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MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS III FOR THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM SUMMIT 2021



In a brief speech, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III delivered a message to the International Religious Freedom Summit, which is scheduled to take place next July in Washington, DC. He expressed the ongoing challenges faced by the Christians of the Holy Land and the difficulties that the Corona pandemic continues to cause on the social and economic level.

His speech was as follow:

“Greetings from the Holy City of Jerusalem. Thank you for inviting us to join you at this important summit. We are sorry not to be able to be with you in person this year.

It is an honor to serve as the 141st Patriarch of Jerusalem. Following an unbroken line of succession of the first Bishop of the church of Jerusalem, Saint James the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This continued presence of the Church in the Holy Land is a blessing from the Divine Providence. For here took place the Divine-Human encounter.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the recent unrest that the Holy Land witnessed has brought immense suffering and challenges to our people.

Our churches and clergy are regularly subjected to intimidation and harassment from certain radical groups. These groups are disturbed by our Christian presence in this land, and this is why they show no respect or tolerance to the multicultural and multireligious character of the Holy Land, nor the sanctity to our holy sites.

Therefore, your concern at the IRF Summit and organizations like the International Community of the Holy Sepulchre, are a great encouragement to us here.

Your efforts to advocate religious freedom and tackle the forces that seek to undermine it, is crucial here in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Please remember us throughout your meetings as we hold you in our prayers. We wish you success in your meeting.

On behalf of the Church of Jerusalem, Thank You.”

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