

MR. CHRISTOPHER PAPPAS ADDRESS TO HIS BEATITUDE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS III.

HOLY CITY OF JERUSALEM, 22-5-2012

Your Beatitude,

It is sincere privilege and profound honour to greet our esteemed guests and my fellow pilgrims of the Order of Saint Andrew to this historical and hallowed pilgrimage in the Holy Land and the sacred city of Jerusalem, where we are humble guests of Your Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, the 141ST Patriarch of the ancient Orthodox Christian Church of Jerusalem.

Your mere title, Your Beatitude, introduces us to the auspicious and awesome region that we find ourselves today. For you are the spiritual leader of the Orthodox Christians in the old city of Jerusalem and all Palestine, Syria and Arabia, beyond the Jordan River and Cana of Galilee, and finally Holy Zion. This city is one of the oldest and holiest in the world; it has been sacred to the people of the Old Testament for 3000 years and to the people of the New Testament for 2000 years. This territory has been trodden by the feet of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; it is here in Bethlehem, that Christ was born and lived, preached sermons and performed miracles, was crucified and risen. It is in the surrounding sanctified waters that Christ was baptized, walked on the sea, and healed the paralytic. It is from here that Christianity spread like fire throughout the world. And it is here that your revered predecessor, Apostle Iacovos, the brother of our Lord, presided over the first Church Council at which gathered the

Holy Apostles and Disciples of our risen Savior Jesus Christ.

As you know, Your Beatitude, the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America are the devoted lay servants and committed defenders of the Sacred See of Saint Andrew, the first called of the Apostles. Yet, we all hold in the highest esteem the maternal source and spiritual birthplace of the Christian Church, which was established on the day of Pentecost with the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ's disciples.

It is truly a blessing and inspiration for us to be here during this Paschal Season. We will be able to chant Christ is Risen before the empty tomb of our Lord. We will be here, on the divine day of the Ascension of our Lord, as it is says in the Creed, when He "ascended into heaven to sitat the right hand of the Father". What we will experience in the coming days will remain in our minds and in our hearts for the rest of our lives. It can never be adequately described with words; it can only fittingly be honored with silence.

We thank you for your hospitality, Your Beatitude and for the honor you've given us by being our most distinguished guest this evening. We also assure you of our love and support in your sacred of history.

Thank you.

Archon Christopher Pappas,

appointed Regional Commander of

South Central United States