### 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

From Secretariat-General

### **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."









## THE FEAST OF SAINT SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, February 3rd/16th 2024, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the commemoration of Saint Simeon the God-receiver in his Holy Monastery in West Jerusalem near the Monastery of the Holy Cross.

On this holiday, the Church honours Saint Simeon the God-

receiver, as he especially ministered in the mystery of the Meeting of Jesus in the Temple, when he recognized Him as the Saviour and exclaimed: "mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, And the glory of thy people Israel" and asked to depart from this world: "now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word", (Lk. 2, 29-32).

For this feast, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy in the above Church, with concelebrants their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, and Methodios of Tabor, Holy Sepulchre Hieromonks, with first in rank the Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, the Archimandrites Claudius and Ieronymos, Vassian of the Russian Spiritual Mission to Jerusalem (MISSIA), Priest Simeon, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacons Eulogios, Dositheos and others. The chanting was delivered by Fr Hanna Awad-Antoniou, the Patriarchal School Students and Mr Fadi Abed Al Nour, in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos and the prayerful participation of monks, nuns and members of the Greek Parish.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2,29-32), the Elder Simeon exclaimed.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

The Holy Spirit, Who was with the righteous and pious Simeon

has gathered us all today in this holy place where the Saint's tomb lies, to honour his sacred commemoration in joy, and to celebrate the Meeting of the baby Jesus and our Lord and God and Saviour Christ in the Temple.

The Elder Simeon is distinguished among the rest of the holy prophets and people of the Holy Bible because he was deemed worthy to receive in his arms the "salvation of God", namely Christ, that is why he says: ""Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2,29-32).

Interpreting these words, among the established Fathers of the Church, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "It was prepared for Christ even before the beginning of the world, and it was revealed in the end of times". Zigavinos says: "You (God) has provided the salvation before all, so that it may be visible to all". Origen marks the wholistic nature of the salvation, saying: "This which they saw is the salvation not only for the Jews but for the whole world...before the face not only for one nation, not only for Israel but before the face of all the peoples".

Indeed, "the salvation of God", whom the righteous Simeon's eyes saw, refers to the wholeness of the salvation of the human race. And this is so, because "the salvation of God" is no other than the mystery of the Divine Providence, namely the Incarnation of God the Word, as the God-bearing Church Fathers explain. "He called salvation the Incarnation of the Only Begotten Son", Saint Theophylaktos says. "Salvation does the Bible call the Christ of God", Saint Basil the Great says. And according to Saint Athanasios the Great, "salvation means the incarnate presence of God the Word".

Moreover, the prophetic words of the pious Simeon, "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel"

(Luke 2,32) testify that the Incarnate God the Word, through the pure flesh of the Ever-Virgin and Theotokos Mary is the presence of the divine light in the world of ignorance and idolatry. That is why the psalmist proclaims: "In Thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36,10). The Lord clearly says in His preaching, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8,12). "Christ is the light of the nations because He was bound to enlighten with His teaching the nations that lay in darkness", Origen says. "He became light to those who were in darkness and deluded, and had fallen into the devil's hand", Saint Cyril of Alexandria says. "Being a light to light the Gentiles and those blinded by fallacies; he calls revelation the ability to see again clearly; to the glory and prosperity of Your people Israel. Glory to them was the sprouting from them according to the human nature. Indeed, His redeeming incarnation enlightened the nations with the knowledge of God and virtue, while it glorified the Jews because He became a native to them (PG 129,893A), Zigavinos says.

Moved by the Holy Spirit, the Elder Simeon told Mariam, the mother of Jesus, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against" (Luke 2,34). Interpreting this word, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "Emanuel is laid by God the Father a chief cornerstone, elect, precious (c.f. 1 Peter, 2,6). But those who believed in Him were not put to shame; whereas the unbelievers who did not manage to see this mystery in Christ, fell and were crushed. God the Father said again: "Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Romans 9,33, PG 72,505B).

Indeed, my dear brethren, since Christ, the Son and Word of God the Father came into the history of man, He became the reason for the fall and the rise of many; fall to those who

did not believe in Him, and rise for those who accepted and believed in Him. That is why up to this day Christ remains "a sign which shall be spoken against" (Luke 2,34). That is what Saint Paul also means when he says, "Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached" (Phil. 1,18). According to Saint John the Evangelist, this precisely "is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (John 3,19).

To our question, what is that which prevents people from seeing the light of truth, namely Christ? The answer is, two things; on the one hand, it is the free will of man, and on the other, man's evil deeds. For this the God-inspired Apostle Peter says: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Peter 2,24). This means that no one can rely on Christ as the Saviour unless he has abandoned sin and lives with "righteousness".

The way to be free from sin is our encounter with Christ according to the righteous Simeon's example, who "received Christ in his arms" (c.f. Luke 2,28). Our Holy Church calls us to this cause through the hymnographer's voice: "Come let us as well, with songs inspired by God, go together to meet Christ and let us receive Him Whose salvation Simeon hath now beheld" (Vespers, Sticharon 3). "Let us pay heed so that the Lord will not find us asleep", Athanasios the Great says.

Our meeting, my dear brethren, with our Saviour Christ is always feasible within the Church, through prayer and the cultivation of the virtues of humility and repentance, especially through participation in the sacrament of the Eucharist, where the one who has a clear heart is vivified and deified on the one hand, and sees through the eyes of the soul the salvation of God, that is, Christ, on the other. Amen. Many peaceful returns!"

Before the Dismissal, His Beatitude blessed the boiled wheat and held a Trisagion on the completion of nine days since the departure of the blessed Hegoumen Archimandrite Theodoritos, who served for forty-five years with devotion to the Holy Monastery and this Greek Community.

After the Divine Liturgy, Hierodeacon Simeon and nun Maria, who devotedly served the departed father Theodoritos for many years, hosted a reception for the Patriarchal Entourage and the congregation.

From Secretariat-General

#### **VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE**

On Tuesday, January 31/February 13, 2024, His Beatitude received:

1. The Head of the Russian Mission to Jerusalem (MISSIA) Archimandrite Vasianos for the presentation and blessing of the new Hieromonk, to serve in the Monastery of Archimandrite Tychon. His Beatitude blessed his stay and wished him a blessed ministry.



2. Later in the morning, His Beatitude held the blessing of the water in the Ecclesiastical Court of First Instance and blessed and praised its President, Archimandrite Nifon, for his work and judicial conscientiousness as well as for the renovation work in the Court building.



On February 1/14, 2024, His Beatitude received the Lutheran Bishop in Jerusalem His Eminence Sani Azar, accompanying the Head of the Church of Denmark with a small group.

His Beatitude informed them about the pilgrimage and ecclesiastical work completed by the Patriarchate in

cooperation with the other Christian Churches for the maintenance of the Status Quo and the strengthening of the Christian presence in the Holy Land and in particular in Jerusalem.



From Secretariat-General

## THE PATRIARCH OF THE HOLY CITY PRESIDES OVER DIVINE LITURGY IN THE VILLAGE OF

### KUFR SUMEI

Kufr Sumei, Western Galilee

The Holy Land

February 10, 2024

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, presided over a divine liturgy at the newly inaugurated Church of Saints Constantine and Helena in the village of Kufr Sumei, on Saturday morning, February 10th.

His Beatitude was accompanied by His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, and His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina as they were warmly welcomed by the local community of the village, including a large number of sheikhs of the well-known tribe. Head of the Kufr Sumei local council, Mr. Yasser Ghadhban and members of the council welcomed the Patriarchal envoy along with the heads and members of the local pastoral councils of the Diocese of Akko. The Greek Consul in Haifa, Mr. Kostas Zenovius, and His Excellency the Consul of the Russian Federation, Mr. Dr. Amin Safiya, were among the attendees of the liturgy with a large gathering of local Christians from the cities and villages of Galilee.

Following the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude gave a speech highlighting the necessity of preserving the cohesion between brothers of the same family, that is the church, the warm and safe home that brings together believers and unites them on the rock of love and harmony, stressing the preservation of the good social fabric in the village of Kufr Sumei.

Later at the church hall, The patriarchal representative in the city of Acre, Archimandrite Silwanos Hanouneh, opened his speech by welcoming His Beatitude and Their Eminences to the village of Kufr Sumei, congratulating the parish and expressing his satisfaction with this reconciliation that took place today after many decades. He then presented the head of the local council of Kufr Sumei, who delivered a moving speech expressing his joy at this event, singing the words of Jesus Christ about love and unity, "That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." (John 17:21).

Then Mr. Bassam Nasser also welcomed, with ultimate joy, the honorable delegation and the attendance, congratulating the parish on this achievement that they had long awaited, thanking everyone who sought and worked to make this day happen. Later, Mr. Youssef Nasser, continued, citing the words of Jesus Christ about harmony and unity, which brought together the joyful celebration with the blessing of His Beatitude and the tireless efforts he made to reach this blessed moment. Mr. Youssef Nasser and his sons played a major role in supervising the construction of the church.

Soon after the speeches, everyone was invited to a meal offered by the parish in honor of His Beatitude and the accompanying delegation. Warmth and joy filled the room, depicting thus the true symbol of the good parishioners who followed the words of the Lord, praise be to Him: "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23).

His Beatitude's Sermon before the Holy Communion follows below:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133,1), the psalmist proclaims.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians,

The grace and peace of God has gathered us all in your beautiful town of Kufr Smea to celebrate the Holy Eucharist and thus declare in the common Chalice of the sacred body and blood of our Saviour Christ our ecclesiastical communion and unity.

We do this according to the fatherly advice of Saint Paul to the Ephesians: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4,1-4).

Stressing the idea of unity, Saint Paul says that God the Father "gave him [Christ] to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1,22-23). "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12,27), "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12,13) he writes to the Corinthians.

Moreover, realizing the danger and the unexpected malice of division, the wise Paul urges the Corinthians again in fervent love: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1,10).

Indeed, my brethren, the schisms and the hatred tear apart the Church in various places, which is our Christian community, resulting in competing groups that contradict the fact that the Church is the body of Christ. Moreover, the schisms and the divisions oppose the mission of the Church in the world. And the mission of the Church is no other than the witness of

Christ's love. According to Saint John the Evangelist, the quarrels and divisions tarnish the testimony of the Church for Christ, since Christians are recognized as disciples of Christ by their mutual love. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another" (John 13,35).

According to Saint Paul, the division is the body of Christ, the Church, reveals the works of the flesh, which feed sin (c.f. Gal. 5,19). On the contrary, the unity in Christ of those who believe in Him is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5,22-23).

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133,1), the psalmist says. Yes, my dear brothers and sisters, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church in general, and the Church of Jerusalem in particular are the dwelling place of God. "Rejoice, Holy Zion, Mother of the Churches, dwelling place of God", Saint John of Damascus proclaims.

And the Church is the dwelling place of God because the "great mystery of reverence" was given to it. Moreover, in the Church and through the Church we receive "the fruit of the Holy Spirit" (Gal. 5,22). For this, the blessed Paul says in his letter to Timothy: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3,14-15). And in detail, I write these to you to let you know how one should live and behave in the house and family of God, that is, the Church of God, Who is a living God. And the Church is another pillar and strong foundation, which upholds the truth.

This "house of God" is also the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and dwellers in it are the pious members of its

Christian flock, who live in the Holy Land.

In other words, the Patriarchate has proven to be the feeding mother, who, as the Scripture says, found its people in a desert land, and in the waste-howling wilderness; it led them about, instructed them, it kept them as the apple of its eye (c.f. Deuteronomy 32,10). And the chief and finisher of our faith is Jesus Christ (c.f. Hebrews 12,2), Who says, "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6,37).

For this reason, we have been gathered and called upon today, all of us, in your respected community, my dear brothers and sisters, to declare Christ's love to one another, and the unity of "a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6,12), namely, the unity of faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

The God-inspired advice of Saint Paul also calls us to the same cause: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3,8-10). In other words, the ultimate goal of the one who puts on the new renewed man is to progress in the perfect knowledge of God, Who is the redeeming truth. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18,37), "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8,32), the Lord says.

How, therefore, my brethren, can we be free, when we carry in our hearts only hatred and malice against our fellow citizens, especially against our brothers and sisters in Christ? For this reason, Christ urges us: "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11,25).

Indeed, today's liturgical gathering of clergy and laity and the members of this community is a sacred work of action. Because, as Saint Paul preaches, "For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14,18-19).

In conclusion, we would like to thank those who strove in zeal for the construction of this marvellous Church, Mr Yusef Nasser and his sons, and all those who contributed to its beautification, either morally or materially. Amen. Many peaceful returns!"

His Beatitude's address at the meal follows below:

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1,22), Saint James the Brother of God asks.

Reverend Holy Fathers and brothers in Christ,

Respected members of our community in Kufr Smea

We rend glory and thanksgiving to the Holy Triune God on this blessed gathering of clergy and people today in your multicultural town.

The purpose of the Holy Eucharistic gathering which we celebrated in the Holy and bloodless Altar, has been and is still the application of the Lord's words: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13,34). And, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14,27).

The lack and absence of love and peace in God and in the world

are the main reasons for divisions, quarrels (Gal. 5,20) and wars (James, 4,1).

The mission of the Church in the world, which is the body of Christ, is no other than the evangelism of Christ's commandments about love and peace, which [commandments] are the prerequisites of unity in the Holy Spirit. "There is nothing that angers God more than the division of the Church. A holy man said: not even a martyr's blood can erase such a sin", Saint Chrysostom says.

While we participate in the great sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, we participate in Christ's Resurrection, therefore, we are called to declare this joyful event along with the hymnographer, proclaiming: "It is the day of Resurrection; let us be radiant for the festival, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, 0 brethren, even to those that hate us: Let us forgive all things on the Resurrection; and thus let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, by death hath He trampled down death, and on those in the graves hath He bestowed life" (Pentecostarion, Sunday of Pascha, Stichera, Glory). Amen. Many peaceful returns!"

















### **VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE**

On Wednesday, January 25/February 7, 2024, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem was visited by:

 Mr Yusef Nasser and his sons in view of His Beatitude's visit to Kufr Smea next Saturday, January 28 / February 10,



2. The priest Nektarios and the Commissioners of the Community of Pkea of the Ptolemais-Acre region, in gratitude to His Beatitude, for the provided moral and material support to them from the Patriarchate.



3. Fr Elias, Head of the Rame Community of northern Israel with his family in gratitude for the help they have received from the Patriarchate.



#### **VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE**

On Tuesday, January 24/February 6, 2024, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyril of Kazan of the Moscow Patriarchate, who was accompanied by his priests and the representative of the Russian Spiritual Mission to Jerusalem (MISSIA) Archimandrite Nikon.

In this meeting, His Beatitude presented to His Eminence the pastoral, pilgrimage and pacifying work carried out by the Patriarchate amid the ongoing and raging war in Gaza, where our Patriarchate in the Monastery of Saint Porphyrios grants asylum to 400 members of its Community under the Most Reverend Archbishop Alexios of Tiberias and Hieromonk Sila.

His Holiness Kyril informed His Beatitude about his Pastoral activity in the Holy Metropolis of Kazan and asked and received from His Beatitude the normal permission to officiate at the Holy Shrines during his stay here.

From Secretariat-General

## HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AT THE MONASTERY OF THE HOLY CROSS

Around noon on Monday, January 23 / February 5, 2024, H.H.B.

our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited the Holy Monastery of the Holy Cross, the Hegoumen of which is the Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos and inspected the ongoing work under the expert conservator from Cyprus, Mr Stavros Andreou, and gave him the required instructions for housing the Centre for Theological Research, the establishment of which has been decided by the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

#### From Secretariat-General