multifaceted work of the Patriarchate, purely pastoral, and ecclesiastical, but also political and peaceful. He also informed about the Synodical system of administration of the Orthodox Church and the relations between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Patriarchate of Bulgaria.

From Secretariat-General

THE KAZAKHSTAN AMBASSADOR TO ISRAEL AND CYPRUS VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday the 8th/21st of February 2024, the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Israel and Cyprus, Mr Satybaldy Burshakov, along with his wife and a group of associates, visited the Patriarchate, as he retires from his office.

His Excellency the Ambassador was received by our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Holy Sepulchre Fathers and thanked His Beatitude, for the excellent cooperation with his country in interfaith and peace issues and His visits to conferences organized in Kazakhstan. The Ambassador gave His Beatitude the highest award of his country.

In response, His Beatitude awarded Mr Burshakov the medal of the Grand Commander of the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre in appreciation of his cooperation and his interest in the Patriarchate, thanked him, and wished him the continuation of this cooperation for the maintenance of peace in the Holy Land and the whole world. His Beatitude also gave Mr Burshakov's wife an excellent painting of the city of Jerusalem

VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE

On Tuesday, February 7/20, 2024, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received:

1. The Ambassador of Egypt in Ramallah, Mr Ihab Soliman.



2. Representation of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS).



3. A group of members of our flock from the county of Shahnin and the county of Pkea in northern Israel.

From Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE OPENS THE CHURCH OF 'THE THREE HIERARCHS' IN DIBEEN IN JORDAN

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Holy City, together with His Highness Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad, Chief Advisor to His Majesty the King of Jordan for Religious

and Cultural Affairs, opened on Sunday, February 18, the Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church, within the Orthodox Center project in Dibeen in Jerash Governorate, Jordan.

The opening of the new church was attended by Her Highness Princess Maryam Ghazi and the Patriarchal Representative of Amman His Eminence Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakopolis, who said that the opening of the church coincides with the Kingdom's celebrations of the silver jubilee of His Majesty the King of Jordan, King Abdullah II, stressing that Jordan is a living example of religious coexistence, and a haven for safety, security and stability.

Archbishop Christophoros continued that "the church will meet the needs of young people, and will be a place for holding conferences, meeting intellectually and culturally, and serving the local community." He also expressed his thanks for the generous donation made by Mr. Issa Nassif Odeh to complete the construction of the church.

The Church of the Three Hierarchs is the first in Jordan to bear this name, and it is in the middle of the Orthodox Center project adjacent to the Monastery of the Virgin Mary, Fountain of Life in Dibeen, and it was named after Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory, and Saint John Chrysostom 'the Golden Mouth'.

The new church also features geometric designs that reflect the traditional Jordanian building art in the region, with a Byzantine architectural spirit.

The church of the Three Hierarchs to hold its first divine liturgy next Friday, February 23, with attendance from officials and local believers from various governorates of the Kingdom.









VISIT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES TO THE

PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, February 17, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Holy City, welcomed Dr Jerry Pillay, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), at the Jerusalem Patriarchate's headquarters. The meeting was attended by the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, including; Cardenal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem; Fr. Francesco Patton, Custodian of the Holy Land; Archbishop Hosam Naoum, Head of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem, and representatives from the Armenian Patriarchate and the Coptic Church in Jerusalem.

The visit of the General Secretary comes during difficult times the Holy Land is going through, therefore Dr Pillay expressed his commitment to ask the millions of Christians, who are members of the Council worldwide, to increase their prayers and support to the churches and the people in the Holy Land, and for peace and reconciliation amid the tension between the different sides.

In recognition of his support, His Beatitude honoured the General Secretary with the medal of the Commander of the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

In addition, the Church leaders each took the opportunity to present the General Secretary with the difficulties and challenges facing Christians, churches and their properties, i.e. the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane, that are often affected by the improper actions of radical elements.

During the meeting, His Beatitude took the opportunity to address Dr Pillay on behalf of the church leaders as follows:

"Dr Pillay,
Beloved Members of your Delegation,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We welcome you warmly to the Holy City of Jerusalem and to our Patriarchate, and we wish to express our gratitude to you for your visit at this difficult and complicated time for all the peoples of this region, and especially for the Christian community of the Holy Land.

Your visit is of such importance, for you bring with you the attention of the World Council of Churches and its members to the situation here.

In these critical times, we Christians, both in the Holy Land and around the world, have a mission to uphold the message of the Gospel, which is stronger and more enduring than our human weakness. It is the Gospel that speaks of reconciliation and peace, and this must be our constant commitment. War and violence are always the consequence of human failure. But Christ and his Church proclaim a different truth. In theological terms we affirm that hatred and darkness have no hypostasis; it is only light and life that have a true and enduring existence.

Death is not our mission. God-given life is at the heart of the kerygma of the Gospel. As our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, I came that they may have life and have it in all its fulness (John 10:10). We are called to be united in our moral obligation and mission to uphold the sacred values of peace and reconciliation. As we learn from the Prophet Isaiah,

They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.

(Is. 2:4)

This is our common human vocation and our common human destiny. The call of the Gospel is to turn the instruments of

war into the instruments of peace and reconciliation.

Our historical experience in the Holy Land is a powerful and tangible example that synagogue, church, and mosque may exist side by side in mutual respect. Ours is a long-standing multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious landscape which has given rise to a unique civilization, in which Jerusalem remains the beacon of hope for the whole world. There has always been room in the Holy Land for all those who call this region our home.

There is no military solution to establish the future of the Holy Land and the wider Middle East. The pattern of disputes, retribution, and retaliation has brought us no nearer to peace and security, and all these frames of reference are bankrupt. For it is written, Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21).

With this in mind, we as the Heads of Churches in the Holy Land continue to pray and call for an end to the war so that the humanitarian crisis may be brought to an end, displaced populations may return to their homes, and essential help be brought to all innocent victims caught up in this conflict who are without the basic necessities of life.

The present conflict is clear evidence from which we have learnt that that we must face the future with a new resolve. We believe that this is the only way to forge a new pathway to true and lasting peace and reconciliation.

The Heads of the Churches remain firm in our opposition to the escalation of violence. We are convinced, as is the World Council of Churches, that it is in upholding and promoting the fundamental values of the Gospel that a way forward will be found, and we invite our fellow Christians, as well as all people of good will around, to join us in this sacred mission. For it is written, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Mt 5:9).

As you come to the Holy Land as pilgrims of peace in a time of war, we pray that our risen Lord, the conqueror of death, may bless your work and your endeavours in the cause of the Gospel of peace and reconciliation.

Thank You."







