

THE CUTTING OF THE NEW YEAR CAKE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

The traditional cutting of the New Year Cake on the commemoration of St. Basil and the New Civil Year 2018 took place at the Reception Hall of the Patriarchate on Saturday evening December 31, 2017 / January 13, 2018.

The ceremony was attended by Hagiotaphite Fathers, clergy of the Patriarchate, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, pilgrims from Greece and faithful from the Patriarchate's congregation from various regions.

In this ceremony His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the guests as follows:

“And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1.7)

Today our Holy Church has gathered us all in this sacred place of the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem, in order to give thanks to the Holy Trinitarian God for the change of the year of the goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Philip. 2:6-7).

The changing of the year of the Lord's goodness, namely our Ecclesiastical Year, coincides with the historic time of man's life on earth, and according to the psalmist: “As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more” (Ps. 103:15-16).

And we say this because the perception of the meaning of time

as past, present and future, is not being understood "by 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 Incarnate God and Logos and our Saviour Jesus Christ who was born from the pure blood of the Ever Virgin Mary and is of one essence with the Holy Spirit, according to the true witness of the words of the Bible: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me...To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Isaiah 61:1-2/Luke 4:18-19).

It is precisely this "Spirit of the Lord" the Holy Spirit of Christ which brings together and composes the institution of the mystical body of the Church in the world, that we should entreat at the beginning of the new year and say along with the wise Paul "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but 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" (Titus 3:4-6). And this Christ is "him which is, and which was, and which is to come" (Rev. 1:4).

It is evident through these revealing words that the Church introduces Christ's eternity within our historic reality, and it is being extended towards this eternity. And inside the Church, where the year becomes time, namely the quantity becomes quality, according to Ammonios, the memory of the past becomes memory in Christ. And the hope of the future becomes hope in Christ. For this reason, St. Paul quotes Prophet Isaiah (49:8) when he says "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

This anticipated time and the day of salvation refer to both the feast of the circumcision in the flesh of our Lord and God

and Saviour Christ, and to the annual commemoration of our Father among the Saints Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia; in his honour we keep the Ecclesiastical custom of cutting the New Year Cake which bears his name.

This festal Ecclesiastical and Patriarchal event calls us to consider the words of Solomon's wisdom: "For thou loves all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made: for never wouldest thou have made any thing, if thou hadst hated it" (Wisdom of Solomon 11:23-24).

Behold my dear ones, the arena of repentance is being opened before us. This is what the beginning of the new year of the Church offers to us. This is the manner of celebrating the beginning of the new year. According to the Wisdom of Solomon: "For he hath given me certain knowledge of the things that are, namely, to know how the world was made, and the operation of the elements: The beginning, ending, and midst of the times: the alterations of the turning of the sun, and the change of seasons: The circuits of years, and the positions of stars" (Wisdom of Solomon 7:17-19).

Taking under consideration the meaning of Time according to our God Jesus Christ, let us entreat the Great Hierarch Basil of Cappadocia, who has enriched the morals of the people, to intercede to our Saviour, who was circumcised in the flesh, for our souls and for the peace of the whole world, as well as for the peace in the much suffering region of the Middle East. Let us say with the hymn writer: "O Maker of all creation Who hast established the times and the seasons in Thine own power; Bless the crown of this year with Thy goodness, O Lord, and keep our rulers and Thy flock in peace, by the intercessions of the Theotokos" and Ever-Virgin Mary; keep in peace our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, our Christian Congregation the Holy City of Jerusalem and our noble nation. Amen.

Have an auspicious, happy and blessed New Year 2018.

Many Happy Returns!

Following His Beatitude's address festal hymns of the day were chanted and His Beatitude cut the New Year Cake wishing a happy New Year to all. While His Beatitude was distributing the pieces of the cake, the Zion School students were singing the carols. Likewise, the students sang the carols at His Beatitude's house of residence and at the houses of many Hagiotaphite Fathers.

On behalf of the young people of our congregation, some young people addressed His Beatitude in Arabic as per the link below:

<http://www.jp-newsgate.net/ar/2018/01/13/35456>

From Secretariat-General

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<httpv://youtu.be/EatTFw6TLE8>