

# **HIS HOLINESS THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW VISITS THE METOCHION OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN NEOCHORION**

On Friday, October 10/23, 2020, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated for the Feast of the Holy Apostle James the Brother of God and first Hierarch of Jerusalem, according to the custom of the Church of Jerusalem, at the Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre in Neochorion of Bosphorus. The Liturgy was attended by His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Who addressed our Representative in Constantinople Most Reverend Archbishop Nectarios of Anthedona and the congregation as follows:

Your Eminence, Archbishop Nectarios of Anthedona, Representative of the Holy Sepulchre in the City of Constantine,

Most Reverend Brethren,

Your Excellencies Archons,

Beloved Children in Christ,

We are gathered in this historic Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre in joy and contrition, in order to celebrate with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs the commemoration of Apostle James the Brother of God, one of the primary persons of the ancient Church, the genuine bearer and exponent of the sacred consignment of the Lord, the First Hierarch of the Church of Jerusalem and its patron Saint. Along with our reverent entourage, We came to the Church of the Metochion of Jerusalem in Neochorio, which is dedicated to the Holy Great Martyr George the Trophy Bearer, just like two other Churches-

Metochia of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Halki and in Phanar, so that we may proclaim “the bond of love” between the Holy Great Church of Christ and the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which holds this celebration of the Throne today, and to express our feelings of love and honour to its Holy Primate, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The Patriarchates of Constantinople and Jerusalem have a long-term tradition of coexistence, cooperation and solidarity, which have produced good fruit for the whole of Orthodoxy and for the protection of the Status Quo in the Holy Land. The All-holy shrines and the holy places where the redeeming news of salvation was heard, and God the Word was made incarnate, the places where the immaculate feet of our Lord Jesus Christ walked, and His words were heard, where He worked the miracles of faith, where the glory of the Lord was revealed in Transfiguration, the Passion and the Resurrection were witnessed, along with the miraculous appearances, the Ascension of the Saviour and the crown of festivities, Pentecost, happened, all these, and “many other things Jesus did” which, as Saint John the Evangelist writes “if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (John 21:25), are always in our mind and heart.

We ceaselessly pray to the Founder of the Church, to strengthen His Beatitude our Brother Theophilos and the blessed Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, in the struggle for the protection of the All-holy monuments and shrines. We were expecting the visit of His Beatitude at the centre of Orthodoxy which was scheduled for the beginning of the Church Year, on September 1, 2020, and was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We wait for the visit of the Holy Brother, in a face-to-face meeting, to co-celebrate the Divine Liturgy and discuss the matters of Orthodoxy related to its unity and witness in the contemporary world.

The Church is “God’s answer to the expectation of the world”.

It is "the new world and the new paradise". Being alive "in the world" it bears witness for the truth "that is not of this world", carrying the Cross of Christ, experiencing and preaching His Resurrection which is the joy of the world. It also foretells and depicts "the common resurrection", "the unwaning, heirless and eternal day", in the course toward the eternal Kingdom of God, "the new world" (2 Cor. 5:17), where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away"(Revelation 21:4), but there will be a joy that is complete, unspeakable and glorified. To this Church, the place and the way of the salvation of man and of the world, we owe everything, in it we minister its Founder and Head, the Giver of every good thing, being ministered in all things by the unspeakable Divine Philanthropy.

Most Reverend brother, Archbishop of Anthedona,

We praise the good-fruit-bearing ministry for the full duration of your ecclesiastical ministry here, the many toils, your tireless and productive work for the preservation of your Metochia, your sacrificial witness and wise care for the ecclesiastical matters at all times. Thanking you for the kind invitation of Our Mediocrity to participate in the Service in this Metochion of Bosphorus, We wish you health and strength to continue your good works. We also congratulate all those who support this holy foundation, with their leader, the Cross-bearer of the Holy Sepulchre and Our dearest Officion-bearer, Mr Panteleimon Vigan.

With these thoughts, and in a festive frame of mind, we express the wishes of Our Mediocrity to His Beatitude, the Head of the Church of Jerusalem, and to all the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood for this Feast of the Throne, praying to the Almighty, Omniscient and Most Generous God, that by the intercessions of the Holy Apostle James the Brother of God and of the Holy Glorious Great Martyr George the Trophy Bearer, He may protect and strengthen the brotherly Church of Jerusalem

and grant to its pious clergy and people every kind of heavenly blessing.

Many happy returns to all of you!"

**From Secretariat-General**