

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 10TH ACADEMIC CONSULTATION  
BETWEEN JUDAISM AND ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY  
JERUSALEM, DECEMBER 5-7, 2017

The 10<sup>th</sup> Academic Consultation between Orthodox Christianity and Judaism on “The Significance of Jerusalem in the Two Faith Traditions” took place from December 5-7, 2017, co-sponsored by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC). His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I presided at this year’s proceedings. IJCIC was led at the Consultation by its chair, Rabbi Daniel Polish. The gathering marked the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the dialogue and was held in the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem with meetings at the Dan Panorama Hotel. The meeting was coordinated by Rabbi David Rosen, former chair of IJCIC and American Jewish Committee International Director of Interreligious Relations and His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, who heads the office of Interreligious and Intercultural Affairs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The meeting opened at the Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center with a welcome from His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem followed by an address from His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Rabbi Daniel Polish conveyed words of welcome on behalf of IJCIC. Sharon Regev, Director of the Department of World Religions at the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ambassador Bikas Konstantinos, Ambassador of Greece in Israel offered official greetings on behalf of their respective Ministries to the participants.

The next day, Metropolitan Emmanuel of France opened the dialogue with welcoming remarks and an introductory address. His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem presented the first paper of the conference in which he discussed “The Historic Place and Role of the Patriarchate in Jerusalem.” Professor Dan Bahat then offered a description of recent “Archeological Insights into Jewish Jerusalem,” in which he provided insights into the evolution of the Temple Mount as a sacred site and its importance to both the Jewish and Christian traditions. Professor Spyridon Tsitsigkos, representing the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, described the patristic understanding of the Holy City in his paper, “Jerusalem as an Archetypal House of the Religious.”

Following these presentations, a congratulatory message was read from Archbishop Chrysostomos II of Nova Justiniana and All Cyprus. Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Zakynthos presented a description of the rescue of the Jewish population of the island of Zakynthos by his predecessor, Metropolitan Chrysostomos and the local mayor Loukás Karrer, both of whom were recognized as “Righteous among the Nations” by the Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem, on behalf of the Jewish people.

IJCIC Vice-Chair Rabbi Noam Marans spoke on “The Spiritual Significance of Jerusalem in the Jewish Tradition” and offered insights on the special place the city has in the Jewish consciousness, both in Israel and for Jews throughout the world. Bishop Jovan of Slavonia addressed the importance of holy sites and the return to sacred lands in both the Orthodox Christian and Jewish traditions.

After the presentations, the participants travelled to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was awarded the degree of Doctor Philosophiae Honoris Causa which was presented by Prof. Asher Cohen, President of Hebrew University. His All-Holiness spoke about religion’s role as a positive force in the world and called on people of faith to reject fundamentalism and violence.

The final morning session, chaired by IJCIC Treasurer Rabbi David Sandmel, featured Dr. Yuval Baruch, the Jerusalem District Archaeologist of the Israel Antiquities Authority who discussed the many archeological projects in Jerusalem including the recent work conducted at the Holy Sepulcher. Following this presentation, participants engaged in a discussion of the previous day's proceedings and various current issues.

The consultation made the recommendation that Christian pilgrims have the opportunity to be introduced to the Jewish experience in Israel during their visits to the Holy Land including preparatory sessions with Jewish leaders in their homelands.

Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia offered a concluding statement on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In his remarks, His Eminence referenced the ways in which Jerusalem binds our two traditions together and affords us the opportunity to respond to the scriptural call to relationship.

Rabbi David Polish closed the session with a reflection on the consultation. He mentioned that it was indeed a special honor to have His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew present and looked forward to future gatherings.