

# NEW YEAR CAKE CEREMONY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday evening 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016/13<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the New Year Cake ceremony took place at the Patriarchate's hall. In the ceremony His H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos gave the following address:

***“Behold now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation”***

*(2 Cor. 6:2).*

*Behold now is the right time, behold, now is the day of salvation, the Apostle of Nations St. Paul proclaims.*

*Our Holy Church, which is the prolonged throughout the centuries body of Christ, inside the world, not only salutes, but also evangelizes the entrance of the New Year through the hagiographic Sunday words : **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”** (Isaiah 61:1-2, Luke 4: 18-19).*

*In other words, my dear brothers and sisters, the consideration of the meaning of time is not made understood **“through cunningly devised fables”** (2 Peter 1:16), but **“according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began”** (Romans 16:25), of the incarnation of God the Logos and our Saviour Jesus Christ, consubstantial with the Holy Spirit and co-creator of all visible and invisible things.*

*This is the understanding of time that our Holy Church offers,*

not as a worldly social organization, but as the body of Christ, of which, according to St. Paul we are members (Eph. 5:30). This very Christ is **"Him which is, and which was and which is to come"** (Rev. 1:4). This means that the Church introduces in the world the eternity in Christ and co-expands towards it. Inside therefore the Church, where time becomes course, the memory of the past becomes memory in Christ. And the hope of the future becomes hope in Christ. For this reason the wise Paul says, recalling the words of the Prophet Isaiah (49:8): **"In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"** (2 Cor. 6:2).

The great and distinguished Church Father St. Basil, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, whose annual memory coincides with the beginning of the New Year and therefore with the feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, God and Saviour Christ, calls us in this modest ceremony held in his honour, namely the cutting of the New Year cake, to consider that **"for our sin we were stranded on earth, and for the philanthropy of our creator we were recalled to heaven"**.

And thus, **"we journey towards our in Christ recall to heaven during the Eucharistic time of the Divine Liturgy, when the human mind is transferred from the "present things to those of the future"**, according to St. Basil the Great.

Moreover, referring to the relevance of time, Apostle Peter encourages the faithful towards repentance by saying: **"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"**.

Taking under consideration the contemplation of time according to Christ, let us implore the Hierarch of Cappadocia Basil the Great, to pray to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls and for the peace of the world and of our region. And together with the hymn writer let us say: **"Thou who hast**

***created all things in wisdom, pre-eternal Word of the Father, and established the whole creation by your mighty word, bless the New Year of Thy virtuousness and preserve our venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, our Christian congregation and our Holy City, granting the world Thy great mercy through the prayers of Theotokos", Amen.***

*Many Happy Returns!"*

Immediately afterwards the Apolytikion of the Circumcision of the Lord and that of St. Basil's "Thy proclamation hast gone out to all the earth" were sung, and His Beatitude blessed the faithful by saying: "have an auspicious, peaceful and blessed New Year 2017".

Consequently, while the School students sang the New Year carols and other songs, His Beatitude distributed the pieces of the New Year Cake to the people honouring the ceremony, the Greek Consul General in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, the Archbishops of the Patriarchate and the other Hagiotaphite Fathers, the monks and the nuns, the members of the Greek community, the members of our Arab-speaking congregation and all participants at the ceremony.

After the ceremony the School students sang the carols to the Fathers of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and to the members of the Greek community.

From Secretariat-General

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