

# THE FIRST PART OF THE SALUTATIONS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday evening of the First Week of Great Lent, at the Catholicon of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection and within the Service of the Great Compline, the Canon of the Theotokos was sung and the First Part of the Salutations to the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary was recited by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who officiated the whole Service; singing on the right was the Choir Leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos, and on the left Mr. George Alvanos with the help of Archimandrite Demetrios. Present were the noble congregation of monks, nuns and laity, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and other members of the Greek Consulate.

At this Service, His Beatitude gave a Sermon to the faithful as follows:

*“The Archangel was sent from Heaven to cry ‘Rejoice!’ to the Theotokos. And beholding You, O Lord, taking bodily form, he stood in awe, and with his bodiless voice he cried aloud to her such things as these: Rejoice, you through whom joy shall shine forth. Rejoice, you through whom the curse will vanish. Rejoice, the Restoration of fallen Adam. Rejoice, the Redemption of the tears of Eve.”*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Noble Christians,*

*Our Holy Orthodox Church, as a caring mother, invites us to participate in the joy of the glorious feast of the Resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. For this*

reason it has appointed the holy and Great Lent, the fasting period before Easter. And fasting, according to the hymn writer of the Church is "the mother of chastity, the judge against sin and pleader of repentance, the life of the Angels and the salvation of the people".

The Ever-Virgin Mary became abettor and participant for the salvation of the people, by becoming a chosen vessel and a vessel of the Holy Spirit, or to be more precise, Theotokos and Mother of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The incarnation of God the Logos from the pure blood of the Most Blessed Mary through the Holy Spirit, redeemed our human nature from the curse, that is, the curse of Eve, through which sin and death entered the world in the first place.

In other words, according to St. Maximus, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary "by giving birth to the incarnate Logos and Son of God, contemplated on earth the mystery of the recreation of our human nature and the salvation of all the world, which is our Lord Jesus Christ and God, He who united with Himself those who had been separated from Him, and vanished the curse of the world". Behold therefore, why the hymn writer exclaims through the Angel's voice to Theotokos Mary: "Rejoice, you through whom joy shall shine forth. Rejoice, you whom the curse will vanish". And furthermore, "Rejoice, the Restoration of fallen Adam. Rejoice, the Redemption of the tears of Eve".

Through His salvific crucified blood and resurrection from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, in his deified human nature resurrected together with Him the nature of the fallen Adam. Through His resurrection, Christ becomes the new Adam, the restored to his former glory man. While Theotokos and Virgin Mary becomes the new Eve, the one who obeys to the Will of God the Father: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38) said Mariam to Archangel Gabriel. That is why again the hymn writer says to Theotokos: "Rejoice, you through whom creation is renewed".

*Our Holy Church honours exceedingly the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, because without her participation, on her Annunciation by Archangel Gabriel, the unfathomable bounties of Christ, meaning the mystery of the Divine Providence and the salvation of man, would have remained unknown to us humans, just as St. Paul preaches, that by revelation Christ made known to him the mystery (Eph. 3:3), and adds: " Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:8-11).*

*And Church, again according to St. Paul, is the body of Christ (Col. 1:24), while Christ "is the head of the body of the Church" (Col. 1:18). This means that while the bodiless God the Logos, Christ, receives a body from the Virgin Mary, likewise, the Church receives its worldly existence from Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, as St. John of Damascus praises her: Rejoice our Lady Theotokos, through whom for our sakes, the bodiless receives a body, the pre-eternal receives a beginning, and the One who cannot be contained is contained in you.*

*In other words, my beloved ones, the Theotokos and Mother of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ is distinguished not only as Mother of Jesus Christ, but also as Mother of the Church. Thanks to Theotokos Mary we have received the name Christian nation of her Son and God and we have nationalized in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, as St. John of Damascus exclaims: "Rejoice, the one by whom we have been named Christian nation of your Son and God. Rejoice, the one by whom we have been nationalized in the One, Holy, Catholic and*

*Apostolic Church".*

*The Church of Christ and His people rejoice in the Most Blessed Theotokos, because she intercedes to her Son and God for all who resort to her motherly help and protection. The hymn writer of the Church writes; More honourable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the heavenly hosts, most praised Theotokos; we sinners confess you are our true salvation and in you we find protection in our temptations; therefore do not cease interceding for us, as you are the stronghold and refuge of our souls.*

*The more honourable than the Cherubim and most praised Theotokos let us implore, so that by her Motherly help and protection we may go through the fasting period of the holy and Great Lent, in repentance and renewal of our souls, and that way we may be found worthy of the joy and the enlightening power of the never setting and eternal light of the glorious resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.*

From Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/ut6FI1bpcC0>

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