

ADDRESS OF H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS III AT THE DINNER IN THE COMMUNITY HALL- CONSTANTINOPLE.

Constantinople, March 7TH, 2014

Your All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I,

Venerable Patriarchs and Archbishops,

Primates of the Holy Orthodox Churches,

Your Eminence Metropolitan Eireneos of Myriophyton and Peristasis,

Beloved brothers in Christ,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The gift of the grace of God is truly great for Us to be present here with you in the Queen of cities, the city of Constantine the Great, the city where the Ecumenical Synods took place, and to be extended hospitality in the embrace of the Great Church of Christ at the brotherly invitation of Our beloved brother in Christ, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

It is also truly great that We, as representatives of Our flocks, which have been entrusted to Us, overcame obstacles, surpassed impediments, and have disregarded differences between Us, not giving them attention whatsoever. We have

gathered here, all together, in the same place so that we can confess Our undisputed Orthodox faith in love and in the union of peace, especially today with the service of the Akathyst Hymn, which was chanted for the first time in this city, and on the upcoming Sunday of Orthodoxy, in Our declaration proclaiming the holy icons as a confirmation of the salvific truth, i.e. the Incarnation of the Son and Word of God by the Holy Spirit and through the Ever-Virgin Mary, our Lord and God Jesus Christ.

Therefore, We are grateful to God for His gift to Us; Our calling to be children of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church of Christ, as well as participants of this Synaxis. We are aware of the responsibility that has been placed on Our shoulders. Let Us prepare ourselves in prayer and humility, and giving the honor to the others for the Holy and Great Synod of Orthodoxy, so that through it, We may confess the reason of life to both Our flocks and to the world, for the salvation of all people and for the glory of Our Triune God.

Therefore, we warmly thank His-All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for his Abrahamic hospitality in the tents of the Great Church of Christ. We would also like to thank His Eminence Metropolitan Eireneos of Myriophyton and Peristasis, as well as the President of the Community Hall, Mr. Georgios Papaliaris, for the offering of this dinner, and to all those who assisted in the harmonious function of this Pan-Orthodox Synaxis.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

GATHERING OF HEADS OF CHURCHES IN CONSTANTINOPLE

Keeping our readers up to date with the Patriarchate's participation in the Gathering of the Heads of Churches in Constantinople, we would like to inform you that His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, accompanied by His retinue, arrived safely in Constantinople on the evening of Lean Wednesday, the 20th of February/5th of March 2014.

Acting on behalf of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Most Reverend Iacovos, Metropolitan of Princes islands, and Hierodeacon Gregorios welcomed His Beatitude at the airport and escorted him to the Hilton Hotel to rest on the first day of His arrival.

The following day, Thursday the 21st of February/6th of March 2014, the Pan-Orthodox Gathering convened at the Church of St George the Great Martyr, in the Phanar.

Participating in the Gathering are all the Heads of Orthodox Churches, with the exception of the Patriarch of Antioch, who is represented by a delegate, and the Church of the Check Republic, which is troubled by leadership problems.

A prayer requesting the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit was followed by a speech by His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

After welcoming the Heads of Churches, the Ecumenical Patriarch referred to previously held Gatherings in Jerusalem, Patmos, and elsewhere, aimed at providing an answer, by means

of the declared unity of the Orthodox Church, to problems facing man today, especially those recently emerged, i.e. technology, bioethics, the natural environment and society's economic structure. The unity of the Orthodox Church is secured through the long established institution of the synodality of the Orthodox Church. Through this institution, Orthodox Churches have, for the past fifty years, since the days of the late Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, been preparing for a series of Pan-Orthodox Conferences. In keeping with this tradition, the present Gathering will look into the topics to be discussed during the future Great Synod of Orthodoxy, and into the Message to be announced to the contemporary world.

Following the address of the Ecumenical Patriarch, each of the Heads of the Orthodox Churches went on to refer, in their own speech, to the importance of the Gathering, as well as to problems that are specific to their respective Churches.

In His address, His Beatitude Theophilos expressed the wish that the Spirit of the Pentecost cast its light upon everyone present during the days of their Gathering, and that it enable all to experience the Holy and Great Forty-Day Period through fasting and praying before celebrating with joy the Holy Resurrection.

After lunch hosted by His All Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew, at a Bosphorus restaurant, the meeting resumed in the afternoon.

From the Secretariat-General



THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM OFFICIATES IN ABUD COMMUNITY

On the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the first day of the Triodion Period, namely the 27th of January/9th of February 2014, a Divine Liturgy was held in the Greek Orthodox (Rum Orthodox) Community of the Patriarchate in the town of Abud, in the vicinity of Ramallah.

This particular Community numbers approximately 1500 members. Its liturgical center is the Church of the Dormition of Theotokos, which to this day preserves pronounced elements of early Byzantine Architecture. Abud was visited for pastoral reasons by His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, who went on to officiate the Divine Liturgy. Co-officiating were His Eminence Dorotheos, Archbishop of Avila; the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina; the master of ceremonies, Archimandrite Porphyrios; the Head of the Community, Steward Emmanouel; Archdeacon f. Evlogios, and Hierodeacon Dionysios. The Orthodox parishioners participated in the Liturgy with piety and devoutness.

To this pious congregation, His Beatitude preached the Word of God, referring among other things to the significance of fasting and praying, *“the spiritual means of preparation towards controlling and overcoming the will of the flesh, therefore towards achieving purification of the soul and the body, and cleansing of the mind”*.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, during the brief reception which was followed by lunch, His Beatitude had the opportunity to listen to topics of concern to the Community from the Priest and Vestrymen, and provide answers towards their settlement and resolution.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/5-bVrApI6q8>



THE FEAST OF ST THEODOSIOS THE CENOBIARCH

On Friday the 11th/24th of January 2014, the feast of Hosios Theodosios the Cenobiarch was observed at the Monastery he had founded in the desert of Judea, to the south of the city of Bethlehem and the Village of the Shepherds – Beit Sahur.

As is well known, this historical Monastery was founded by St Theodosios on the site and the cavern where the Church accepts that the three wise men spent the night before leaving for their own country by another way (Matthew 2, 12), after he arrived at the Holy Land and dwelled for a short time at the Monastery of Theotokos near Jerusalem, founded by the pious pilgrim Ikelia.

The Monastery was founded by St Theodosios in response to a request by monks in the desert to follow his spiritual guidance. The Monastery used to be a Coenobium, that is, it received novice monks who would go on for years communicating with and obeying the Hegoumen, living among each other and sharing prayers, food and work. Work was a condition of admittance to the Coenobium of St Theodosios, the Monastery's motto being "no one slothful shall enter". With their manual work, the monks used to help the poor and maintain charitable institutions, i.e. a nursing home and a poorhouse. The Monastery also maintained a School for educating the monks.

Upon the completion of their diaconate at the Monastery, the monks would proceed to a Lavra, i.e. the Lavra of St Sava and St Efthymios, for more intensive monastic practice in prayer and isolation.

At this Monastery, St Theodosios had gathered 700 monks of different nationality, Greeks, Iberians, Armenians etc, praying together in their own dialect during Matins and in Greek during the Divine Liturgy.

St Theodosios, working together with his contemporary and fellow countryman, Hosios Sava the Consecrated, contributed greatly to the fight against the heresy of monophysitism and the prevalence of the Christological dogma of the fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon in 451 AD, namely the existence in Christ Our Lord of a single hypostasis and two natures, the divine and the human, the human willingly obeying the divine.

In later years, namely the 7th c. AD, St Modestos, who was to become Patriarch of Jerusalem, St Sophronios, also Patriarch of Jerusalem, as well as Hosios John Moschos, author of the 'Leimonarion' [Spiritual Meadow], led an ascetic life in this Holy Monastery.

At the Cavern of the Magi, which had through the centuries served as a Cemetery, lies the tomb of St Theodosios, of his mother Evlogia, of St Savva's mother, Sophia, of the mother of the Holy Anargyroi, Cosmas and Damianos, namely St Theodotis, and of Hosia Maria, wife of St Xenophon and mother of St John Arkadios and St John Moschos.

Leading a rich spiritual life and having survived the ferocities of human history, the Monastery was renovated in the 20th c. by monks Leontios and Galaktion of Crete, and by Hagiotaphite Archimandrite Bartholomew of Chios, all buried in the Monastery, and by Archimandrite Ierotheos, the Hegoumen for the past thirty years.

On the morning of the aforementioned day, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, led the Divine Liturgy at the Monastery. Co-officiating were His Eminence Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias; their Eminences Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Theophylaktos of Jordan and Theodosios of Sevasteia, as well as Hieromonks, including the Hegoumen of the Monastery of the Shepherds in Beit Sahur, Archimandrite Ignatios, and of the Monastery of Hosios Sava, f. Evdokimos. Praying with them were Arab-speaking Presbyters and Hierodeacons, amid Greek chanting by monk Iacovos of Mount Athos and Hagiosabbaite monk Efrosynos. Members of the choir of the Village of the Shepherds chanted in Arabic. A crowd of people, nuns and pilgrims attended the service, mostly from the nearby town of the Village of the Shepherds.

His Beatitude preached the Word of God to the pious congregation in Greek. In Arabic, the speech may be read here: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2014/01/24/3350>

The Divine Liturgy and the Apolysis were followed by a procession around the Church and in the cavern of the Holy Monastery where lies the tomb of the Hosios, as well as in the forecourt of the Monastery, where a memorial service was held for its proprietors on the tomb of the late Archbishop Bartholomew of Madava.

A reception at the Hegoumen's Quarter was followed by lunch, hosted by the Elder Hegoumen, Archimandrite Ierotheos.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/yejv0NqR8rE>



FESTIVE GREETING OF H.B. PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS AT THE NEW YEAR RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE MAYOR OF JERUSALEM.

Jerusalem, 23 January 2014

Mr Mayor,

Your Beatitudes,

Your Eminences,

Fellow Leaders of the Jewish and Muslim Communities,

Respected Members of the Civic Authorities and the Diplomatic Community,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Christian Churches and Communities of the Holy Land, and especially of our beloved Jerusalem, we greet you, Mr. Mayor, in this festive New Year season with the words of the Psalmist:

Praise is due to you, O God... to you shall vows be performed in Jerusalem, O you who answer prayer! To you all flesh shall come... You crown the year with your bounty, (Ps 64:1-3, 1 2)

As we celebrate this New Year – the crown of the year – we do so fully aware of the sacredness of Jerusalem. This is God's holy dwelling-place, and the witness of the three great Abrahamic faiths is a testament to this sacred history. For millennia, in this Holy Land God has conversed with humanity, and God's holiness has been made accessible to his human creatures.

Yet this Holy City is not just a witness to the past. Jerusalem has a present, living identity that leads the human family to the future. For Jerusalem is the embodiment of the future hope of humanity, a sign to us now of our common destiny in God. Jerusalem, the foundation of peace, is the embodiment of the words of the Psalmist, to you all flesh shall come.

We live in a world that increasingly denies or avoids realities of ultimate significance. We no longer view our life in terms of eternity in relation to God, or in terms of the fulfillment of all creation in God, which we call the eschaton. But, it is precisely in this fulfillment of the creation in God's eternal life that peace, justice, and integrity find their true meaning. Jerusalem is the tangible expression to us of this great desire of creation to fulfillment in God. As Saint Paul says:

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now. For in hope we are saved. (Rom. 8:22,24)

History cannot avoid judgment. In human terms alone we have experienced this time and again, as we see humanity's inhumanity continue to break out forcibly in our region and around the world. Even this Holy City has been washed in the blood of the Prophets and of Jesus Christ. War, poverty, genocide, the suffering of children, the persecution of the innocent, the denial of human dignity – all this reminds us of the failing of the human family to live up to our divine image as the sons and daughters of the One God, who are descended from our common ancestors, and who are destined for a new future that we are called to build with divine inspiration for the sake of all.

Our spiritual mission as the Christian Churches and Communities of the Holy Land is to maintain the identity of Jerusalem as God's dwelling-place. For we are aware that Jerusalem is the principal focus that brings together the

faithful of the three Abrahamic traditions, and all people of good will, in an encounter with that God-given peace and reconciliation is possible for all those who aspire to it.

We who make up the colourful mosaic of this unique City, which is held sacred in all our Holy Books and in our traditions of worship, cherish both the physical reality of the City as well as its spiritual significance. For the earthly Jerusalem always points us to the heavenly Jerusalem, and in this regard we recall the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines... And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples... he will swallow up death forever... It will be said on that day. Lo, this is our God; We have waited for him, so that he might save us... let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain.

(Is. 25:6-10)

This divine impulse continues to inspire the countless pilgrims who come to the Holy Land and to Jerusalem every year – indeed even every day. We all acknowledge that Jerusalem has a life-long impact on the hearts and minds of the many people who come here. The mystery of Jerusalem changes people's minds, and opens their hearts to a new understanding of the power of faith in God.

As we celebrate this New Year – this crown of the year – let us all as people of goodwill of various faiths and confessions, re-commit ourselves to the heavenly truths of which our beloved City is the supreme earthly expression. Jerusalem is a beacon of light to a turbulent world that summons all humankind to the inextinguishable Light of God. To this one, everlasting Light that the darkness cannot overcome are we all on pilgrimage. As Saint Matthew says in his Gospel, echoing the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

...the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.

(Mt. 4:1 6; cf. Is. 9:1-2)

Again, on behalf of the Christian Churches and Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, we wish you, Mr. Mayor, and your colleagues, every success in your responsibilities, and we wish you a very blessed and peaceful New Year. Thank you".

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III,

Patriarch of Jerusalem.

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY MONASTERY OF HOZEVA

On Tuesday the 8th/21st of January 2014, the feast of the Holy Monastery of Hozeva was celebrated.

The Monastery is one of the most ancient in Palestine; it lies on the slope of the torrent of Horrath which, passing through Jericho, flows into the Dead Sea.

On the footsteps of the first ascetics, Promon, Aias, Zenon and Yannaios, the Monastery had distinguished Hegoumens, i.e. St John the Bishop of Caesarea, Palestine who came here after abandoning his Episcopal duties in the fifth c., as well as St George the Cypriot, who in fact renovated the Monastery in the wake of the destructive Persian invasion in 614 AD.

It is to the name of these two saints, considered to be the Monastery's proprietors, that the Monastery is dedicated, having survived several damages through a turbulent history. Remembered fondly as Hegoumens of the Monastery are – the late Archimandrite Amphilochios, its dedicated servant for more than thirty years; the late Archimandrite Antonios of Thessaloniki, killed when a wall of the Narthex collapsed during repairs; the late Archimandrite Germanos of Thessaloniki, murdered on his way to the Monastery by an unholy hand; the Hegoumen of Abba Gerasimus of the Jordan, Archimandrite f. Chrystostomos, who took over as Hegoumen for a transitional period of time after a rock had landed on the Monastery. Today, Archimandrite Constantinos is the Hegoumen, having joined the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood from the Church of Greece.

In this historical Monastery, which is greatly loved and very often visited by pilgrims, either Orthodox or not, both Christians and non Christians, His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, was received warmly by the Hegoumen, Archimandrite Constantinos.

In his welcome speech, Archimandrite Constantinos referred to Sts Johns and George as “having given breath to the barren desert, given life to the area of the torrent of Horrath. The purpose and objective of their arrival to this consecrated site was their pure intention to cleanse themselves from passions.”

“Therefore”, the Hegoumen went on to say, “they became models to be emulated from that time to the present day; models of safe and successful sailing across the sea of life. Because only if man offers God his exclusive love, when he does everything there is to cleanse his heart, when he fervently wishes to communicate with God, only then shall he be given the evangelic: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5, 8).

At the conclusion of the Hegoumen's speech, His Beatitude Theophilos led the commemoration of Sts John and George the Hozevites during a nocturnal vigil. Co-officiating were the Patriarchal Commissioner, His Eminence Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias; the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina; and the Hegoumen, Archimandrite Constantinos. A crowd of pious Christians, monks and nuns, locals and pilgrims participated in the celebration.

To this pious congregation His Beatitude preached the Word of God in Greek, referring to the Epiphany of Christ in the Jordan river, through which He "vanquished the domain, the power of sin, investing within Himself our human nature with the new garment of imperishableness".

"It is precisely this garment of the divine and sanctifying and unapproachable light", His Beatitude added, "that Hosios Father George, hailing from Cyprus, had put on. Of the same garment of the divine light of the Holy Spirit we are called to become communicants and sharers".

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the Patriarchal Retinue as well as the entire congregation were hosted to lunch at the monastery, after which His Beatitude left for Jerusalem.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/MPYI2p4CJDk>



HIS BEATITUDE ADDRESS OF

WELCOME TO HIS EXCELLENCY TRAIAN BASESCU THE PRESIDENT OF ROMANIA.

Jerusalem Patriarchate, 20 January 2014

Mr. President,

Respected Members of your Delegation,

Your Eminences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for us to welcome you to the Holy Land and to our Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which is the Mother of all the Churches. Most especially we are pleased that you are here during this festive season in which the Church celebrates the Feasts of the Nativity and the Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ, the time of the revelation of the True Light that enlightens all peoples (cf. Lk 2:32). We welcome you as a pilgrim and as a faithful son of our Holy Orthodox Church, which has such deep roots in the history of your nation and people.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem is the embodiment of our sacred history, and, as you know well, Your Excellency, the Patriarchate, together with the Brotherhood of the Holy Tomb, have been entrusted by Divine Providence from the earliest days of the Church with the spiritual mission to be guardians and servants of the Holy Places. In this way we understand that we do not represent ourselves alone, but the whole Orthodox world, and we rejoice that so many pilgrims come from

your country for the deep refreshment of the soul that so many find here. Indeed as Orthodox Christians from Romania they are able to participate fully in the worship and religious festivals of the Holy Places.

Moreover, Jerusalem holds a unique place in the human imagination, and the Patriarchate ensures that all those who wish to have access to the Holy Places are able to do so, including many Jewish and Muslim pilgrims, in addition to Christians of many confessions.

This is the responsibility that is laid upon us because of our unique position in the Holy Land. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem enjoys the full respect and recognition of the three political authorities of this region – the State of Israel, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the State of Palestine – and this legal status is clear and safe-guarded. The Patriarchate serves as the representative leader of all the Christian communities of the Holy Land, and is the principal Christian institution that can speak on behalf of the unique integrity of the status of Jerusalem. In this important work we know that we can count on the support of the faithful of Romania.

On the occasion of your visit, Your Excellency, we recall with gratitude the close relationship that has long existed between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the people of Romania. It was in 1682 that our esteemed predecessor, Patriarch Dositheos, established the first printing press in any Orthodox country, publishing in the great cultural city of Lași important theological and liturgical books. We are united by important bonds of faith and affection which we must always be careful to foster and deepen.

We wish you, Mr. President, every success in your mission to our region, and we ask you to convey to your beloved nation and people our Patriarchal greetings and blessing. And in recognition of the close historic and spiritual relationship

between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Romania, we wish to bestow upon you the decoration of the Great Cross of the Holy Tomb.

We thank you for your visit.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

THE PRESIDENT OF ROMANIA VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the 7th/20th of January 2014, the day after the feast of Theophany, the President of Romania, His Excellency Mr Traian Basescu, on a visit to the state of Israel, visited the Patriarchate accompanied by members of the Romanian Government and by the Romanian Ambassador to Israel, Mrs Andreea Păstârnac.

The Romanian President and his retinue were received by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Hagiotaphite Fathers. In His welcoming address to the President, His Beatitude spoke in English, see link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2014/01/20/4001>

and decorated him with the Grand Cross of the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulcher for the enhancement of his pious

disposition toward the Holy Sepulcher, also offering him a fine icon of Theotokos Jerusalemite.

Touched, the President offered His Beatitude a beautiful icon of the Nativity of Christ, crafted in an Orthodox Monastery of Romania, thanking Him for the honour bestowed upon him as a representative of the Romanian people, consisting of Orthodox faithful by 90%, and having close ties to the Orthodox Church.

“In the aftermath of the communist regime”, Mr Basescu said, “the state of Romania is trying to reestablish its relations with the Church of Romania, which is considered its integral part”.

Extending his thanks to His Beatitude over the manner in which He represents Christians in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem, the President kindly asked that the Church of Jerusalem look favourably on the as yet unresolved problem between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Patriarchate of Romania.

In His response, His Beatitude said that “we have already reached a preparatory agreement, which we expect to be signed by His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of Romania”. He went on to add that “We have decided in favour of establishing closer ties between the two Churches and have therefore sent a Hagiotaphite student, now Archimandrite Dositheos, to study in Romania with a scholarship”.

His Excellency the President, accompanied by His Beatitude and members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, amid ringing bells, proceeded to venerate at the Church of the Resurrection, the Holy Sepulcher, the Katholikon and Sacristy of the Church of the Resurrection, where he was received by the Hegoumen, the Elder Sacristan of the Holy Sepulcher, His Eminence Isidoros, Archbishop of Hierapolis, in the presence of Templar Fathers. There, he was also offered an icon of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulcher.

From the Secretariat-General

http://youtu.be/kPQ0opNl5_k



H.B. PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS III ADDRESS TO THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION.

Jerusalem, 20 January 2014

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Members of the Brotherhood of Saint James, Dear Brothers,

We greet you with congratulations on the celebration of the Feast of the Nativity, according to the Armenian calendar, and we proclaim with you the great words of Saint John,

The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the Father's only son, full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:14).

As your celebration of the Nativity and our celebration of the Theophany coincide, we recognize that this is indeed one and the same feast, the feast of *the True Light that enlightens all people* (cf. Lk 2:32).

We extend to you, Your Beatitude, and to the whole Brotherhood of Saint James, our special greeting on this Christmas in your ministry as Armenian Patriarch and the spiritual father of the Armenian community in the Holy Land.

It has been by God's grace and help that, despite the turbulent affairs of the world and our region, the celebrations of this holy season have been uneventful and as a consequence they have been of genuine spiritual refreshment to our people. This sends a message near and far that the new-born Christ is the only sure ground for hope, justice, and peace. When we as the Churches of the Holy Land celebrate the great feasts of the events of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, we make clear the bright hope of God to all those who live in desperation around the world.

This is our sacred, spiritual mission that we must always keep before us as we endeavor to maintain our co-operation. We cannot underestimate the importance of this. In this way we strengthen our role in shaping the developments of this Holy City and of our beloved Holy Land.

In the spirit of this season, we wish to take this opportunity, Your Beatitude, to express to you, to your brother bishops, to the members of the Brotherhood of Saint James both here in Jerusalem and in other parts of the world, and to the Armenian community of the Holy Land, our Christmas wishes.

And we wish for you, Your Beatitude, health and strength for your ministry, and a peaceful and spiritually fruitful New Year.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

ADDRESS OF H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF JERICHO ON THE OCCASION OF THEOPHANY

Jericho, the 5th/18th of January 2014.

Your Excellency, the Governor of Jericho,

Your Eminences,

Your Excellency, the Consul-General of Greece,

The Holy Land and especially the Land of the very ancient city of Jericho, with its sacred river Jordan, is inextricably linked with the holy history, and specifically with the historical event of the Baptismal of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who founded and established the Mother of All Churches, namely the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and of all Palestine.

The array of monasteries in the vicinity of Jericho and the river Jordan, as well as the Churches on sacred sites, bear testament to the Presence of God on earth on the one hand, and on the other hand to the revelation of the divine light, that is the Holy Spirit, on men. Furthermore, they are tangible evidence of the social and religious setting of peaceful

coexistence between Christians and Muslims, forged through the centuries by the great National and Religious Leaders, our predecessor, Patriarch Sophronios, and Khalif Omar ibn Khattab.

It is this very event that we celebrate today in your historical city, in order to share with you the joy and delight of the Universal feast of Holy Theophany.

And this we say because today's feast celebrates the revelation of the divine light, the light of love, peace and justice that dawned on those living in the land of the shadow of death, (Matthew 4,16), the "powers of this dark world" according to the Apostle Paul.

It is this revelation of the divine and never-setting light of justice that we have come here to declare in prayer, through the ceremonious blessing of the waters of the river Jordan. We thank you for your brotherly welcome and hospitality, and profoundly wish that the divine light, the light of justice, shall reign on earth, especially in this Holy Land and on the Palestinian people. May health and power be offered to our dear President Mahmud Abbas Abu Mazen so that he may guide his people to the fervently desired complete independence and freedom.

Many happy returns.

Theophilos of Jerusalem.