

MEETING BETWEEN THE COPTIC AND ETHIOPIAN CHURCHES AT THE PATRIARCHATE

At noon of Wednesday, the 21st of July/3rd of August 2016, representatives of the Coptic and Ethiopian Churches in Jerusalem met at the Patriarchate.

The representations consisted of the Coptic Archbishop in Jerusalem, His Eminence Antonious, and the Head of the Ethiopian Church in Jerusalem, His Eminence Bab Enbakom and their Entourages – Primate from Egypt for the Copts and representatives of the Egyptian and Ethiopian Embassies in Tel Aviv.

The meeting took place on the initiative and invitation of H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, with an eye to launching a dialogue on the resolution of the long and very acute status quo problem between the Coptic and Ethiopian Monasteries. The Monasteries are adjacent to the Church of the Resurrection on the east side and to Abraham Monastery on the north side. At the meeting, His Beatitude addressed guests in English, see link: <http://jp-newsgate.net/en/2016/08/03/25579>

In His address, Patriarch Theophilos underlined the need to overcome psychological obstacles in order to bring down the walls of differences and allow the beginning of a dialogue for reconciliation and the resolution of the problem.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/KTVM4tgML4I>



ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO THE NEW CUSTOS OF THE HOLY LAND.

30 July 2016

Your Paternity, dear Father Francesco,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of our respective Brotherhoods,

We greet you with great joy in the name of Christ as you assume your new ministry as Custos of the Holy Land in succession to Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, who has recently been appointed the Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate by His Holiness Pope Francis. We enjoyed a close and mutually supportive relationship with Father Pierbattista, and we look forward to deepening the relationship between our two Brotherhoods under your spiritual leadership of the Custody.

Our Brotherhoods have been called by Divine Providence to be the guardians and servants of the Holy City of Jerusalem and all the Holy Sites, and to ensure that they remain places of worship and spiritual refreshment that are accessible to all without distinction. With respect to the City of Jerusalem, we work to ensure the integrity of her Christian character. The witness of the three Communities of the Patriarchate, the Custody, and the Armenian Patriarchate, as well as of the other Churches and Christian communities, to this spiritual mission is a sign of hope to a world in darkness, despair, and

confusion. We are especially encouraged by the deepening collaboration of the three Communities in our endeavor to restore the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, and we hope that this is a fresh beginning of the more extensive work of the general restoration of the Church of the Anastasis.

This project to restore the holiest of sites in the Christian world is of supreme importance not simply for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre itself and for our Communities, but for all people of good will everywhere, and especially for our troubled region. Here, where the great mystery of our faith, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, occurred, where earth and heaven met, where death was at last trampled down, and where life is promised to all, thousands of pilgrims from every nation around the world come each year, "as the deer who longs for flowing streams" (Ps 41 [42]:1), to be renewed in hope and in faith. Here the uncreated Light shines out to every heart that is open to truth, and here people are able to drink of the deep water brooks of the soul.

Today, more than before, our pastoral mission is of primary importance. For we are called not only to guard and serve the undeniable testimony of our faith, that is, the Holy Places, but to guide and lead our flocks in a part of the world where Christians, together with other innocents, are threatened and where persecution still occurs. We who are the Christian leaders of this Holy Land continue to have a mission of promoting reconciliation and mutual respect between the different religious communities and political entities of our region.

As we congratulate you on your new responsibilities, we welcome you to this unique ministry and we assure you of our prayers for you personally and for your Fraternity. May God grant you the humble spirit and patient endurance of your patron, Saint Francis, and support you through many years of

fruitful service.

Please accept this gift as a token of our appreciation and love in Christ.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

THE NEW CUSTOS OF THE HOLY LAND VISITS THE PATRIARCH

On Saturday, the 17th/30th of July 2016, the Custos of the Holy Land, f. Francesco, accompanied by the Franciscan f. Serge, visited the Patriarchate. The new Custos was welcomed by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of the visit, f. Francesco thanked Patriarch Theophilos for their collaboration as regards the restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre and also for their meeting at the Patriarchate.

His Beatitude congratulated the Custos on his new duties and extended wishes that their collaboration be harmonious as the Patriarch's relation with his predecessor, for the benefit of peaceful coexistence between Christian Communities in the Holy Shrines, especially in Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

His Beatitude's address in English can be reached here:
<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2016/07/30/25503>

The Custos thanked the Patriarch for the honour of meeting with him and for the present he received, an icon of Theotokos Jerusalemite, asking for Her mediation in pursuing a solid collaboration for the completion of restoration works on the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/obJZlMKbn2c>



INAUGURATION OF THE PATRIARCHATE'S HOUSING SETTLEMENT IN BEIT JALA

At noon of Sunday, the 11th/24th of July 2016, the inauguration ceremony of the Patriarchate's housing settlement in Beit Jala, near Bethlehem, took place.

The settlement was founded following a Synodic decision and based on an agreement with a specific company for the construction of residences available to the poor and newlyweds at a low price.

The entire project represents the Patriarchate's contribution to members of its flock towards the resolution of the housing problem.

Patriarch Theophilos visited the site, accompanied by Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Archimandrite Mathew, f. Issa Mousleh and Professor A. Moropoulou of the NTUA.

During the ceremony, the Patriarch laid the foundation stone.

The event continued at the Orthodox Society of the town of Nanta Orthodox.

There, Vice-Mayor William Saer addressed guests, as well as the Chairman of the Committee on Christian Affairs of the Palestinian Autonomy, Mr Hanna Amire, and Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah.

The speakers underlined the significance of the project for decent and inexpensive housing of the locals, pointing out the Patriarchate's contribution to this end.

The Patriarch's address was delivered in Arabic by f. Issa Mousleh:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/>

The president of the project, Mr Abu Abarra, bestowed medals on His Beatitude, Mr Amire and the Chairman, hosting guests to lunch.

From the Secretariat-General

PRESENTATION OF ONGOING

RESTORATION WORKS ON THE AEDICULA OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

Before noon on Thursday, the 8th/21st of July 2016, a presentation was made of the ongoing restoration works on the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, in accordance with a study conducted by the Interdisciplinary Team of the National Technical University of Athens.

The presentation was made by Professor Antonia Moropoulou for the members of the Steering Committee in the presence of H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Custodian of the Holy Land, f. Francesco, and his attendants, fathers Makora and Sergios, and the representatives of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, fathers Samuel and Curion. To the members of the Committee and the Representatives of the three Major Communities, Ms Moropoulou presented on screen all the aspects of the work completed so far as well as the scheduled restoration works based on the designated scientific methods and compatible restoration materials.

Of special interest was the presentation of the findings revealed by the removal of marble stones as well as the tackling of problems pointed out through scientific documentation and appraisal on behalf of the NTUA's Interdisciplinary Team.

In the second part of the presentation, the project's manager, Mr Nikolaos Moropoulos, set out the donations made so far towards covering the restoration's cost, and the sum required for the completion of works, scheduled to take place during Easter 2017. On the conclusion of the presentation, His Beatitude, accompanied by the Custodian and his attendants, and the Armenian Patriarchate's representatives, convened at

the Project Owners Committee, where He addressed participants in English, see link: <http://www/jp-newsgate.net/en/2016/07/21/25285>

To see the complete presentation of restoration works on the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, please press here.

With the blessings and unanimity of the three Christian Communities, the project carries on.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/XJ-U5ApfXiI>



HIS BEATITUDE ADDRESS AT THE MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE RESTORATION WORK OF THE SACRED EDICULE OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER.

Your Excellency Father Francesco,

Your Beatitude Patriarch Nourhan,

Your Eminences,

Dr Moropoulou and the Respected Members of the Scientific Team,

Esteemed Delegates of the World Monuments Fund, Beloved

Members of our respective Brotherhoods, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We welcome you to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and to this important meeting in the ongoing work of the restoration of the Sacred Edicule. We have gathered today the steering committee in order to evaluate the progress of the work so far, and to shape a strategy for the work ahead that will be based on the actual data that has so far been collected as well as the resultant judgments and concerns of the experts.

They have confirmed what they had foreseen in their explorations, especially in their investigation with non-destructive endoscopic cameras and other state-of-the-art scientific methods. Now the work of our experts is focused on the critical area of the eastern part of the Sacred Edicule where the Copts hold their rites.

We are thankful to our Lord who has given our three Communities the grace us to understand that we have a common mission is to protect and guard this holy place primarily as a place of worship. We have seen a remarkable spirit of collaboration between the three Communities of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate, the Franciscan Custody, and the Armenian Patriarchate in our joint focus on the urgency of this project.

This is good in itself, and is a sign to the world of hope and unity. We have been entrusted by Divine Providence with the responsibility to be the guardians and the servants of the Holy Places, and our collaboration in this project represents the fruit of this faithful diakonia.

We have tried our best so far to facilitate first that the usual religious services of our Communities that take place in the Edicule have been able to proceed as normal. At the same

time we have maintained access for pilgrims even during work hours. We assure everyone that services will continue throughout the project, and we are clear that the existing Status Quo will not be changed or altered in any way. This is of crucial significance, as we are not restoring a monument; we are preserving a place of worship, where worship must continue even as restoration takes place.

We must also thank the National Technical University of Athens and the team of experts under the direction of Professor Antonia Moropoulou. Their scientific report is the firm basis for the present restoration work, and is a significant advance in our knowledge of this holy site.

We would like to take this opportunity to express formally our appreciation to a number of people and groups who are contributing to this project.

First, we wish to acknowledge our gratitude to His Majesty King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for his leadership and significant support of this restoration.

The Government of the Hellenic Republic has given important support to this project in many ways, and we acknowledge the contribution of the Athen's Bank of Attika and many others.

We wish to thank the management of Aegean Airlines, who are making the regular visits of the team from Athens possible by the generous donation of airline tickets.

The World Monuments Fund has been extremely helpful to this project, and we are deeply grateful for the generosity of many donors of funds who are making this work possible, including His Majesty King Abdullah II, Mrs Mica Ertegun, and individuals and groups from many Churches and Christian communities here and around the world. The restoration of the Sacred Edicule, itself a sign of hope to the whole world, has become a project of the whole world.

In addition to these notes of gratitude, we feel obliged to mention clearly that the funds that are coming in for the project come to a specific account and to a specific office which administers the funds solely for this purpose. All funds that are donated for this restoration are going to this project, and this project alone.

May God prosper this work, and may God bless all those who are charged with its successful completion.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

THE GATHERING OF THE APOSTLES IN TIBERIAS (2016)

On Wednesday, the 30th of June/13th of July 2016, the Patriarchate observed the feast of the Gathering of the Twelve Apostles at the Monastery dedicated to them in Tiberias, on the west coast of the Tiberian Sea.

By “Gathering of the Holy Apostles” we mean the gathering of the faithful in order to honour the twelve Apostles for the dissemination of the truth they revealed about the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

The divine Liturgy was led by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, having as concelebrants Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth and Joachim of Zambia, Hagiotaphite Archimandrites, led by Archimandrite Ieronymos, Archimandrite Sophronios, Hieromonks and Arabic-speaking Presbyters, Archdeacon Evlogios and deacon Anastasios. Archimandrite Philotheos, hegumen in Accra, sang for a congregation from the parishes of Nazareth and Galilee, as well as for Greek-speaking and Russian-speaking pilgrims.

In His sermon, Patriarch Theophilos spoke of the joyful event of the appearance of Jesus to his disciples in the Tiberian sea. "The Church of Christ", said the Patriarch, "bestows special honours on the Apostles, namely Christ's disciples, because on the one hand they became eye and ear witnesses of the incarnation of the Logos of God, and on the other hand they received the Holy Spirit (John 20, 22) and were sent by the Lord Himself to all nations in order to preach the Gospel of the Light of the truth: *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."* [John 20, 21-23].

The divine Liturgy was followed by reception at the hegumeneion, and then lunch hosted by the hegumen, Archimandrite Dionysios.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/Tk22wzF4FdU>

<http://youtu.be/vpfE03-jrQg>

<http://youtu.be/-jnGG-Qml0g>

WHIT MONDAY DURING THE GREAT SYNOD OF ORTHODOXY

On Monday, the 7th/20th of June 2016, Monday of the Holy Spirit, the divine Liturgy was performed at the Church of Dormition of Theotokos, led by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, with Hagiotaphite Archimandrites Christophoros and Ieronimos co-officiating. The Most Reverend Primates, Priests and laymen of the Delegation of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and of other Churches participating in the Synod concelebrated.

After the service, the opening Session of the Holy and Great Synod of Orthodoxy began in the events hall of the Orthodox Academy of Crete, in the presence of the former king of Bulgaria, Simeon, and observers from other Christian Churches.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew first addressed the Session, followed by reply-addresses from the Heads of Churches, who pointed out the necessity of this particular Synod for communication between the Orthodox Churches and for sending out a strong Christian testament to their flocks and the world.

In His address, Patriarch Theophilos remarked on the fact that participants in the deliberations of the Holy and Great Synod overcame distances, obstacles and differences in order to seal their synodic collaboration for the support and salvation of their congregations and for attesting to peace, conciliation and unity in a world tormented by economic crisis, the immigration problem and crimes of unprecedented and harsh violence, a world in need of life, namely Christ the Lord.

“The Church of Jerusalem” went on Patriarch Theophilos, “has unwaveringly been in favour of the Synod, participating with representatives in all stages of the long preparation that included Pan-Orthodox Conventions, Inter-Orthodox Committees, Pre-Synodic Conventions and Gatherings of the Heads of Churches. So does it participate here today through Our Mediocrity and Entourage, bringing its fraternal embrace from the Holy Cave, the Horrendous Golgotha, the Most Holy Sepulchre and the Pentecost Cenacle, together with the agony of Christians in the Holy Land and the Middle East, who are guarded by the Most Holy Shrines”.

Patriarch Theophilos also referred to the absolutely necessary and important work of conservation, protection and restoration of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre, in collaboration with the Franciscans and the Patriarchate of the Armenians in Jerusalem, on the basis of a project conducted by the NTUA. *“Costs have been estimated to more than four million euros and are expected to be met by donations from Churches, States, Organizations and private citizens”*, Patriarch Theophilos pointed out and went on to extend wishes for the fruition of the Synod’s deliberations.

At noon, the Heads of Churches and their Entourages were hosted to lunch by the Orthodox Academy of Crete, whilst in the afternoon the Synod discussed the text entitled “The Mission of the Church in the contemporary world”.

From the Secretariat-General



THE FEAST OF STS CONSTANTINE AND HELEN AT THE PATRIARCHATE (2016)

On Friday, the 21st of May/3rd of June 2016, the Patriarchate observed the memory of the glorious and pious kings, Constantine and Helen, recognised by the Church as equals to the apostles. Constantine the Great had proclaimed, with the Edict of Milan in 312 AD, the freedom for Christians to spread their faith and worship and build Christian churches, the first of which was the Church of the Resurrection, erected on Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre.

To commemorate these two saints and protectors of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, Vespers was held at the church dedicated to their names, led by Patriarch Theophilos. Archimandrite Eusebius sang on the right and Archimandrite Alexios on the left, with Hagiotaphite Fathers as concelebrants. Members of the Arabic-speaking flock in Jerusalem and members of the Greek Parish attended the service.

On the conclusion of Vespers, Fathers sat in the forecourt where they received *kollyva* [boiled wheat] and rusk with wine.

On feast-day, Matins and the Divine Liturgy were led by Patriarch Theophilos, having Hagiotaphite Hieromonks as concelebrants in the presence of the Greek Consul-General to Jerusalem, Mr G. Zacharoudiakis, monks, locals and pilgrims from Greece, Russia and Ukraine.

After the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude and officiating Priests and Primate walked in procession to the Patriarchates. Passing through the gate, they received the blessing of bread made by Hieromonk Paisios and Elder Nun

Seraphima. At the Patriarchate, a supplication was made before the Patriarch addressed guests in Greek.

“The first among idolater Roman Emperors to be proclaimed king of the Christians, Constantine the Great, has sealed the world in general and the Holy Land in particular with the salvaging instrument of the Holy and Life-giving Cross of our God and Saviour, Christ”, said Patriarch Theophilos. “The Cross, for which St Paul says “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians, 1, 18). “The salvaging power of the Cross”, added His Beatitude, “is proclaimed and confessed by the most holy shrines of the mystery of the divine economy, namely the Nativity, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, upon which fine Churches and Monasteries, known as Constantineans, have been erected and in which the honourable members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood have taken up residence as guardians, deacons and officiants”. “The Church of the Resurrection”, the Patriarch concluded, “is where the testament of the Evangelic and apostolic truth is maintained alive and unscathed, alongside the hope of the Resurrection and new life in Christ”.

This great feast of the founders, patrons and protectors of the Most Holy Shrines and of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood was sealed by tangible and spiritual communion and participation in festive monastic lunch.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/WcMlJXjuhWo>

<httpv://youtu.be/FdDRpF5Hyhk>

<httpv://youtu.be/rJxZB-l6qW4>



HIS BEATITUDE SPEECH ON THE DECORATION OF THE CUSTOS OF THE HOLY LAND FR. PIERREBATTISTA PIZZABALLA.

30 March 2016

“For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus”, (1 Tim 3,13).

Your Paternity the Custos of the Holy Land Fr. Pierrebattista Pizzaballa,

It is in the frame of the words of Saint Paul that the Fraternity of the Holy Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ has decided to honour You with the Cross of the Holy Sepulchre.

Your diaconia as Custos of the Holy Land and head of the Franciscan Fraternity has been exemplary. For during your tenure here in the Holy City of Jerusalem, you have been instrumental in building trust and mutual respect between the various religious and Christian Communities in general and our Greek Orthodox Community in particular.

The harmonious cooperation between our respective Fraternities both in the Holy Sepulcher and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and elsewhere has fostered our common martyria of our Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, has produced the historic consensus between our three communities, namely Armenian, Franciscan and Greek over the restoration of the Aedicule of the Holy Tomb, something that for many was

considered totally unattainable, today nevertheless is a reality.

Your Paternity, with these words we would like to express our deep appreciation both to your Brotherhood and to you personally.

No matter what is going to be your new monastic and pastoral assignment, for us here in Jerusalem. I mean for us that we have known you as a spiritual leader and pastor and of course a priest working in the vineyard of our common Lord Jesus Christ, you will be considered part and parcel of our Christian Mission in the Holy Land and more specific in the Holy City of Jerusalem. A mission that has been bestowed upon us from the divine Providence, in order to keep, serve and guard the Holy Places as places of Worship and places of spiritual refreshment for the many thousands of pilgrims who are coming for the source of the crucified and resurrected Love of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is risen!

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem