

# THE NAME DAY OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS

On Saturday March 11/24, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, on the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs of Lake Sebastia of Pontus, one of whom is Holy Martyr Theophilos.

## 1. VESPERS

In the evening of the feast the 9<sup>th</sup> Hour was read at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen and then, bells tolling, according to the established Typikon order, Festal Vespers was held at the Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Participants in prayer were Archbishops, while the Priests were co-celebrants, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The choir of singers was under the lead of Mr. Demetrios Balagiorgos, while the service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and a congregation of many pilgrims.

## 2. ON THE DAY OF THE FEAST

On Saturday morning March 11/22, 2018, the Divine Liturgy on the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs and the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was celebrated at the Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, officiated by His Beatitude, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishops, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops, Aristarchos of Constantina and

Secretary-General, Methodios of Tabor, Demetrios of Lydda, Nectarios of Anthedona, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and Hagiotaphite Hieromonks with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The choir was formed by Archimandrite Aristovoulos and the choir of Professor Demetrios Balagiorgos. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and many pilgrims from various countries. After the Divine Liturgy there was a Doxology and finally the full congregation returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

There Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina was the first to address H.H.B. as follows;

***Address of Geronda Secretary-General***

***Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina***

***on the Name Day of H.H. Beatitude***

***our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III***

***March 9, 2018***

*Your Beatitude Father and Master,*

*The Commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs, the crowned athletes who confessed Christ at the Lake of Sebastia of Pontus, is a spiritual replenishment depot of the Orthodox faithful for the continuation of their race towards the welcoming of the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ.*

*This feast of the One Holy and Catholic Church of Christ is celebrated by the Mother of Churches with special emphasis, as its Holy Head, Your Beatitude, bears the name of one of these forty martyrs, St. Theophilos.*

*For this reason, today we celebrated the bloodless sacrifice, followed by a Doxology at the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, "this holy dwelling place of the glory of God", attended festively by the full body of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the reverend clergy and faithful of our Patriarchate, who have come from all places of its jurisdiction, namely, Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian State.*

*Having prayed in the Holy Sepulchre for the health and longevity of Your Beatitude, and now returning in this historic reception hall of our sacred dwelling place, we render the fair praise for all righteous and worth-praising deeds Your Beatitude has been labouring for our venerable Patriarchate.*

*To start with our commemoration, it is undeniable that last year's completion of the historic project of the restoration of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre by the National Technical University of Athens, was a work majorly owed to the inspiration of Your Beatitude and Your safeguarding of the balanced cooperation of the Three Major Communities, while during the current year, Your Beatitude has toiled tenaciously for the support of our nation's rights, every time they were threatened by violations of the Status Quo by the Armenians, at the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre and the chapel of the finding of the Sacred Cross. Moreover, Your Beatitude has striven and worked tirelessly towards the solution of the issue of the Ethiopian's chapel by the Gate of the Church of the Resurrection, which remains closed to this day due to their lack of cooperation.*

*There has also been a special interest in the spiritual guidance of the Arab-speaking congregation of the Patriarchate, through the printing and distribution of the appropriate books, among which the Liturgical texts of the Patriarchate in Arabic to be used by the Priests. Similarly, restoration and refurbishment projects of the congregation*

have been funded in both Jordan and Israel, as for example the Church of Koufr Smea Community. The Patriarchate has also taken care of its Russian-speaking congregation, especially in Beer Sheba and the neighbouring areas.

As far as the support and claiming of our property rights are concerned, these were continued by the appeal of our Patriarchate under Your Beatitude's command to the Israeli Court of Appeal, after the wrongful decision of the Israeli District Court which gave effect to the illegal and corrupt long-term contracts for the Jaffa Gate Hotels, to the settler group "Ateret Kohanim".

However, the undiminished and vibrant interest, as well as the determination of Your Beatitude were made manifest recently, when the Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, imposed illegitimate taxes on Church property, contravening the long established tax exemption rights of our Patriarchate and of the other Churches, as well as the established through the sacred history Status Quo of Jerusalem, and also, during the proceedings for the proposed bill to the Knesset by Member of Knesset Rachel Azaria, which threatened to deny the Churches their right to freely deal with their own properties. Having no other solution, Your Beatitude then took the initiative of the cooperation of the Three Major Communities and the decision of the closure of the Holy Sepulchre, after the Divine Liturgy of the Sunday of Orthodoxy there, on February 12/25, 2018, as a sign of protest against these measures.

The All-holy Church of the Resurrection which is overcrowded by thousands of pilgrims on a daily basis, remained closed for them until the Israeli Prime Minister Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu intervened with a statement, according to which, all actions from the Municipality regarding the collection of taxes as well as all legislative activity on Church properties was suspended, including the "Bill of Church Lands" proposed to the Knesset by Member of Knesset Rachel Azaria. There was also a decision to establish a professional team led by Minister

*Tzachi Hanegbi with the cooperation of the representatives of the Churches in order to solve these current issues. Consequently, the Three Major Communities agreed on the re-opening of the Gate of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the morning of Wednesday, February 15/28, 2018.*

*The aforementioned endeavours, which are a representative sample of the grand total of your servitude, inspire us the Hagiotaphites to have courage in order to continue working and cooperating in a brotherly spirit among us, and in a spirit of obedience to Your Beatitude, in order to safeguard our Fathers' inheritance and consign it twofold to our successors, for the praise of our Patriarchate and our blessed nation and for the glory of our Trinitarian God.*

*Raising my glass on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and all the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, I wish You, Your Beatitude, many happy returns, in peace, stability, benevolence, pastoral fruitful guidance and in abundance of heavenly gifts. So be it.*

The Consul General's address as follows;

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today's feast has a special significance to all of us, as the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the noble Congregation, the pilgrims and the Orthodox Community honour with the appropriate grandour the Name Day of the Head of the Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches, His Holy Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

It is a special honour and joy for me to be present at this feast and I would like, Your Beatitude, to convey our

wholeheartedly wishes for health, longevity and strength, in order to continue Your important mission, which increases every day in significance in this hard time.

On this occasion, I would like to express our undivided support to the sacred Institution, the Ambassador Jerusalem Patriarchate, which throughout the ages has played a supremely significant role, and as the centre of Orthodoxy in the Holy Land, it remains an inexhaustible source of hope, projecting from the Holy City the values of Christianity and the message of the salvation of man to all directions.

The Jerusalem Patriarchate is, of course, a steady reference point for all Greeks, wherever they are, and symbolizes the long presence of the Greeks in the Holy Land, while it never fails to represent a strong bond of friendship and cooperation with other nations, as it also represents the Orthodox Christians in the region, safeguarding the valuable traditions and conveying the ecumenical message of Orthodoxy to all directions. For all of us, the Sacred Institution is, of course, the depositary of the most important Sacred Shrines of Christianity, which the Hagiotaphite Fathers defend in devotion and self-denial on a daily basis, and always inspire and strengthen the faith and reverence of the faithful around the world, as well as the bonds with the Church of Jerusalem.

Your Beatitude,

The sincere intention of understanding and reconciliation You systematically display and cultivate, so much so among your relations with the other doctrines and religions, as also in Your wider attempts for reconciliation and peace-making in this much-suffered region, adds to the moral stature of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, within the efforts of defending the Christian presence in the Middle East, promoting its role as a factor of moderation and stability in a period of instability and turbulence, that seem to feed the intolerance and rivalry.

Your Beatitude,

The burden upon Your shoulders is heavy and the fight coinciding from it is long and arduous. I know you face challenges, aware of the criticality of the circumstances and the necessity to defend the Status Quo in the Holy Land, which has safeguarded the peaceful co-existence of all religions here for centuries. It is my deep belief, that with God's help and the active support of all of us, You will continue and succeed in Your mission.

All the Consulate staff, as much as myself, pray that You may have health, strength and longevity for the benefit of the Patriarchate, of the Brotherhood, of Your Greek-Orthodox Congregation, of Orthodoxy and of peace in the Holy Land.

Many Happy Returns.

There were also other addresses, as His Beatitude thanks them in His address below;

*"Having left every military array of the world, ye cleaved unto the Master Who is in the Heavens, O Forty Prizewinners of the Lord; for having passed through fire and water, O blessed ones, ye rightly received glory from Heaven and a multitude of crowns" the melodist of the Church proclaims.*

*Your Excellency Consul General of Greece*

*Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,*

*Reverend Fathers and Brothers,*

*Noble Christians and pilgrims.*

*As today our Holy Church and especially the Church of Jerusalem honours and venerates the sacred commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs, and in particular their co-martyr Theophilos, whose name is given to Our Mediocrity, we came down to the All-holy Church of the Resurrection along with the*

reverend members of the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, where we festively celebrated the Divine and Bloodless Worship, and we also rendered a thanksgiving Doxology "unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God" (1 Tim. 1:17).

"At the commemoration of Thy martyrs, O Lord, the whole creation keeps festival; heaven with the angels greatly rejoices, and the earth with all mankind makes glad" St. Theodore of the Studion says.

Our Patriarchal Mediocrity along with all the members of the Hagiotaphite Fathers chorea and the pious members of our Christian congregation are participants of this festal jubilation and gleefulness. And this is so, because Our sacred Name Day is not referred only to Our Mediocrity, but especially to the institutional status of the Patriarchal office of the Church, the mystical body of our God and Saviour Christ in the world.

By honouring the commemoration of Christ's martyrs and all the saints, whom we are named after, we actually honour our regeneration (paligenesis) of salvation in Christ and His Holy Spirit, as St. Paul preaches: "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 3:5-6).

And we have been grafted in the good olive tree, namely the Church, the body of Christ, through the regeneration and renewal of the waters, the Holy Baptism; while the holy martyrs in general and today's honoured Forty martyrs of the lake of Sabastia, have been renewed through their martyr blood of Christ's love.

And we claim this, because the foretold Church by the Law of Moses, the Patriarchs and the Prophets, the Church of "the

*Great Will of the angel" (Isaiah 9:6), was revived and regenerated through the sacred blood and water that came out of the pierced side of the Son of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ Who was Crucified for our sake.*

*This witness is witnessed by St. John the Evangelist and confirmed by the sanctified place of Golgotha, whose true witness is confessed and evangelized over the centuries by the chorea of the ministering Hagiotaphite Fathers together with their Father and Hegoumen, namely each and every Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem who is the successor of St. James the Brother of God.*

*Today therefore we honour and celebrate the commemoration of St. Theophilos, the co-martyr of the Holy Forty Martyrs. These blessed martyrs went through water and fire and worthily gained the divine glory and praise by our Holy Trinitarian God.*

*These Holy Forty martyrs, along with their co-martyr Theophilos, who made heaven on earth and illumined the universe, and now stand by the Holy Trinity in three hypostases, intercede for us.*

*Let us entreat these Holy Forty Martyrs whose commemoration of glorious prizewinning we celebrate, and the Most blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and Mother of God, the refuge of our souls, to grant us the great mercy and peace towards the three-day Resurrection of our God and Saviour of our souls.*

*On this occasion, we pray for all who joined Us in prayer and honoured this feast, that they may have power from on high, and the grace of the All-holy Tomb, patience and every blessing from God, expressing our warmest 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 and Sacred Synod and the Hagiotaphite*

*Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, 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, Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the brotherly Church of Romania, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, Reverend Archimandrite Philotheos, who spoke on behalf of the congregation of Acre-Ptolemais, Reverend Fr. Farah Bandour, who spoke on behalf of St. James Cathedral, the School Director of the Patriarchal School of Zion Reverend Archimandrite Mattheos, the teacher of St. Demetrios School Mrs. Chrysi Triantafilaki and all participants in this feast."*

At noon there was a festal fasting meal.

#### **From Secretariat-General**

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