

AN ADDRESS OF H.B. PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS III AT PALESTINIAN EMBASSY IN WARSAW.

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

28 June 2010

Distinguished guests,

I stand before you in the presence of Archbishop Sawa of Warsaw and Metropolitan of All Poland and H.E. Ambassador Ghazal, carrying greetings, messages and concerns from your brethren in humanity, the people of Jerusalem, the people of the holiest of all cities that can be remembered synonymous for political divinity.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem has its roots dating back 2000 years in the history of the Holy City, during which many wars, conquerors, natural disasters, scientific breakthroughs and literary masterpieces have been initiated or took place to change the course of the history of the Middle East and in some cases the entire world.

Our Patriarchate has had unique relations with the Orthodox Church of Warsaw for many years, especially since the Late Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophanis. And this welcomed invitation for us to visit here with you is furthering these historic good ties and positive cooperative relationship between our church and the Church of Warsaw.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem is probably the longest running institution in the world and remains committed to keeping this status forever as well as witnessing peace in our City of Peace. Our Patriarchate remains enthusiastic in it's pursue

of peace through local, interchurch and interfaith activities. The role of a religious leadership in a city like Jerusalem or a part of the world like the Middle East isn't necessarily typical. Much of the work of religious and social duties that most religious leaders of the world are obligated to fulfill, in Jerusalem they must fulfill on the grass-root level to promote peace and to fill people's hearts with hope for a stable future.

On the interchurch level, many activities and plans are executed with the aim of preserving the ever-dwindling Christian population of the Holy Land and perfecting the role of bridging between all parties concerned; having a vital interest in Jerusalem's religious significance. Many of these efforts are channeled through the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land. On the interfaith level, our historical position and international network of friends and supporters provide us with an asset to contribute to interfaith initiatives and peace efforts since we have been a witness to many decades of peace and stability in the Holy Lands.

Since peace and stability were possible and indeed real in the past, we see no logical reason for not achieving it today and sustaining it for the future.

We have supported and still support peace efforts by the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and his government led by Prime Minister Dr. Salaam Fayyad. We pray to almighty God that Justice, Peace and stability will be realised in the Holy Land, and the Palestinian people achieve their rightful National rights.

AN ADDRESS OF H.B. PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS III AT THE MAJDANEK DEATH CAMP IN LUBLIN.

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

25 June 2010

Your Eminences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Whenever we come to a place where there has been human suffering and death, we know that we are walking on holy ground. We who live in Jerusalem understand this very well. And when we are on holy ground, we must walk with prayerful reverence.

Here at Majdanek, as well as at the other concentration camps of the Nazi regime, unspeakable inhumane and barbaric acts were carried out systematically against the Jewish people. Others, including Christians, and among them several whom we now venerate among the saints of the Church, also suffered in the concentration camps during this brutal period of the 20th century, often simply because of their national or religious identity.

Majdanek stands as a stern and compelling reminder to us that we must never forget this terrible history, because the responsibility rests on our shoulders to ensure that such things never happen in our generation or in generations to come. As the eye-witnesses of what occurred here and

elsewhere pass away, we in the next generations who have known them also have a duty to pass on to our children the great dangers that flow from prejudice and discrimination. If there is a fine line between fear and discrimination, there is an even finer line between discrimination and persecution.

Both Jews and Christians place the highest value on the human person. The Holy Scriptures assure us that we are made in the image and likeness of God, and for us Orthodox Christians this means quite simply, and yet also quite profoundly, that every human person is an icon of God himself. We bear this privilege, and this responsibility, in equal measure.

Therefore any inhumane act of one human person against another is not just a crime against a fellow human being; it is an insult against God. One might go so far as to say that such acts amount to a denial of the Creator. Violence dehumanizes all concerned, both perpetrators as well as victims. It is the moral imperative of all who desire to build a new future for the human community, based on mutual respect and peaceful co-existence, to do all in our power to break cycles of violence wherever they manifest themselves.

As we gather here in this resolve, our minds and our prayers turn to those who perished here so unnecessarily. We pray that Almighty God, in his infinite mercy and philanthropy, may give rest to the dead who bear such a witness still. May their memory be blessed and eternal. And may we, the living, learn a new commitment to forgiveness and reconciliation, for these are the firm foundation of human society.

Thank you.

THE FEAST OF ST. CONSTANTINE AND ST. HELEN THE EQUAL-TO- THE APOSTLES AT THE PATRIARCHATE.

In the person of Emperor Constantine the Great and his mother Empress St. Helen, the Church acknowledges the Saints as divinely crowned royals and equal-to-the-apostles.

It is so because they embraced Christianity, they gave an end to the three century long Christian persecution and allowed the free practice of Christianity by believers through the royal decree of Mediolanum of 312 A.D.

The Church of Jerusalem, the Church of the Holy Places, has special reason to honour St. Constantine and St. Helen since they distinguished the Holy Places that were, up until then, in darkness due to heathenism. It was they that founded the Church of Resurrection in Jerusalem, the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem and others in the Holy Places.

The Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre as guardian and protector of the Holy Places is proud that the Church of the Brotherhood is named after these Saints, equal-to-the-apostles and illustrious royals.

The feast was celebrated at this Church, contiguous to the Holy Sepulchre, with particular splendour, grace and order by the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre on Thursday 21st of May / 3rd of June 2010.

In the early evening Great Vesper was performed along with the ceremony of the Blessing of the Bread, presided over by the Superior of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, His

Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

According to the custom following the Vesper, His Beatitude and the Fathers shared 'kollyva', bread and wine at the duly prepared forecourt of the Church.

On the morning of the feast day His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III presided at the Matins and the Holy Liturgy concelebrating with priests, members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.

After a resplendent and devout Holy Liturgy, His Beatitude in full Vestment together with concelebrating priests and Archbishops of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, headed in chanting procession to the Patriarchate.

While exiting the Central Monastery towards the Patriarchate, traditional bread for blessing was offered to all the participants by sister Serafima and hierodeacon Paisios who are responsible of the Patriarchate's bakery.

His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III received the participating devout believers at the Throne Hall.

A monastic Lenten lunch then followed for the members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.

Chief Secretary's Office.

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AN ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO THE

MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE LUTHERAN-ORTHODOX JOINT COMMISSION

Bethlehem, 26 May 2010

Your Eminence Metropolitan Gennadios,

Bishop Donald McCoid,

Esteemed Members of the Joint Commission,

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We welcome you to the holy city of Jerusalem with great joy, and we are pleased that you have accepted our invitation to hold your meeting in Bethlehem. In this city, in the place where the eternal Logos became incarnate in Jesus Christ, we celebrate together our common origin in the faith of the Gospel.

Let us remember today briefly our historical context.

The first contact between the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran Church occurred as far back as the 16th century, when there was a significant correspondence between a group of Lutheran theologians in Tübingen and Patriarch Jeremias II of Constantinople. This correspondence represents, in fact, the earliest exchange on issues of theology between the Orthodox Church and the emerging Protestant world, and we must not discount these roots of our relationship, even if they did not come to bear significant fruit for three centuries.

It was in 1967 that the bitterness and tragedy of prejudice and separation gave way to our quest for attaining to a common faith and a common destiny. After some 5 years of preparatory processes, the Lutheran- Orthodox Joint Commission met for the

first time in 1981 in Finland – a significant location, for Finland is the only country in the world in which both the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran Church enjoy equal status as national Churches.

From its inception the Joint Commission has engaged in a wide range of exploration and produced a number of significant documents that enable us to say that over these last 30 years, even though a number of open questions and differences remain, our two traditions have reached “broad areas of agreement”. When the dialogue of the love of Christ grows arduous, it is always important to remember how much has been accomplished.

You are now committed to an exploration of the nature of the Church, focused on the four attributes of the Church as reflected in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of AD 381. We confess that the Church is not just “one, holy, catholic and apostolic”. It is the visible and tangible Body of Christ, which extends, as Saint Paul says, through our history to eternity. The Church is nourished by the Eucharist, because at the Church’s heart is the participation in and of the Body and Blood to the Lord, the *kyriakon soma kai aima*.

It is significant that, in the course of these particular deliberations, you have made your first pilgrimage as a Joint Commission to the land in which the Church was first revealed, and just a few days after we have celebrated the Feast of Pentecost, the Coming of the Paraclete, the Spirit of Christ. By the seal of the gift of this Holy Spirit, the Church continues the saving ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ to the world. If the resurrection is the seal of divine *oikonomia*, then the descent of the Spirit is the seal of the Church and the Body of her members.

As the oldest continuous religious Institution in the Holy Land, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem takes seriously our vocation of *diakonia* both to all those, regardless of religious, ethnic or cultural origin, who make this region

their home, as well as to all those, of whatever religious affiliation, who come here throughout the year as pilgrims. In this ministry of *diakonia* to humankind and for the sake of the unity of all Christians, we extend to you our appreciation and encouragement.

We look forward to the 15th Plenary Meeting of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission next year, and to the results of your dialogue in deepening our understanding of the Nature and Attributes of the Church. It is our fervent prayer that, as we can say together the common words of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, we may also one day be able to share a common understanding of the mystery of the Church, and one day also be able to share the common Chalice. We are fully aware that the road to the fullness of the unity of faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit is difficult and painful. Nevertheless, we have to continue in our efforts in doing our part and the rest we leave in faith to the Lord.

We are pleased to bestow on you and your deliberations our Patriarchal Blessing, and we thank you for your labour on behalf of both our Churches.

His Beatitude Theophilos III , Patriarch of Jerusalem.

AN ADDRESS TO THE COUNCIL OF CHURCH LEADERS OF JORDAN IN AMMAN

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

25 May 2010

Your Eminences,

Your Excellencies,

Most Reverend and Right Reverend Fathers,

On this Tuesday after Pentecost, we greet you in the power of the Holy Spirit, the “Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who is everywhere present and who fills all things”. May this same Spirit fill our hearts and enlighten our minds as we begin this venture.

We wish to express our appreciation to His Majesty King Abdullah and to His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi for their initiative in instating this legitimate Council of Church Leaders of Jordan. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is spearheading this part of the world in commitment to freedom of religion, co-existence, and equal rights for all its people. This Council is yet further fruit of this commitment, and we applaud this example of religious freedom in the Kingdom.

It is, therefore, of significance that we are gathered here in Amman for such an important meeting of our Council of Church Leaders of Jordan. And it is a particular privilege for us to convene this Council.

The Covenant of Omar – the Al-‘Uhda Al-Umariyyah – established between the Caliph Omar ibn Khattab, the predecessor of the Hashemite Kingdom and our predecessor Patriarch Sophronius in the 7th century – is the foundation that have shaped the noble relationship between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Christians of the Holy Land to our own day. And this Covenant

provides a unique framework for further development of relations and proper *symbiosis* for us all.

Equally importantly, the Covenant sustains those good relations that are the means by which the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan maintains its close and essential association with the Christian Holy places in Jerusalem.

We who have the privilege of exercising the leadership of the Churches and Christian communities of the Holy Land and Jordan have a special duty to build on the foundation of our predecessors to ensure the well-being of the Christian communities of our region and peaceful relationships between followers of monotheistic religions. There can be no authentic future for the Holy Land without our commitment to Justice and Peace on the bases of co-existence and mutual respect.

Our commitment to Justice and peace could only be materialized through our service of our communities and society as a whole. Such service is spiritual and material in nature. Furthermore, we have an essential role to fulfill in initiating and supporting initiatives that bring people closer together and shed the light on the importance of achieving justice and peace in the holy land.

As we begin our new work under the gracious patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah II and His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi, let us re-commit ourselves to the unique ministry that is ours in the Holy Land and Jordan. Let us endeavour to deepen our life of *diakonia*, the Christ like, humble service that is the vocation of all who claim the name of Christian. And let us never allow vested interest or antagonism to mar the fellowship that this Council is designed to deepen and prosper.

We take this opportunity to congratulate His Majesty King Abdullah II and all the people of Jordan on this momentous day of Independence for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. May God bless His Majesty King Abdullah II and all the Royal Family, and may God prosper the mission of this Council to the glory of his name and to the well-being of all our people.

Thank you for your ready response and participation in this meeting, and for your co-operation in its aims.

AN ADDRESS AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE “WUJOOD” CULTURAL CENTRE AND MUSEUM IN JERUSALEM

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

14 May 2010

Your Excellencies,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Miss Nova Court,

Dear Members of the Orthodox Society,

Brothers and Sisters,

It is a pleasure for us to participate this afternoon in the inauguration of the “Wujoud” Cultural Centre and Museum in the Old City of Jerusalem, and to bless its new and important work.

The Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem is the oldest continuous religious institution in the Holy Land and is therefore, in a particular way, the embodiment of sacred history. Because of our spiritual identity, the Patriarchate is the servant and the guardian of the special religious and cultural character of Jerusalem. It is the distinctive privilege of Jerusalem to maintain and to prosper unity in the name of the God of Abraham as well as diversity in the name of our common humanity.

The “Wujoud” Centre, which we dedicate today, is a simple yet significant witness to the διακονία – the Christ-like ministry of service – that the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate and its flock have been commissioned to fulfill both here in the Holy Land and throughout the whole inhabited earth. As we read in the Second Letter to Timothy: “Be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of the evangelist, carry out your ministry – your διακονία – fully”, (II Tim. 4,5).

Throughout our history, we of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate have known our share of afflictions. But we have also known great endurance. Ours is the living witness of the message of the Gospel of the crucified, risen and ascended Lord, which is a message of the love of humanity that we call “philanthropy”. This philanthropy finds expression in the commitment of the Patriarchate to all the people of our City without religious, ethnic, racial or cultural distinction. The Good Samaritan Centre and the Saint Benedictos Polyclinic are thriving examples of this mission and today we add the work of the Wujoud Centre. The Wujoud Centre is designed to be another

guarantee of the diversity of our City as well as a place for the community to gather for important events in our life together.

As we celebrate the opening of this Centre, and as we recall our identity and mission as the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate, we congratulate Miss Nora Court and her colleagues and we express our gratitude to her and to all those whose generosity has made the Nora Court initiative a reality.

We extend to all our best wishes for the work of this Center, and we impart our Patriarchal Blessing on this endeavour, on all gathered here, and on our beloved City of Jerusalem and all her people, who long for justice, peace and respectful co-existence.

Thank you, and God bless you.

SPEECH OF HIS BEATITUDE THEOPHILOS III BEFORE THE MECC

Speech before the Executive Committee of the
Middle East Council of Churches

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

20 April 2010

“Your Beatitudes, Eminences, Graces,

Your Excellencies fellow clergy,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Christ is Risen, He is indeed Risen.

It is a great honour and privilege for the “Mother Church” of all Christendom. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem to host this distinguished gathering of the executive committee of the Middle East Council of Churches in Our beloved Holy Land here in Amman under the wise and enlightened leadership of His Majesty King Abdulla II, may God guard him.

In the Middle East in general and in Holy Jerusalem in particular, we have a diminishing congregation to protect, a fine line amidst political turmoil to walk, centuries’ old status quo to preserve, a priceless Heritage to maintain, and on top of all spiritual duties to perform.

We shall not allow the special circumstances we experience in our respective national domains and spiritual jurisdictions, to deter us from performing our mutual and universal commitments as well as our devoted concern to challenges facing religious communities, entities and Humanity as a whole. It is precisely in this respect that we are convening here today to address the main concern that will only be achieved through adhering to the incarnate message of the Cross and the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ and his message of Justice, Tolerance and Unity, For it is said: “ In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears God and works righteousness is accepted by God”, (Acts 10:34 & 35).

The radical currents that our world is experiencing demands

our perseverance to be the initiators and apostles of spreading the message of the gospel unadulterated; the message of the love of Christ, that is Justice, Peace and reconciliation for nations and people, among Christians and others, grassroots and political echelons.

Performing such a task in a complex environment where some have found an interest in spreading bigotry, violence, aggression and hatred is risky. Reconciliation with Almighty God and our common efforts as Church Leaders and clergy among us and our flock is the only way to engage the inherent risks and succeed in this task of spreading the message of Love, Justice and Peace. For as Saint Paul says: "...we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness...", (Eph. 6:12).

The ongoing crisis in the MECC is in its essence structural and administrative. The financial component is only one of its symptoms. Therefore, there is a need to approach this crisis in a comprehensive way.

The MECC should be modelled to fit in the needs and aspirations of the member churches but also needs to adapt to these changing and challenging times. Therefore it has to be reconfigured to reflect an up to date vision of itself and of its mission aspirations. Let us be critical to ourselves and courageous enough to tackle this very point along the lines of what We envisaged in our address to the last General Assembly that took place in Cyprus.

There is no doubt that good efforts have been made by the special task force appointed to ensure the MECC survival beyond 2009. It should be acknowledged that the Churches in Lebanon made a substantial financial contribution to the MECC. Therefore, we call on Churches in other countries to follow

suit. As far as Our Church is concerned, We are ready to fulfill our responsibilities and make our contribution the very moment that the NEW MECC emerges adopting the above mentioned re- structural vision.

The Executive Committee today is extraordinary by all means. We are asked to take bold and sharp decisions about the near and short term future of the MECC.

Any decision we may take has to be bound by clear guidelines, and realistic timetables; most importantly it has to have secured financial resources ensuring its implementation.

We cannot condone any concessions that undermine the future of the MECC. We have to be tough enough in our decisions and if need be to overcome ourselves as well as our church inclinations and interests.

We are open to all the suggestions and proposals that have the only aim of securing the functionality and sustainability of the MECC as a fellowship of churches that are devoted in the diaconia and service of our institutions guarding our respective congregations together with our fellow brethren thus encouraging the much needed Christian presence here and now.

To perform such a task we need to intensify our spiritual presence in society, to attract more believers to commit themselves to church teachings, to provide better social services, to enhance education, to subsidize for the unfortunate through welfare programs and to communicate more efficiently among ourselves. This task requires solid promotion of inter-religious dialogue for nurturing mutual respect, symbiosis and coexistence.

Let our faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ lead our way, let our work be a firm manifestation of Christ's enlightenment, let our human fears be the fuel for our actions, so that the biblical words: "Let justice roll down like water and righteousness".

Please join Us in extending our appreciation and thanks to the sponsors and organisers that worked diligently to organise this meeting of ours".

Christ is Risen, He is indeed Risen".

HIS BEATITUDE THEOPHILOS' III, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM ADDRESS OF GREETING TO THE EMIR OF QATAR

An Address of Greeting

to the Emir of Qatar

H H Shiekh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani

during the Pastoral Visit of the Patriarch of Jerusalem

to lay the Foundation Stone

of the Orthodox Church in Doha

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

April 2010

Your Highness,

It is an honour for Us, Your Highness, to be able to address you on the occasion of Our pastoral visit to the Roum Orthodox community of Doha for the laying of the foundation stone of our parish of Saint Isaak the Qatari and Saint George. This is the fruit of many years of careful work and co-operation between the Emirate of Qatar and the Roum Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

We take this opportunity to praise the work that both Your Highness and Her Highness the Consort have done in encouraging all Qataris to help build in this country a culture of progress and openness. Qatar is well known for the breakthroughs that you have made in overcoming the barriers of prejudice, in encouraging freedom of worship, and in creating a society of mutual respect and peaceful co-existence.

The world sees in Qatar a country that has managed to combine remarkable progress in the economic realm with an equally remarkable progress in the spiritual realm, and as such Qatar serves as a leader and as a model of stability for our region.

We see in his achievement the embodiment of the essence of Islam as a religion of tolerance, hospitality and intellectual rigour and achievement. In this region of the world, Christian and Muslim have enjoyed periods of peaceful co-existence that have been of mutual benefit to both our communities. We know each other well, we understand each other's customs and traditions, and the well-being of our region depends on good relationships between us.

We honour the leadership that Your Highness has shown, and continues to demonstrate, in the practical work of ensuring

the ongoing religious and cultural diversity of our region. The Rum Patriarchate pledges itself to be loyal and firm supporters of Your Highness's leadership in this regard.

As we know that we have a place in Qatar, Your Highness has a respected place in Jerusalem, and we are privileged to have your photograph in our Patriarchate. We look forward to the day when Your Highness can visit us at our Patriarchate in Jerusalem, a city that is sacred to the Abrahamic traditions.

We thank you, Your Highness, for this opportunity to address you, and we pray the blessings of the All-Merciful God on you, Her Highness the Consort, on your family, and on all the people of our beloved Emirate.

God bless you.

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 way 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.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!

Christus ist auferstanden! Er ist wahrhaftig auferstanden!

THE ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY THE MOST REVEREND DR. ROWAN WILLIAMS VISITS THE HOLY LAND

The Archbishop of Canterbury of the Anglican Church the Most Reverend Dr. Rowan Williams, a scholar and writer, well disposed towards Orthodoxy, has visited the Holy Land again. Previously he had visited mainly with the aim of aiding the residents of Bethlehem and had invited His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III to participate in the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church (19 July -3 August 2008). On Sunday 8th /21st of February a reception in his honour was held at the Anglican Church of Saint George the Great Martyr in East Jerusalem by the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem His Eminence Right Reverend Suheil Dawani. Invited to this reception, amongst others were the representatives of the Christian Churches in the Holy Land, representatives of the Department on Christian Communities of the Ministry of Religion, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel and representatives of the Israeli Police in Jerusalem.

At the reception the Archbishop of Canterbury the Most Reverend Dr. Rowan Williams was welcomed on behalf of the

Anglican Church in Jerusalem by the Anglican Bishop His Eminence Suheil S. Dawani who thanked him for his visit to the Holy Land, the land where, he said, Lord Jesus Christ deigned to visit in body and was Incarnated for us, the land where a small flock resides, a Christian Community which is now decreasing due to the political tension. His Eminence Suheil Dawani expressed his wish that the mutual respect between the followers of the three Abrahamic religions will constitute the basis and the foundation for peace in Jerusalem whilst retaining its beauty, which is also essentially its diversity.

In the name of the Christian Churches in the Holy Land His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III addressed the Archbishop of Canterbury the Most Reverend Dr. Rowan Williams. His Beatitude was escorted by His Eminence Isihios Archbishop of Capitolias, His Eminence Aristarhos Archbishop of Constantina, His Eminence Dorotheos Archbishop of Avila, Hierodeacon Fr. Athanasios and the Rum-Orthodox Dr. Halil Andraous.

The address of His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III is as follows:

“Your Grace, the Most Reverend Dr Rowan Williams

Your Eminences

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Distinguished guests

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven”. (Mathew 5:13-16).

On behalf of church leaders in the holy land, We welcome His Grace, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. rowan Williams to the holy city of Jerusalem.

We are physically only a few hundred meters away from the church of the Holy Sepulcher and a relatively short travel away from Bethlehem's Church of Nativity.

Despite this close proximity between the two Holy cities, the faithful cannot visit one or the other freely. This situation can only be described as tragic. It is hugely unacceptable when political failures are expressed in restricting freedom of worship especially at a time when we, religious leaders, push for inter-religious dialogue and the principles of convergence and coexistence.

But not all dissimilar ideologies deal with their differences using the same methods practiced by politicians. The convergence between the Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion carries in its spirit a role model for bringing together diverse ideologies throughout the world.

The dialogue between Orthodox Churches and the Anglican Communion began in 1973, when the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussions held its first meeting in Oxford. Through its first phase of 1976, second phase in 1984 and the conclusion of its third phase concluded in the Cyprus Agreed Statement, considerable agreement was reached over a range of issues.

We and Our Jerusalem Patriarchate of Jerusalem share these important intentions and drive for these honorable fraternal relations.

Our convergence should be developed to include more faiths and

take hands –on forms of manifestation through cooperation to achieve justice and peace so as to ultimately bridge the distance between the church of Nativity and the church of Holy Sepulcher.

The current political misfortune lived in the Middle East, especially in our beloved Holy Land, carries within its reality tragic human experiences. We church leaders, guardians of faiths and carriers of holy messages intend and persevere to effect a continuation to merge through dialogue that produces practical unified vision on how responsibility can be taken towards achieving justice and peace and forming a conduit for diffusing tension and support for positive political action.

We speak with utmost sincerity about our existence as clergy and about efforts towards the realization of justice, peace and stability. At the same time, we have to be very cautious in taking the religious dimension of the political conflict and not to mistaken it for a political tool but rather as an integral part of the conflict's resolution.

Such responsibility may touch upon causing a change in the moral climate that governs this part of the world. Such change, given the nature of the relation between human and religion in the Holy Land, can only be achieved through the solid will of religious leaders and when encouragement is given to our respective congregations to rediscover the true meaning of justice and peace in the ultimate spiritual context.

We believe that we are in the company of one of the world leaders in promoting dialogue and coexistence. The work of Your Grace in this aspect has been inspirational, to say the least, to many of us who share the same values and vision, We

commend the statement given Al-Azhar University in Cairo in the Third anniversary of the 11th of September terrorist attacks, when Your Grace pointed that the followers of the will of God should not be led into ways of violence. This drives Us to say: no doubt in my mind that The Most Reverend Rowan Williams is one of the utmost "Orthodox" believers in justice and peace for all human kind.

We would also like to extend our thanks and gratitude to our host and friend Bishop Suheil Duawani who has showed great responsibility in supporting and cooperating with many initiatives and events that serve the purpose of promoting Justice and Peace in the Holy Land.

Thank you".

In response, the Archbishop of Canterbury the Most Reverend Dr. Rowan Williams said the following:

'For someone to live in Jerusalem or to visit it is a grace, a blessing, a gift from God, a challenge and an opportunity to self-reflect. The work of God for mankind in the Holy Land urges and implores us to empathize with Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a city in which all nations are called upon to live 'Let's rise to the mount of the Lord'. This happened on the day of Pentecost and it happens also today. Jerusalem is destined to have its gates open to everyone, but for some they are closed. For some, entrance is excluded.'

'The way of life for the inhabitants throughout the centuries in a Jerusalem which had its doors open to everyone, sets the example for peace in the present. Let's remember the words of the ancient ascetic hermits "our life and our death entirely depends upon the life and death of our neighbour. If our

neighbour lives, we live also with him; if he dies we also die with him”.

The following Monday 9th/23rd February 2010, the Archbishop of Canterbury the Most Reverend Dr. Rowan Williams, escorted by His Eminence Michael Jackson Anglican Bishop of Ireland, His Eminence Suheil Dawani Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem and other clergy, visited His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III at the Patriarchate.

During this visit His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III addressed the Archbishop of Canterbury as follows:

“Your Grace, Archbishop Rowan

Bishop Suheil,

Bishop Michael,

Your Eminences,

Dear Fathers

With great joy we welcome you, Your Grace Archbishop Rowan, and those with you, to our Patriarchate once again.

As we welcome you, we remember with deep gratitude our time with you at the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury and the Walk of Witness against Global Poverty in London in 2008. We honor you in your archpastoral ministry of peace and justice both at home and around the world, and we recognize the care and concern that you have always shown to the Holy Land. We commend your thoughtfulness, and the wisdom and discretion that always mark your words and deeds.

We are also appreciative of the way in which, by your writings and your primatial ministry, you have helped to deepen the knowledge of Orthodoxy among Western Christians and thereby helped to lay a further foundation for the unity of all Christians.

Your efforts to articulate the message of the Gospel in an increasingly secularized society are a reflection in a different place of the ministry of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem here to maintain the sacredness of Jerusalem and the integrity of the Holy Places in our region.

Jerusalem forms a kind of “universal parish”. Here millions of pilgrims come every year – Jews, Christians, Muslims and even those of no particular religious affiliation – and it is the special ministry of the Patriarchate to offer spiritual consolation and encouragement to all who come in search of the presence of God.

We know that you understand that a strong and vibrant Patriarchate ensures a strong and vibrant Christian presence in the Holy Land. We value your efforts on our behalf and we continue to ask for your prayers as we seek to be a living sign in the Holy Land of the message of mutual respect, reconciliation and peace that is our responsibility in the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in asking for your prayers we assure you of our own prayers for you and for the unity and well-being of the Anglican Communion with which, for so many generations, the Orthodox Church has enjoyed such close and mutually beneficial relations.

Despite the current tensions within the Anglican Communion, we continue to be committed to dialogue. Our dialogue helps us

all to re-discover the shared sources of the fullness of the Christian faith, especially in the Holy Scriptures as well as the Church Fathers and Saints whom we hold in common. It is by returning to the shared heritage, we believe, that we shall find the best way of healing the divisions that keep us separated from each other. For it is not in administrative structures or any form of accommodation, but in faith, that our unity in Christ will be firmly established.

This year Christians in both the East and the West enjoy the opportunity of celebrating the Feast of the Resurrection on the same day, and so we have also entered into the fast of Great Lent together.

‘Attend, O Heaven, and I will speak, and will sing of Christ, who came to dwell among us in flesh which he took from the Virgin’.

We sing these words at the beginning of Great Lent in the Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete, and they remind us of the truth that we begin Lent with the remembrance of the Incarnation of the Logos. Our celebration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy yesterday is just this, an affirmation that God came to share our human nature, and so to teach us that our human nature comes from the same divine source.

In this spirit of our common humanity redeemed by Our Lord Jesus Christ, we bestow our Patriarchal blessing on your trip to the Holy Land, and we thank you again for your visit to the Patriarchate”.

To this address the Archbishop of Canterbury the Most Reverend Dr. Rowan Williams responded broadly as follows:

'It is for us, Your Beatitude, Bishop of the Jerusalem Church, a particular pleasure to meet with you again. We highly appreciate the stance of your Church and Your acceptance and participation in the Lambeth Conference. We pray for your Church as the local Church of Jerusalem that contributed greatly in conserving the Christian presence and identity in the Holy Land. The increasing presence of Christians in the Holy Land is a gift from God to the world. This is indeed possible because the Lord said to Paul, the Apostle of the Nations: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (B' Corinthians 12,9)

Regarding the 'Sunday of Orthodoxy' which You celebrated yesterday, the Anglican Church views the decision of the 7th Ecumenical Synod on the reinstatement of the Holy Icons that they truly reflect the uncreated Light of the Lord and from Him as a source is diffused to the (faces) Saints. For all this we thank God and we thank Your Beatitude for the testimony which You give.

In light of the forthcoming visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to Gaza the following day, His Beatitude spoke regarding the support of our Patriarchate for the people who were affected during last year's clashes. His Beatitude spoke to the Archbishop of Canterbury about the financial and managerial crisis of the Middle East Council of Churches and the efforts of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to upgrade its role as a Christian organization, empowering it to be a single unified Christian voice and a testament for Christians in the Middle East and for the peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims. For this His Beatitude requested the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

When asked about his Church, the Archbishop of Canterbury explained that it is founded on the apostolic faith and

tradition, in which its structure is not hierarchical but based on a collective way of life and administration. However this system has a weakness in co-operation which sometimes creates difficulties, because each of the thirty one (31) Anglican Churches sometimes decides on its own regarding issues which require a collective undertaking and decision making process such as bioethics, sexuality and women in the priesthood, etc.

The Most Reverend Dr. Rowan Williams said 'This is why we invited other Christian Churches, like Yours, to the Lambeth Conference to listen and to be of help. We have accepted the ordination of women into the priesthood and we are already facing the ordination of women to the level of Bishop which has become a serious problem for us.

In addition the Church of England takes part constitutionally in the issuing of state laws. This privilege is difficult because the truth has to be confessed in a secular environment'.

'The Church of England has experienced a decline in the participation in sacraments of its believers over the last fifty years. In the last twenty years protestant groups have emerged with intentions rather of evangelizing and not so in participating in the sacraments.

However in the last five to six years around five hundred New Congregations of our Anglican Church have surfaced. This is encouraging, as well as the advent of approximately twenty people who were ordained into the priesthood. I consider these to be signs of God's Grace within our Church, for which we implore Your prayers'.

His Beatitude concluded by referring to the historical connections of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem with the Anglican

Church and the British Commonwealth. His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III thanked the Anglican Church for their help towards the church of Jerusalem in Qatar during the first stages of its founding there and accepted an invitation from the Archbishop of Canterbury for an official visit to the Anglican Church when time permits.

His Beatitude offered the Archbishop of Canterbury a commemorative gift for his visit to the Patriarchate, a ceramic icon of 'Theotokos of Bethlehem' and the Patriarchate's precious publication of sacred objects with illustrations from the Church of Resurrection edited by Professor Nikolaos Olymbiou. To the escort of the Archbishop, His Eminence Michael Jackson Bishop of Ireland, His Beatitude offered a book of illuminated manuscripts of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem by Professor Vokotopoulos. To the rest of the escorts, medals were given depicting 1500 years of the history of Jerusalem together with a photo album on ceremonies of Jerusalem by photographer Ms. Gali Tibbon.

The Archbishop of Canterbury kindly reciprocated by offering his Beatitude a volume of prose by English authors regarding the spirituality of the Anglican Church.

Also present at the meeting was the elderly Jerusalemite Dr. Ioannis Tlil, an old and distinguished member of the Church and Jerusalem's community, who offered to the Archbishop of Canterbury a book entitled 'I am Jerusalem'. This was followed by a commemorative photograph taken for the visit of the Anglican delegation with His Beatitude at the Throne.

Chief Secretary's Office