THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

A message from Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem on the anniversary of the meeting in Amman



His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of the Holy City of Jerusalem and All Palestine sent a message to the Primates of all Autocephalous Orthodox Churches. The letter was received by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'.

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus noted that he is writing the letter on the anniversary of the meeting of the Primates and delegations of Local Orthodox Churches which took place in Amman, the capital of Jordan, on February 26, 2020. One of the main goals of that meeting was to find solutions to the Ukrainian crisis.

Read the full letter below:

Our Orthodox unity is our daily prayer

My dear Brothers, fellow Primates and Concelebrants in the Lord Jesus Christ,

One year ago this week, we gathered in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to build our common fellowship in the pursuit of a dialogue of love for the sake of the unity of the Local Orthodox Churches. After two days of prayer and fraternal discussion, we emerged with greater determination to pursue deeper communion, and to address our common challenges together.

None of us imagined that we were meeting on the cusp of a global health catastrophe the scale of which has not been seen in our lifetimes. We remember before God our late brother Patriarch Irinej of Serbia, who was with us in Jordan, and who is now asleep in the Lord. We pray that God may grant him rest with the saints in the place of refreshment and light. We pray daily, remembering each of you, offering our praise, thanksgiving, and intercessions, and knowing that *His grace is sufficient for us, whose power is made perfect in our weakness* (cf 2 Cor. 12:9).

This pandemic has required us all to look to our own communities, those whom God has called us to serve, to lift up their hearts from despair and turn to the Lord who gives us hope. For we know that *while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God* (Rom. 5:8-9).

Here in our own Holy City of Jerusalem, we have been strengthened and sustained by your prayers. As has been true across the world, our fellow human beings in the Holy Land have suffered hardship through the pandemic. We ask that you continue to pray for us, as we continually pray for you from the Life-Giving Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is merciful, and has given to his creatures the knowledge and skill to develop medicines and vaccines to end this deadly pandemic. As we look forward to brighter days this year, we are reminded of our common commitment to gather for prayer and fellowship. We pray that this may be possible later in this year.

Let us continue to uphold one another in prayer, and seek ways in which our Local Orthodox Churches might bring hope, blessing, and joy to one another. For Saint Paul says, *Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ* (Gal. 6:2). We also join together in prayer for our brother, His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, and our fellow Orthodox primates, and we look forward to serving together to further the unity of our communion.

As we begin our pre-Lenten preparation for the great feast of Pascha, we listen to these words of hymnographer of the Triodion:

Brethren, let us not pray as the Pharisee: for he who exalts himself shall be humbled. Let us humble ourselves before God, and with fasting cry aloud as the Publican: God be merciful to us sinners. (Vespers of the Sunday of the Publican and Sinner)

With brotherly love in Christ.

THEOPHILOS III
Patriarch of Jerusalem

Holy City of Jerusalem
Wednesday, February 24th, 2021

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