

HIS BEATITUDE'S THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM NAME DAY (2017)

On Saturday, 12th/25th March 2017, the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was celebrated (transferred from Wednesday) by the Patriarchate. His Beatitude bears the name of one of the Holy Forty Martyrs of the lake of Sabastia in Pontus, who celebrate on 9th March.

1. In the evening

On Friday evening the feast began with the reading of the 9th Hour at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen.

Afterwards, bells tolling, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood descended at the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection. There, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and the Hagiotaphite Fathers venerated the Holy Deposition Shrine and the Holy Sepulchre, and then having put on His cloak, He gave the blessing in the Catholicon and Great Vespers began, with the Great Entrance and the Blessing of Bread. Meanwhile, the Archbishops of the Holy Synod venerated the Horrendous Golgotha and the Deacons performed the incense procedure around the Shrines. At the end of Vespers, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood headed for the Patriarchate quarters.

2. On the Day of the Feast

On Saturday morning, 12th/25th March 2017, after the descend at the Church of the Resurrection and the veneration of the Holy Deposition and the Holy Sepulchre, His Beatitude was dressed in His cloak and entered the Catholicon, blessed and went up on the Throne, and the procedure of the prayers to receive the blessing from both the Priests and His Beatitude followed, while the Choir Leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection was chanting festal hymns.

Once His Beatitude and the Archbishops were dressed in their liturgical vestments, the Divine Liturgy began in the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, led by His Beatitude, with concelebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia, and the Most Reverend Archbishops: Alexios of Tiberias, Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Nectarios of Anthedona, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, and Arab-speaking Presbyters of the Patriarchate, the Hierodeacons Eulogios, Anastasios and Archdeacon Mark. Singing were the choir leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the Consul Mr. Koenis, other members of the Greek Consulate and many pilgrims.

After the Holy Eucharist and the Dismissal, a Doxology for His Beatitude's feast took place at the centre of Catholicon, with the participation of the concelebrants Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Hieromonks. At the end of the Doxology, the Patriarchal Entourage headed for the Patriarchate. There at the Reception Hall, Geronda Secretary-General addressed His Beatitude as follows:

Address of Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina on His Beatitude's our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Name Day

H.B. Theophilos III

9th March 2017

Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

The Memory of the Holy Forty Martyrs, who suffered cold and other similar tortures for their confession of Christ in the lake of Sebastia in Pontus, is celebrated by Church today, in the beginning of March, and in the middle of Great Lent. This feast is before us today, as a strong hortatory challenge and encouraging reinforcement for the continuation of our spiritual struggle towards a worthily participation in the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the Mother of Churches and the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in it, the memory of these Great and Holy Forty Martyrs is associated with the feast of Your Holy Beatitude's Name Day, as you God-lovingly bear the name of one of them, the Holy Martyr Theophilus.

For this double occasion of the memory of the Holy Forty Martyrs and Your Name Day, the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist was celebrated, and a thanksgiving Doxology was sang in the middle of the earth, where our God worked our salvation and where the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection stands, with the participation of all the members of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, the Clergy and laity from near and afar places belonging to the jurisdiction of our Patriarchate.

Continuing the prayer we started in the Temple, for Your Beatitude's health and longevity, we conclude now in this historic Hall of the Throne, and express all that is worthy, demure and praising, as proven by Your works, that befit You.

And we commence by saying that Your Beatitude's distinguishing pastoral concern, care and diligence for our Greek-Orthodox Arab-speaking congregation has been once again unceasing, manifested at Your pastoral visits either at the feasts with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the preaching of the Divine word, or by providing financial aid on different occasions of need, according to the measure and the ability of the Patriarchate. On this field, with the financial aid of the Patriarchate, we celebrated recently the inauguration of the

Holy Church of St. George of the border Community of Pkea in north Israel, and the suitable for it Priest was ordained. Caring for the Arab-speaking congregation, Your Beatitude has recently started the procedure for the operation of the Joint Council, an institution which specifies the participation limits of laity in matters concerning the Patriarchate.

The places of worship and estate rights of our Patriarchate were likewise protected and secured, as in the cases of the property of the Monastery of St. Theodosios, in the surrounding area of St. Savvas' Lavra, which is a no construction area, and in the Metochion of Gethsemane opposite the Church of the Resurrection, which was in danger by the treacherous and illegally occupying the neighbouring guesthouse Israeli settlers. In order to safeguard these property rights of the Patriarchate, large sums of money were paid to court and lawyers' fees.

The humanitarian activity of our Patriarchate was made manifest again in practice, by the third visit of Your Beatitude in the Syrian refugees' camp in Zaatar in Jordan, where humanitarian help prepared by the Patriarchate's office in Amman, was offered.

All the above, Your Beatitude, took place while for more than one year, lying on Your shoulders, was the responsibility and the care in both theory and practice of the work of the restoration, conservation and rehabilitation project of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, according to the study of the Interdisciplinary Team of the N.T.U.A. under the coordination of the present with us today, Professor Antonia Moropoulou, with the financial contribution of noble donators, whose names are in the book of life. This work, is the capping stone of Your works, as a difficult task was made easy, and what was impossible was made possible, for which Your Beatitude first of all, and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood who cooperated with willingness and devotion with You, are able to boast modestly, for they have added a fixative and sustaining

stone to the pre-existing work of Komnenos and our Fathers, as an eternal mark of the religious peace-making and cultural mission of our blessed nation in the history and glory of the Resurrected from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sincerely congratulating Your Beatitude for these, I raise my glass on behalf of the Brotherhood, wishing you undiminished health for as many years as possible, peace, solidarity and governmental power, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, towards the creation of more good works for the benefit of our Holy Congregation and the glory of our Trinitarian worshiped God. So be it."

His Beatitude was also addressed by His Excellency the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, as follows:

"Your Beatitude, Most Reverend Fathers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's feast is of special significance to all of us, as the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the noble Congregation, among which are those who serve at the Greek Consulate, honour the Name Day of the Head of the Zion Church, the Mother of Churches, His Holy Beatitude's the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

It is a special honour as well as joy for me to be present at this feast for the first time since the undertaking of my duties in Jerusalem. On this occasion, I would like, Your Beatitude, to convey on behalf of the Greek Government, its unwavering confidence and support towards the Patriarchate, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and You personally, together with the recognition and our admiration for the multi-task work that you, tirelessly and with self-denial perform. Allow me to express our most sincere and heartfelt wishes for health, longevity and strength, so that you continue to accomplish Your important mission.

Only a few days after the bright ceremony of the completion of

the restoration project of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, which inspired admiration and deep respect to Christians worldwide, we are given the opportunity to recognize that this project would have never been materialized without Your historic initiative, Your vision and sense of great responsibility for the protection of the exaltation of the shrines, which as You Yourself emphasized, reconciles peoples, nations and cultures, and constitutes an eloquent witness of our common human nature, our common destiny.

Your Beatitude,

The sincere disposition for understanding and reconciliation that You demonstrate and systematically cultivate, not only for the relationship with the other Doctrines and Religions, but also in the broader reconciliation and peace-making effort in this unsettled region, adds moral authority and status to the Jerusalem Patriarchate, rendering it an institution of moderation and stability, amidst an era of uncertainty, instability and reorganizations which seem to favour fanaticism, intolerance and tensions.

Jerusalem Patriarchate is certainly a stable point of reference for the Greeks worldwide and symbolizes our long presence in the Holy Land, while it is an indestructible bond of friendship and cooperation with other nations, as it also is representative of the Orthodox Christians in the region, preserving precious traditions and conveying the Ecumenical message of Orthodoxy to all destinations. For all of us, the Holy Institution is the trustee of the most important Holy Shrines of Christianity, which are being defended with devotion and self-denial by the Hagiotaphite Fathers.

Your Beatitude,

Both the Greek Government and the faithful Greeks surround You with love and devotion. Officers and others gather at the Patriarchate as pilgrims, as we witnessed a few days ago,

proving the significance they attach to Your work, and the work of the Hagiotaphite Fathers.

Among them, we also pray that You may have health, strength and longevity for the benefit of the Patriarchate, the Brotherhood, Your Greek Orthodox Congregation, Orthodoxy and peace in the Holy Land. Many Happy Returns."

His Beatitude was also likewise addressed by representatives of other Orthodox Churches and congregations, which are shown at the rendering of thanks of His Beatitude at His address below:

"O wondrous prizewinners, with minds staunch with courage, as ye endured the pains of martyrdom nobly, ye passed through fire and water, O ye valiant men, coming out into the breadth of eternal salvation; ye gained the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven..." the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Your Excellency Consul-General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

"Let us rejoice in the Lord, let us shout with jubilation unto God our Saviour" (Psalm 94:1); for He has granted us the Communion of His Heavenly and Immortal Mysteries at the celebration of the bloodless sacrifice at the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection, on the memory of the Holy and Great Forty Martyrs of Sebastia, as well as the Great Martyr Theophilos, our guardian and advocate.

These Saints were distinguished for their unanimous and wholehearted confession of their faith to crucified and resurrected from the dead Christ in front of their persecutors, the idolaters, who did not succeed in dissuading the Martyrs. For this reason, being naked in mid-winter, they

were condemned to spend the night in the middle of the lake by the city of Sebastia, where they suffered a martyrs' death as their hymn writer says: "The Martyrs, O Christ God, esteemed the lake as Paradise and the cold as warmth. The threats of the tyrants did not affright their mind, nor did the noble Saints fear the assaults of torments, since they possessed the Cross as a divine weapon; for with it, as mighty men, they put the enemy to flight. Wherefore, they have also received the crown of grace".

The Sacred Memory of these Holy and Great Martyrs is especially honoured by our Holy Orthodox Church, and this is done during the period of the Great Lent. And this is so because the Holy Martyrs went through fire and water and entered the Kingdom of Heaven, fulfilling by their works the prophetic word of Prophet David: "We went through fire and water and Thou didst bring us out into refreshment" (Psalm 65:12).

Partakers of this experience were the friends and preachers of the Gospel of love and righteousness and of the light of the salvific truth of Christ, the Holy Apostles and all who faithfully followed them, the Holy Martyrs, teachers and God-bearers Prelates of our Church.

Our Mediocrity, bearing the name of Martyr Theophilos, who participated in the chorea of the Holy Forty Martyrs of Christ's love, we render glory and thanks to the Holy Consubstantial and Life-Giving and Undivided Trinity on this Sacred Feast of our spiritual rebirth in Christ, but also for our calling to the Apostolic and Institutional position, of the Head of the Most Holy Church of Jerusalem on the one hand, and on the other hand, of the Hegoumen of the Order of Monks of the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

Today's festal day, amidst the reverend and distinguished members of the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, Archbishops, Hieromonks, Priests, Deacons and Monks, as well

as Clergy of our brotherly Holy Orthodox Churches, and the participation of the faithful Christians of our Congregation, grants us with a great honour and an even greater responsibility "as those who must give account to the Lord" according to St. Paul's command: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

"For an honour to the Martyr is the imitation of a Martyr" St. Chrysostom preaches. This means that the way by which Christ's Martyr is praised, is the steadfast imitation of his faith and virtue during his life in Christ, by us who festively celebrate his Sacred Memory.

The blood of the martyrdom in Christ of the Holy Forty Martyrs and of the Holy Martyr Theophilos with them, calls all of us today to vigilance, so that the light of the witness of the sons of Christ's light may not be put out. "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thes. 5:17-19).

We therefore say this, because the darkness of the persecutors of Christ has made its appearance in our contemporary era with the form of the most demonic terrorism which plagues humanity as a whole.

Let us thus entreat the Holy Martyrs who have parressia before God the Father, so that by their prayers and the intercession of the Most Blessed our Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, we may bear witness in this world of the martyria of love, peace and righteousness of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and we may be found worthy to celebrate the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For all these, we pray for all who have been praying with us

and have honoured this feast, that you may have the strength from on high, the grace of the Holy Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing from God. We express our heartfelt thanks to those who addressed Us, Geronda Secretary-General, Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy Synod and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Russia, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Romania, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Joppa, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Philotheos, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Acre – Ptolemaida, Reverend Fr. Charalambos Bansour, who spoke on behalf of St. James Cathedral, Professor Mrs. Moropoulou, the Zion Patriarchal School Director and teacher, Mr. Nikolaos Souliotis, and all participants in this feast.

To the health of every one of us!"

The reception at the Reception Hall of the Patriarchate was followed by a festal meal. The above mentioned Church Services were broadcast live by the Jerusalem Patriarchate radio station.

From Secretariat-General

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