

AN ADDRESS OF GREETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE RE-DEDICATION OF THE FESTIVAL HALL AT AUGUSTE VICTORIA HOSPITAL

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

6 April 2010

Your Royal Highness,

Esteemed Representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany,

Dr Uwe Grabe,

Bishop Mounib,

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Christus ist auferstanden! Er ist wahrhaftig auferstanden!

On this Tuesday of Bright Week, we greet you with the great Paschal greeting of the Church, as we proclaim together the victory of God in the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

On behalf of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the other Churches and Christian communities of the Holy Land, we

welcome you to the Holy City in this holy season, and we wish to extend a special greeting to Your Royal Highness.

As we celebrate the re- dedication of the Festival Hall in this centenary year of the Auguste Victoria Hospital, we recall the role of Your Highness's great grandfather in establishing a hospice and rest home on this site. When it was built, it was among the most modern buildings in Jerusalem and the very first to have electricity.

Over many years, the hospital has gained a reputation for the care and healing of some of the most needy of our region, and all people of good will recognize the important charitable work that is done here in our own day to alleviate suffering, especially among the Palestinian population.

The mission of Auguste Victoria is a reminder to us all of the urgency that is before us to continue to deepen the relationships between the Churches and Christian communities of the Holy Land for the common good of all our people. Many call Jerusalem their spiritual home, and Jerusalem has universal significance. But this must not deafen us to the distinctive Christian voice of this City, a voice that it is our responsibility to articulate in the work of mutual respect, reconciliation and peace.

The Church does not take to itself a worldly political agenda; it lives, we might say, the political agenda; for, as believers, we are members of the πόλις – the “City” – of Christ. The Churches and Christian communities together are called to articulate those highest values that sustain the moral, spiritual and religious well- being of society. Even as the Church in the Holy Land works tirelessly for peace, reconciliation and respectful co-existence, we encourage all those engaged in political life both in our region and abroad

to ensure that bigotry and prejudice give away to the reality of our common humanity and our common destiny in making enough room for all in this transitory world.

The message of the resurrection of Christ is the message of hope that God has brought us from the cross to the resurrection, from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom. This is the reality to which the Church in the Holy Land bears witness, and this is what Jerusalem does and should be – a living testimony to this dynamic divine existence. May your visit to the Holy Land during this most holy time refresh you and fill you with God's peace and joy.

We are pleased to bestow on you, Your Royal Highness, and all those gathered here, our Patriarchal good wishes and the Easter blessing of Jerusalem, and we thank you for the opportunity to be able to extend these words of greeting.

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Christus ist auferstanden! Er ist wahrhaftig auferstanden!