

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY AT THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL OF ZION

On Sunday, September 28 / October 11, 2020, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Holy Trinity on the hill of Zion, on the commemoration of Saint Chariton the Confessor and introducer of the monastic life, and of Saint Isaac the Syriac. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences; Metropolitans Isychios of Kapitolias and Joachim of Helenoupolis, the Managing Director of the School, Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, Archimandrite Dionysios and Hierodeacon Simeon. The chanting was delivered by Mr Gotsopoulos.

This Church was built by the Vice Sacristan of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Archimandrite Gerasimos between the years 1905-1911, and this is where the Patriarchal School is housed since 1970. The School operates as Highschool and Lyceum, following the program of the Ministry of Education of Greece, and the leaving certificate from it offers the graduates entrance to the Universities of Greece without taking the introductory examinations. At present, thirteen students study here, preparing by their free will to join the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, and serve the All-holy Shrines in the Holy Land, after their graduation.

After the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude held the Blessing of water, in order to bless the New School Year 2020-2021, and before the teachers, the school students, and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evaggelos Vlioras delivered the following Sermon:

“When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying; Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken...And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed him” (Luke 5:8-11).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Beloved Students of the Patriarchal School

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all today in this sacred place of the Holy Zion, at the Monastery of the Holy Trinity, where the Patriarchal School is based, in order to offer the Trinitarian God the bloodless sacrifice in Doxology; and entreat in prayer our Lord God to send down to us the sanctification and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

“And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men” (Luke 5: 10). Through these words, “Christ replaced the natural fishing with the noetic one”, Zigavinos says.

This noetic, or spiritual fishing which Christ bestowed to the Apostles is no other than the fishing which is accomplished by the enlightening power of the mind’s abilities. In other words, the Disciples were taught about this spiritual fishing by Christ. That is why Christ is called a Teacher, while the Apostles are called Disciples. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples” (John 13:35). And elsewhere; “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:19-20).

It is clear that studentship, namely, the education, is the armour and the weapons of God’s light (Eph. 6:11, Romans

13:12). Therefore, Saint Paul advises Timothy, his disciple thus: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:14-15).

The holy scriptures to which Saint Paul refers, are those written in the Holy Bible, which entail the enlightening and redeeming truth of God, as it has been revealed to men by the Holy Prophets and Apostles. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free", the Lord says (John 8:32). And we wonder, what (or Who) is this truth? In this occasion, the truth is the incarnate God the Word, Christ, who said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

This truth, the righteousness that lives unto the ages, is being preached and evangelized to the world by the Holy Church of Christ; "He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever" (2 Cor. 9:9, Psalm 111:9). This truth of the Crucified and Resurrected Christ is witnessed and ministered by the Church of Jerusalem.

"Lay hold of instruction, lest at any time the Lord be angry and ye perish from the righteous way" (Psalm 2:12). "Goodness and discipline and knowledge teach Thou me, for in Thy commandments have I believed" (Psalm 118:66). And in more detail: teach me the common sense and the science to distinguish good from evil, namely, give me the ability of knowledge and discernment, the psalmist says. Behold, therefore, why Saint Paul preaches: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Needless to say that not only the God-inspired Scriptures, but also the discreet use of the Greek philosophy may contribute

so that "God's man be perfect and healthy" according to Saint Basil the Great, and especially according to the Holy Martyr and Philosopher Justine, who held the opinion that the seeds of the Word made the Gentile Philosophers able to "behold the beings dimly" and teach "seeds of truth", and he adds: "For those things said [by the Gentile Philosophers] well, [they] belong to us Christians".

And those "things said well" by the Gentile Philosophers, refer to the divine wisdom from above. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17).

My dear Brethren and beloved students, the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, known as the Order of the Studious Ones, according to Saint Paul's words: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19), has never ceased caring for the education in Christ of its flock's children, all over its jurisdiction. On the contrary, it has always striven for the education of its future force, namely of its new members, the graduates of this Patriarchal School, according to the command written in the Bible: "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction" (Proverbs 3:11) and "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding" (Proverbs 3:13).

Concluding, We wish that the grace of the Holy Spirit which came down from heaven like tongues of fire and sat upon the Holy Apostles and Disciples of Christ at the Upper Room of the Holy Zion, may enlighten your minds and guide your education to every good work, by the intercessions of our Most-Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints. Amen."

From Secretariat-General