

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM OFFICIATES A CHRISTENING IN NAZARETH

On Saturday afternoon, 5th August / 23rd July 2017, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Sacrament of Christening of the grandchildren of a distinguished member of our Arab-speaking Community, at the Holy Church of the Sacred Shrine of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Nazareth.

Inaugurating these twin children as members of our Orthodox Church, His Beatitude gave the following address:

“ Brothers, so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death”... “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him” St. Paul preaches (Romans 6: 3-11).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today a planting of truth has been planted in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who bestows upon the baptized the blessed purification, the divine blessing and regeneration. And this planting of truth are the newly baptized servants of God Psara & Sharif, who have been reborn through water and spirit and sealed with the seal of the gift of the Holy and Almighty and worshiped Spirit. “...according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour” St. Paul preaches(Titus 3:5-6).

The renewing through the washing of regeneration is nothing but the second birth in Christ through the Holy Spirit, as the wise Paul confesses by saying: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). This means that you are sons of God, because as many of you have been baptized in the Name of Christ believing Him to be the Saviour, you have put on Christ and have been united with Him.

And in what way do we put on Christ? The Lord says: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). This very divine light, namely Christ, we put on and are surrounded with. According to great Photios "We are surrounded outwardly by Christ and His Holy Spirit not in the manner of wearing a garment, but by filling the heart and the thoughts with light and the face with grace."

In other words, my dear brothers, today, by the participation of all of us in the great sacrament of the christening of the newly baptized servants of God Psara & Sharif, we have become witnesses of their death and regeneration in Christ God and His Holy Church. And we say this, because having being baptized on the faith in Christ, the newly baptized have done so in His death.

They have died together with Him as far as sin is concerned, and the old man has been mortified in them. And just as Christ was risen from the tomb after He had died, likewise the baptized through descend in the water, come out of the font as new people, in order to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4) displaying a holy life that is in accordance with the commandments of Christ and the teaching of our One, Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church. Amen."

From Secretariat-General

