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From the Eastern Churches

Resignation of the Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites

Letter of the Holy Father to the Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites

Curricula vitae

Resignation of the Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites

The Holy Father Francis has accepted the resignation from the pastoral care of the Greek Melkite Church presented by His Beatitude Gregory III Laham, Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites.

By law, the Administrator of the Greek Melkite Church, until the election of the Patriarch, is His Excellency Jean-Clément Jeanbart, archbishop of Aleppo of the Greek Melkites, the most senior by ordination of the bishops of the permanent Synod.

Letter of the Holy Father to the Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites

**To His Beatitude Gregory III Laham
Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites
and all the Bishops of this Church**

Beatitude and Venerable Brothers in Christ,

In my solicitude for all the Churches, I address myself to you, grateful for your service to the People of God and

aware of your responsibility as pastors.

Since the meeting of the Synod of Bishops last February, His Beatitude, at the hearing I granted him, spontaneously presented me with his renunciation of the patriarchal office, asking me to decide on the most favourable moment to accept it. After careful prayer and reflection, I consider it opportune and necessary for the good of the Greek Melkite Church to accept his resignation today.

In thanking His Beatitude, a zealous servant of the People of God, for his years of generous service to his Church and for keeping the attention of the international community focused on the tragedy of Syria, I invoke upon you all the intercession of the Holy Mother of God and willingly give my apostolic blessing to our dear Greek Melkite Church as a sign of grace and encouragement for the future of communion and witness of the Gospel.

From the Vatican, 6 May 2017

FRANCIS

Curricula vitae

His Beatitude Gregory III

His Beatitude Gregory III (Loufti) Laham was born on 15 December in Daraya, Syria, in the archieparhcy of Damascus. He entered the Basilian Order of the Most Holy Saviour of the Melkites, and gave his perpetual vows on 20 January 1952. He then completed his studies in Rome, at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, and was ordained a priest on 15 January 1959.

After returning to Lebanon, he became rector of the seminary of his order, and taught theology and liturgy. His apostolate then continued both in Lebanon and in Syria, with particular attention to the aspects of youth pastoral ministry.

Elected to the archiepiscopal see of Tarso of the Greek Melkites on 9 September 1981, he received episcopal ordination on 27 November 1981, with the office of auxiliary and protosyncellus of Jerusalem of the Greek Melkites.

The Synod of Bishops of the Greek Melkite Church, on 29 November 2000, canonically elected him as Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites, following the resignation of His Beatitude Maximos V. As the new Patriarch he assumed the name Gregory III. The day following his election, His Beatitude asked Pope St. John Paul II for "ecclesiastical communion", which he received on 9 December of the same year.

In the years of the ongoing crisis in Syria, His Beatitude Gregory III has shown a great yearning for peace, commitment to reconciliation and paternal closeness to his faithful.

His Excellency Msgr. Jean-Clément Jeanbart

Msgr. Jean-Clément Jeanbart was born in Aleppo on 3 March 1943 ; after being ordained a priest on 15 April 1968 he continued his specialist studies in Rome.

From 1968 to 1972 he served as a parish priest in Aleppo; he was subsequently appointed as rector of the St. Anna Major Seminary in Raboueh and taught moral theology and canon law at the St. Paul Institute in Harissa, Lebanon.

On 2 August 1995, the Synod of Bishops of the Greek Melkite Church canonically elected him archbishop of Aleppo of the Greek Melkites. On 16 September of the same year he received episcopal consecration.
