

# **THE SCHOOL CEREMONY AT THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL OF ZION FOR THE NATIONAL CELEBRATION OF MARCH 25 1821**

On Monday evening March 12/25, 2019, the school ceremony for the anniversary of March 25 1821 took place at the Patriarchal School for Priests in Holy Zion.

The ceremony was honoured by the presence of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, escorted by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis and Chairman of the School Board and other Hagiotaphite Fathers, along with the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, members of the Consulate and of the Greek Community, Greek pilgrims and Nuns of the Patriarchate.

The ceremony began with the introductory speech by the School Managing Director, Archimandrite Mattheos, the festive speech of the day by the Greek literature teacher Mr. Michail Kehagias, reciting of poems, and texts, song singing and the presentation of a short theatrical play by the students, under the lead of the teachers of the School and of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos.

There were also videos of the suffering of our nation for four hundred years under the Turkish Ottoman yoke, the fights of our fathers and heroes of the Revolution and the spiritual support of the Church for eight years until the liberation of our nation and the creation of an independent country for a life in freedom, progress and prosperity.

At the end of the ceremony His Beatitude and the Consul General praised the teachers and the students for their good performance, which evoked feelings of national sensitivity and pride and the desire to accomplish the fighting morals of the years following the revolution of 1821.

**From Secretariat-General**

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

On Sunday March 11/24, 2019, on the second Sunday of Great Lent, on the commemoration of St. Gregory Palamas, the Patriarchate also celebrated the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, which for reasons related to the Status Quo has been transferred from its actual day of March 9/22, day of the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs who martyred at the frozen lake of Sebastia of Pontus during the reign of the persecutor Emperor Licinius in the year 320 A.D.

For this feast the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth and Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Demetrios of Lydda, Makarios of Qatar, Nectarios of Anthedon, Philoumenos of Pella, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis and the

Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba. There were also the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank the Elder Kamarasis Reverend Archimandrite Nectarios, Arab-speaking Priests and visiting Priests from other Churches, Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons. The chanting was held by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos in the attendance of a congregation of local faithful and pilgrims.

After the Divine Liturgy there was a Doxology and the return in procession to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

Therein the following addresses were read:

**The address of Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina;**

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Ascending the ladder of the Holy and Great Lent, we are fortified in our spiritual fight with the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs who boldly confessed Christ, and fought the good fight well, winning the crown of divine glory, having defied the glacier of the lake of Sebastia in Pontus in 320 A.D., during the reign of King Licinius.

On the feast of these athletes of Christ today, the commemoration of the holy martyr Theophilos is especially projected in the Church of Jerusalem, because Your Sacred Beatitude bears his name.

In the special honour of the holy martyr Theophilos and of Your Beatitude, we offered the bloodless sacrifice at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and a thanksgiving doxology with the vast participation of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, the members of our Greek-Orthodox flock and a large crowd of noble pilgrims.

Filled with the joy of this double feast and in this historic

Hall of the Throne, we gratefully remember those things that Your Beatitude has worked for our Patriarchate and flock.

Initially we commemorate the fact that once again there has been a great effort for the pastoral guidance of our flock in the three areas of the Patriarchate's jurisdiction, especially in Jordan, in gatherings of Priests for their more efficient pastoral activity. A fruit of Your Beatitude's actions have also been the special festivities organized by the Royal Family of Jordan, which support the Christians in their peaceful co-existence with their Muslim co-citizens. In the Metropolis of the Patriarchate in Amman, members of the flock of Jordan have been honoured with the medal of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, as they have been distinguished for their charity donations and the construction of a Church. Moreover, with your characteristic sensitivity favoring the pilgrims who have been flooding the Holy Land recently, Your Beatitude has offered much time for their welcoming in the Patriarchate, for their blessing and guidance, along with the stressing of the benefit through their pilgrimage.

Keeping good relationships with our brotherly Churches, Your Beatitude was invited to officiate the consecration ceremony of the beautiful and very large Cathedral of St. Andrew the First-called in Bucharest, in the Patriarchate of Romania, and participated in the national festivities on the occasion of the 200-year-old anniversary of liberation and unity of Romania.

Practicing the leading role of our Patriarchate among the other Christian Churches, Your Beatitude has mobilized them towards the abolition of laws undermining their properties and the raising of their voices in the protection of the continuously lessening numbers of the Christians of the Holy Land. Aiming at this, Your Beatitude has striven by visiting leaders of countries and of Churches and Presidents of international organizations in order to ensure their solidarity to the efforts of our Patriarchate to preserve the

internationally and biblically established Status Quo of the Holy Land and the rights of the Christians on them.

The actions of Your Beatitude for the protection of the rights of our shrines and especially of the renovation of the God-receiving Cave in Bethlehem have been most intensive, simultaneously with the equally important preservation and renovation of the Chapel of Stocks in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the historic Monastery of St. John the Baptist by the baptism site in the River Jordan, where a few days ago Your Beatitude received the President of the State of Israel and leaders of the Christian Churches.

Last but not least, worthy to be mentioned is the project of the modest Christian presence in Qatar, which began during the Patriarchal Office of the late Patriarch Diodoros and was recently completed with the consecration of the beautiful Church of St. Isaac the Syriac, St. George the Great Martyr and St. Makarios, Archbishop of Jerusalem, along with the Episcopal Headquarters and completed parish facilities, for the comfort, support and sanctification of the Orthodox and other Christians who live there.

From all these, Your Beatitude, we the Hagiotaphite Fathers take an example and are encouraged to co-operate with You as the members of the body with its head and among us harmoniously, in order to reflect the witness of unity to the world and that the name of our venerable Brotherhood and of the Holy Church of Jerusalem may be praised and the venerated Name of the Most High may be glorified.

Raising the glass Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the whole Brotherhood, I wish health and strength and protection from on high, so that You may guide the vessel of the Church of Jerusalem steadily and in good course, for the fulfillment of its peace-making, reconciliatory and salvific mission in the Holy Land and in the full body of the Orthodox Church. So be it.”

**The address of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos;**

“Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

The present day, when the memory of the Holy Forty Martyrs is celebrated, takes on special importance, since the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the pious congregation, the pilgrims and the Orthodox Community, honoured with the proper splendor the Name-Day of the Head of the Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches, His Holy Beatitude, Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

In attending this celebration with feelings of sincere joy and particular honour, I would like to express the unwavering support of Greece to the Presbyterian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and to extend to You our cordial wishes for health, strength and longevity, in order to continue Your high, national as well as religious mission, which is becoming more and more important and significant in this difficult time.

During its centuries-long journey, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem has played an extremely important historical role and, as a religious centre of the Holy Land, continues to be an inexhaustible source of hope and to point out in all directions from the Holy City, its universal message of salvation, while defending with the dedication and self-denial of the Holy Fathers, the most important holy pilgrimages of Christianity.

The Sacred Institution is a fixed reference point for all Greeks and symbolizes the long-standing presence of Hellenism in the Holy Land, while it is an indissoluble bond of

friendship and cooperation with other peoples, and it is the spokesperson for Orthodox Christians in the region, preserving valuable traditions and transmitting, in every direction, the Universal message of Orthodoxy.

Your Beatitude,

In a time of instability, fluidity, and continuous redeployments that seem to favor intolerance, empathy and rivalry, Your multifaceted work, which is governed by sincere mood of mutual understanding and reconciliation, not only in relations with other doctrines and other religions, but also in the context of the wider peace effort in this much tested area, gives moral stature to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, in the context and defense of the Christian presence in the Middle East, promoting its role as a factor of moderation and stability. With a series of initiatives, You promote the restoration and promotion of the Sacred Shrines of Christianity, while ensuring the preservation of the Status Quo in the Holy Land and the spiritual guidance and prosperity of a flock undergoing significant trials.

Because the challenges of the time and the lurking dangers are many. However, it is certain that those who are treacherous against the Patriarchate struggle in vain. Their efforts strike and will always strike in the hurdle of the power that the Sacred Institution draws from the long history and tradition, from unity, from the deep faith and devotion of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and from its leadership, Your Beatitude, who, with conscious knowledge and perception of the circumstances, with vigor and determination, take care of its present and its future.

Your Beatitude,

The load you have been given is great and the struggle that this involves is long and laborious. It is my deep conviction that with the help of God and the active support of all of us, You will continue Your work and carry on Your high mission.

Many Happy Returns.”

**Addresses were also delivered by representatives of the flock of areas belonging to the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate, representatives of other Orthodox Churches and finally His Beatitude thanked them all with the following words;**

“The Martyrs, O Christ God, esteemed the lake as Paradise and the cold as warmth. The threats of the tyrants did not affright their mind, nor did the noble Saints fear the assaults of torments, since they possessed the Cross as a divine weapon; for with it, as mighty men, they put the enemy to flight. Wherefore, they have also received the crown of grace” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

“Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious” (Psalm 66:1-2), the Church of Christ cries out through the mouth of Prophet David, on the sacred commemoration of the athletes of Christ and Great Forty Martyrs who martyred in the town of Sebastia. These “wondrous prizewinners with minds staunch with courage, they endured the pains of martyrdom nobly, and having as a divine weapon the Cross they defeated the enemy and gained the crown of grace”, namely the Christian calling through which they abide in the highest, according to their hymn writer.

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem, which honours the sacred memory of the holy forty martyrs, especially of their co-martyr Theophilus whose sacred name is given to our Mediocrity, we came to the place of martyrdom and the three-burial of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where we celebrated the divine and great sacrament



of the Eucharist. Moreover, we offered a thanksgiving doxology to the Holy Trinitarian God on the occasion of the sacred commemoration of Martyr Theophilus, surrounded by the sacred members of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, and we prayed along with our Christian congregation, the noble Christians and the visiting pilgrims.

We did all these according to the words of St. Paul: "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20).

This annual commemoration of the holy forty martyrs and their co-martyr Theophilus, which our Holy Church of Jerusalem jubilantly celebrates, does not only refer to our mediocrity, but especially and primarily to the institution of the Patriarchal office, through which it is made clear that the Church of Christ has been founded on the crucified and redeeming blood of Christ and of the holy ones who became co-martyrs of His sacred blood. Therefore the wise Paul says: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

The holy martyrs of the love of Christ are those who martyred with their blood for the sake of truth and faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ. For this reason St. Paul advices his disciple Timothy saying: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord; For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7-8).

Today's commemorated holy Forty Martyrs with their co-martyr Theophilus worthily gained the divine glory, having gone through water and fire and became wondrous by our Holy

Trinitarian God, towards whom they have boldness and pray for us. "Likewise, the souls of those who have not in vain been chipped for the sake of the witness in Christ in the heavenly altar, minister those who pray asking for the remission of their sins" according to Origen.

The holy martyrs are projected as an example to imitate for the fight they fought in their earthly life in order to become heirs of the kingdom of God. "...we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Ecumenios says; "our present life is a fight; a fight against sins and desires and all thoughts who fight against us. For this we strive against and accomplish in the fight".

In this fight of the witness of the love of the gospel of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ are we also called, my dear brothers and sisters, especially during this blessed period of the fast of the Great Lent, having as helpers and protectors the holy forty martyrs, their co-martyr Theophilos and the Most Blessed Theotokos and Mother of God, Ever-Virgin Mary. Let us entreat them so that we may be deemed worthy to the three-day Resurrection of our God and Saviour of our souls.

For this, we pray for all who prayed along with us and honoured this feast, that they may have power from on high, the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, patience and every blessing coming from God.

We warmly thank 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 our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, Reverend Archimandrite Dometianos, 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 Holy Church of Romania, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His

Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Archimandrite Raphael who spoke on behalf of the flock in North Jordan, the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, who spoke on behalf of the Holy Archdiocese of Qatar, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the newly founded Community in Beersheba, the Reverend Archimandrite Ignatios, who spoke on behalf of the Community of Beit Jalla, Reverend Farah Badur, who spoke on behalf of St. James Cathedral, the Managing Director of our Patriarchal School, Reverend Archimandrite Mattheos, the Steward Savvas, who spoke on behalf of the Community of Beit Sahour, Mr. Abu Aeta from Beit Sahour, Mr. Michele Frez from Bethlehem and all who participated in this feast.

To the health of all of you!"

A festal fasting meal followed where the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos was the guest of honour and to which His Beatitude offered the officion of the Archimandrite to Hagiotaphite Hieromonk Martyrios who ministers in Madaba.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL VISITS QASER EL YAHUD SITE BY THE RIVER JORDAN**

On Tuesday morning, March 6/19, 2019, the President of the State of Israel Mr. Reuven Rivlin visited the site of Qaser El Yahud by the river Jordan, escorted by the Minister of Regional Cooperation Mr. Tzachi Hanegbi, Mr. Yacub Salame and Mr. Ceasar Marjie from the Ministry of Religions of Israel and by the Israeli Military Officials of the region, The President also visited the properties of the Christian Churches in the area, which have been de-mined by Halo Trust and the Israeli army, and the nearby Holy Monastery of St. John the Baptist which has recently been restored and renovated by the Patriarchate.

In this Monastery the President was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos along with the Heads of the other Churches of Jerusalem and Hegoumen Archimandrite Bartholomew.

The President Mr. Rivlin stressed the importance of the de-mining project of this area, which is a beacon of Christianity and praised the cooperation of the Churches for its accomplishment, as a means that secures the incoming of pilgrims from around the world, and a bridge among Israel, Jordan and Palestine and among Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Departing from the Holy Monastery of St. John the Baptist, His Beatitude visited the Holy Monastery of St. Gerasimos of the Jordan, whose commemoration was celebrated last Sunday (of Orthodoxy) and praised the work of Archimandrite Chrysostom

who welcomed Him warmly.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE CONSECRATION SERVICE OF THE H. CHURCH OF ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAC & ST. GEORGE THE TROPHY-BEARER IN DOHA**

On Friday, February 9/22, 2019, the consecration service of the Holy Church of St. Isaac the Syriac and the Holy Glorious George the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer, along with St. Makarios the Patriarch of Jerusalem was held as described below.

It is befitting to refer to a few things related to the history of this Church, before the consecration details are mentioned.

The memorable Patriarch Diodoros I was the first to visit Qatar in 1990, as it belonged to the border of the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem Patriarchate in the Arabic peninsula. The Patriarch was then received by the Emir of that time, Prince of Qatar Hamed Bin Khalifa Al Thani.

This visit was followed by a delegation under the command of Patriarch Diodoros, with the current Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who was then Archimandrite Theophilos, after the petition of the Ambassador of the U.S.A. at that time, Mr. Patrigh Theros, in order to officiate the Services of Easter for the small Greek community, at a hall of the American

Embassy, as there was no Holy Church for the Christians in Qatar.

Following this, there were subsequent petitions to the Government of Qatar to provide the construction permit of a Holy Church in Doha, the capital of Qatar, by the Patriarchate.

The Government of Qatar granted this request and offered a piece of land to the Patriarchate in Doha, not as its own property, but only for the use of the land. The construction of this consecrated Holy Church began in this piece of land. This action of the Patriarchate was set as an example to other Christian denominations who asked and were given land areas in this particular district which was offered to the Patriarchate, and they also built Holy Churches. In this manner, the Patriarchate became the cause for the return of Christianity in Qatar. In the year 2010, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited Qatar, and was received by the Emir Prince of Qatar Mamed Bin Khalifa Al Thani.

The construction project of the Holy Church was being continued with the addition of the Bishop's residence on the opposite side of the Church, by the hard toiling efforts of the Patriarchal Commissioner in Qatar Archimandrite Makarios the Hagiotaphite, who was ordained Archbishop of Qatar in 2014. With the funding by the Patriarchate and by noble donors, the project reached its completed current form, being in the need of its sanctification with the consecration service. So that the Church will be established in the ages for the worship and the sanctification of the congregation belonging to it, which numbers ten thousand Greek Orthodox faithful Christians from various countries.

The service was held on the aforementioned day according to the Typikon order of the Orthodox Church regarding the Consecration, with the litany of the holy relics of the Holy

Martyrs of St. Savvas' Lavra, three times around the Church, the planting of the relics inside the Holy Altar, the smearing of antiminsia and the Church walls with the Holy Myrrh, and with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, which was officiated by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were; the Most Reverend Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Makarios of Qatar, Philoumenos of Pella, Aristovoulos of Madaba, Ioannis from the Church of Serbia, Archimandrite Eudokimos, spiritual Father of the Holy Lavra of St. Savvas the Sanctified, Fr. George, Priest in Madaba, and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by a choir from Thessalonica under the lead of Mr. Ioannis Hasanides in Greek, and by the parish choir in Arabic. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece, His Excellency Mr. Constantinos Orphanides and the Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus in Qatar, His Excellency Mr. Mihail Zaharioglou, diplomatic representatives of other countries, invited clergy from various Metropolis of the Church of Greece and the Church of Crete, Reverend Abbess Theoxeni and nuns from the Patriarchal H. Monastery of Chrysopigi, of the H. Metropolis of Kydonia and Apokoronou, the full congregation of the people who prayed and glorified God for this gift of the consecration of the Church in the centre of the Arabic peninsula for their sanctification by the celebration of the Church services in it.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation:

"By means of His coming, Christ hath filled all things with His light; our souls are now consecrated, and by His Holy Spirit He hath renewed the world; for a house is founded to the Lord's praise and glory, wherein Christ our God, for the salvation of mortals, doth consecrate and hallow the hearts of all His faithful flock" the hymn writer of the church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians,

Rejoice O heavens and the earth be exulted, for by the grace of God we the clergy and the people are gathered here today, at the Emirate of the State of Qatar, which is under the canonical spiritual jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, in order to officiate the consecration of this beautiful Holy Church in thanksgiving and doxology, a Church that has been built in honour of the local Father of ours among the Saints, Isaac the Syriac and of St. George the Great Martyr.

In the sacred history of the Holy Bible we see highlighted the fact that the Lord pointed out the tabernacle of the covenant which Holy Moses placed on earth. The covenant had also ordinances of divine service (Hebrews 9:1), and Solomon built a house for the Lord (Acts 7:47), namely a Temple where there were sacrifice offerings of "beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin" (Hebrews 13:11).

St. John the Evangelist witnesses that "we have radiantly beheld the glory which the Son hath from the Father in the grace of truth. And as many of us as have received Him with faith, to all hath He given the power to become children of God; and we, who were born again not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but have received increase by the Holy Spirit, have raised up this house of prayer and cry out: Do Thy Thyself now establish this house O Lord".

And the House of God, namely the consecrated Church, is inseparable with the worship and veneration of God in spirit and truth; "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24) the Lord says. While prayer is the ascent towards God, or the invocation of God to grant us what is of need, according to St. John of Damascus. And according to St. John of Sinai (of the Ladder), "prayer is, as far as its quantity is concerned,



a union between man and God, while as far as its energy is concerned, [prayer is] the food of the soul and enlightenment.”

For this reason, we say along with Sophronius the Patriarch of Jerusalem and our predecessor; today the things above co-celebrate with the things below and the things below converse with those above. Today the sacred gathering of the Orthodox faithful rejoices. Great art Thou O Lord, and marvelous are Thy works, and no words befit the hymn of Thy wonders.

Having willingly being raised up on the horrendous place of Golgotha in Jerusalem, the Lord worked out the salvation of us men on the Cross, renewing all creation; while in this established and sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit and the intercessions of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos, along with the prayers of our Holy Fathers among the Saints Isaac and St. George, this Holy Church, which is in natural and spiritual communion with the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is being granted the enlightenment and renewal of His resurrection from the dead, to all those who worship Him in faith, spirit and truth, and who pray to Him in repentance.

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1), David chants. In this hospitable oasis of the Arab and open to progress Emirate of Qatar, the gates of this consecrated house of God have been opened by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that all of us, either living here or visiting the State, who seek the rest of our souls, may hear the calling of the King of Glory, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ saying: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt. 11:29).

It was precisely this rest of the soul that our Holy Father Isaac sought in the harsh place of the desert, where he became like the tree of righteousness “which bringeth forth his fruit

in his season" (Psalm 1:3). This very righteousness is being evangelized by the Rum Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, preaching and witnessing the love without hypocrisy, the philanthropy and the peace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ at all times in all places. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree... Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing" (Psalm 92:12-14) the psalmist says.

And the "righteous who is planted in the house of the Lord" are no others than the Saints of the Church, who having become imitators of the kenotic sacrifice of the Love of Christ, bring forth their fruit, in which we rejoice today.

And we say this, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, because the mercy of God has offered Our Mediocrity this blessing, of the consecration of the good work of this Holy House, which has been built from its foundations, it has been decorated and completed by the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, our Hagiotaphite brother. Therefore, let us say along with St. Chrysostom "Lord sanctify those who love the decency of Thy house and the dwelling place of Thy glory" (Divine Liturgy of St. Chrysostom).

Finally, we find it appropriate and a duty, that not only the Church of Jerusalem, but all brotherly Orthodox Churches may thank from the depths of our hearts his Excellency the Ambassador of the United States of America Mr. Patrick Theros and especially His Majesty the Emir of the State of Qatar Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and His Highness his heir and current governor Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. We wish them that the Lord God may grant them health and longevity and governmental power for the good of the State with all its peoples.

Along with the hymn writer let us say: "the Church is like a

luminous sky, enlightening all faithful; wherein as we stand let us cry out; establish this house O Lord". Amen

During the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy His Beatitude offered the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, who toiled for the construction of the Holy Church, a set of Bishop's egolpia, wishing him that by the grace of God he may continue the mission of the witness of the love of the incarnate, crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ, for the spreading of the preaching of the Gospel, which began from the Horrendous Golgotha and the Life-giving Tomb. Archbishop Makarios offered His Beatitude an icon of the complex of the Church and the Archdiocese of Qatar, which has been painted by the nuns of the H. Monastery of Chrysopigi.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a rich meal at the reception hall under the consecrated Holy Church.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE CONSECRATION OF THE HOLY  
CHURCH OF ST. ISAAC THE  
SYRIAC AND ST. GEORGE IN DOHA**

# — QATAR

For the consecration of the Holy Church of St. Isaac the Syriac, St. George the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer and St. Makarios Archbishop of Jerusalem in Doha, Qatar, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos departed from Jerusalem on Thursday morning, February 8/21, 2019 and flew to Qatar from Ben Gurion Airport of Tel-Aviv and via Amman of Jordan. His Beatitude was escorted by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, Archimandrite Eudokimos, who is the Spiritual Father of the H. Lavra of St. Savvas the Sanctified, and Archdeacon Mark.

His Beatitude arrived in Qatar on Thursday afternoon, February 8/21, 2019. He was welcomed by the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, the Priests of the Archdiocese of Qatar, Priest Demetrios and Priest Stylianos, the associates of the Holy Archdiocese of Qatar, representatives of the Government, such as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and others. His Beatitude then went to the hotel designated for His time in Doha, as an Executive guest of the State of Qatar.

In the evening of the same day there was the formal welcoming reception of His Beatitude at the Holy Church of St. Isaac the Syriac and St. George the Great Martyr, by the Scouts and the full congregation of the Church. There was Great Vespers for the consecration ceremony, with the choir of Thessalonica under the lead of Mr. Ioannis Hasanides in Greek and with the parish choir in Arabic. There was the revelation of the sign of the owners at the forefront of the Holy Church which reads in Greek and in Arabic: "the founding stone of this Church was placed by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010 during the Governmental Office of Father Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, and it was consecrated by Him on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019, with owner the Most Reverend

Archbishop Makarios of Qatar and during the Governmental Office of H.H. Sheikh Tamin Bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Qatar". Present were the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar and other Governmental representatives and a large crowd of people, and His Beatitude address all present as follows;

Your Eminence Archbishop Makarios,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Respected Local Officials,

Dear Fathers,

Beloved Faithful,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

*O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;*

*His steadfast love endures forever!*

*This is the day that the Lord has made;*

*Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

(Ps. 118:1,24)

It is an honour for us to be with you today, and we rejoice with great gladness on the occasion of the consecration of the completed Church of Saint Isaac the Syriac and Saint George here in Doha. We wish to express our gratitude to you, Your Eminence, Archbishop Makarios, for the hard work and dedication that you have invested in the building of this Church, and we wish also to acknowledge and thank all those many people who have been benefactors and who have worked themselves to make the dream of an Orthodox Church in Doha a reality.

There have been many years in the construction, and we can at last give thanks to Almighty God for the faith and steadfastness of so many who have brought this project to a happy conclusion.

On this occasion, we must also observe that the State of Qatar boasts not only exceptional economic progress and development, but also promotes a diverse cultural life. Since 2008, Christians have been able to build churches here on land contributed by the government, and there is an important tradition here of interfaith dialogue. Over the years, many important interfaith conferences and gatherings have been held here, and we welcome to this occasion our friends from other religious traditions.

The presence of the Churches in the State of Qatar, which allows freedom of worship within the frame of the civil law, is a testimony to the careful government of the Qatari authorities as well as to the wise rule of the present Emir, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and his father, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Father Emir of Qatar. Qatar was the first Gulf State to make history by opening the door to non-Muslim religions. We wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to them for all that they have done to open the way for the building of this church.

The consecration of this church is significant for several important reasons.

First of all, this Church establishes the presence of the Orthodox Church in Qatar on a secure footing. At last the faithful have a permanent Church for worship and for the events of the community. The Rum Orthodox Church and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem have deep roots in this region, and we were witnesses to the emergence of Islamic faith and culture.

In addition to this historical truth, this Orthodox community

in Doha is representative of the *oikomene* – the inhabited world – for gathered here are the people from all over the world. Qatar is well known for its international flavor, and this Orthodox community also reflects this international life. Here we see the living out of the vision of the Psalmist, who said;

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it.*

(Psalm 24:1)

But perhaps most significantly the consecration of this Church that is dedicated to St. Isaac and to Saint George is a testimony that challenges the so-called “clash” of civilizations between Christianity and Islam. Where Christianity and Islam are lived in their true fullness, they have co-existed for centuries in respect and mutual understanding. Indeed, the dedication of this church to Saint George is a sign of this, as both Christians and Muslims share a deep veneration for Saint George.

The Arab peninsula as well as the Arab peoples of the Gulf, like all the regions of the Middle East, share a civilization of common religious and moral values, grounded in the respective Holy Books. These common fundamental religious and moral values have shaped and formed a common human civilization that understands the richness of our multi-ethnic, multi-religious landscape.

All these considerations make the consecration of this Church a historic moment. And if we may be permitted a personal note, it gives us a deep personal satisfaction to preside over this consecration, as we served here in this community 20 years ago, and we came to love and respect the Emirate of Qatar, its leaders, and its people.

On behalf of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and the

Holy Synod, we take this opportunity to convey the blessings of the Holy Tomb to this community, and to thank all those who have contributed to the building up of this Orthodox community and the completion of this church. We take deep pride in all that you have accomplished, dear Archbishop Makarios, on behalf of our Brotherhood.

May God bless you and our congregation, which is under your spiritual and pastoral care, and may God bless all the people of our beloved Qatar.

Thank you.

The service was followed by a festal meal, offered by the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar at the reception hall below the Holy Church.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**HIS BEATITUDE MEETS WITH THE  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY AND  
THE ANGLICAN BISHOP IN**



# JERUSALEM

On Tuesday afternoon, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos held a meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury Most Reverend Justin Welby and his associates, and with the Most Reverend Archbishop and Head of the Anglican Church in Jerusalem Mr. Suheil Dawani, at the seat of the Anglican Church in Amman of Jordan on the occasion of the administrative reforms of the Anglican Church in the Middle East region.

In this meeting His Beatitude was being escorted by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Priest Issa Musleh, the legal adviser of the Patriarchate Mr. Rami Moghrabi and the Manager of the Patriarchate's Office in Amman of Jordan Mrs. Wafaa Ksous.

In this meeting Archbishop Suheil Dawani underlined the cooperation of his Church with the Mother Church of Jerusalem, the cooperation of the Heads of the Christian Churches of Jerusalem for matters related to the Christians of the Holy Land and the sustaining of the Status Quo, for which, one year ago there was the decision of closing down the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In this meeting H.H.B. delivered the following address;

"Your Grace, dear Archbishop Justin,

Your Grace, dear Archbishop Suheil,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for us to be with you for this important

meeting of Regional Primates of the Anglican Communion, and we welcome you to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. As you know, His Majesty King Abdullah II is a stalwart defender of the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious character of the Middle East in general and the Holy Land in particular, and the Kingdom remains a model of religious freedom in this region.

As we welcome you, Your Grace, dear Archbishop Justin, we would like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to you once again for your personal support and the support of your staff and colleagues in the ongoing work of ensuring the freedom and the rights of the Churches and Christian Communities of the Holy Land.

In particular, we are grateful to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales for his public support, and to the Dean of Westminster for his role in opening Westminster Abbey last December for a service of witness to the plight of Christians in the Middle East. Such a clear manifestation of solidarity with the Christian communities of the Middle East is a tremendous encouragement to all who labour every day to ensure that our indigenous Christian Communities in the Middle East, some of which go back to the earliest days of the life of the Church, remain alive and vital at a time when the threats against them are real and potentially devastating.

This last year was a particularly difficult one for us. There have been many challenges to the Christian community and to the well-being of our society and the Holy Places, many of which are the result of aspirations for political gain by politicians attempting to strengthen their positions at the expense of our Churches. There have also been further attempts to undermine the Christian presence in the region.

With the ready assistance of our international supporters, including Your Graces, as well as many other governmental and Church leaders, we have managed to keep these threats at bay.

But the pressure remains, and some of these threats have not gone away. They are simply dormant for the moment, and they could rise to the surface again at any time. We must not relax our vigilance, nor our influence on those who have the power to protect the Churches from such threats.

In this regard, we see great hope in the in the work of the International Community of the Holy Sepulchre as an advocate on behalf of the Churches in the Holy Land. ICoHS has the firm support of the Heads of the Churches, and we are grateful to you dear Archbishop Justin, for your enthusiasm for this organization and for the help you have given to those who have established it.

We have experienced a significant blessing in the deeper spirit of unity among the Heads of the Churches and Christian Communities of the Holy Land in the course of the work we have done to protect the Church, and we rejoice in this mutual commitment to a common mission. Our unity of resolve and purpose is strong, and in this regard especially, we wish to express our gratitude to His Grace Archbishop Suheil, whose unwavering leadership has been an indispensable part of the success of this joint work so far. Not only have you, dear Archbishop Suheil, been an absolutely reliable colleague, in your own pastoral zeal for the Anglican Church in your diocese, especially in the rebuilding of your communities, but you have also helped to ensure the ongoing Christian presence here. For all this work, you are recognized beyond your own Communion.

As you meet here in Amman to take counsel for the most effective ways in which to oversee the Anglican Communion in this region, we know that you are all deeply aware of the situation in which we find ourselves. We also note the long-standing, close, and mutually beneficial relationship that has always existed between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Anglican Communion, and this relationship gives us both strength and encouragement both for the relationship between

our two Churches, and for our common spiritual mission in this region.

May God bless you and guide you in all your deliberations, and may God bless all the peoples of our beloved Holy Land and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Thank you”.

The Most Reverend Archbishop of Canterbury said that it is a blessing for him to visit again the countries of the Middle East, he praised His Beatitude, who apart from His other qualities, is distinguished for His valor and within it the reconciliation, which was made obvious by the historic decision to close down the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and then open it again after the intervention of the Prime Minister of Israel Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, who ordered the suspension of the tax measures imposed by the Municipality of Jerusalem against the Churches.

Moreover, he said that the relationship between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Anglican Church has become stronger during the Patriarchal Office of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE CUTTING OF THE NEW YEAR**

# CAKE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday evening, December 31, 2018/ January 13, 2019, the Eve of the New Civil Year 2019, at the Reception Hall of the Patriarchate there was the ceremony of the cutting of the New Year Cake, at the presence of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, nuns, local Orthodox Faithful and pilgrims from Greece, Cyprus, Russia and Romania.

During this ceremony the apolytikion of the Circumcision of the Lord was sung, and that of St. Basil and then H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed all present as follows;

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). Everyone who is united with Christ is a new creature. The ancient condition that the law and sin had created has passed away. Behold all things have become new, St. Paul preaches.

We fully comprehend these God-inspired words of St. Paul through the Holy Church of Christ, but also within the Church which not only evangelizes the entrance of the new year with the words of the Bible and of the Lord; “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Isaiah 61:1-2) (Luke 4:18-19), but it also prays to God for the sanctification and the blessing of the new year, through its hymn writer John of Damascus; “O Thou Who hast made all things in wisdom, O Word of the Father Who art from before all eternity, Who hast constituted the whole of creation by Thine almighty word, bless the crown of the year with Thy goodness, through the Theotokos, since Thou art good and the Friend of man”.

And we say this because in the interpretation of the phrase "God created in the beginning" St. Basil the Great says; it has been said "He created in the beginning" for us to be taught that the world had been created without any intermediate passing of time, but immediately after the Will of God had been expressed. And elsewhere he says; or is it not so that the time is something of which the past has disappeared, the future has not appeared yet, while the present slips through the senses before it is even made understood that it is here?

In other words, the comprehension of the concept of time receives its appropriate meaning in the salvific mystery of the divine philanthropy, the incarnation through the pure blood of the Ever-Virgin Mary the Theotokos of God the Word and our Saviour Jesus Christ, as well as His Church.

And the Church, being the God-man mystical body of Christ, is the one who introduces in the world the eternity in Christ, and expands towards it. Within the liturgical life of the Church, where time becomes season (kairos), the memory of the past becomes memory in Christ.

For this reason St. Paul refers to the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 49:8) who says; "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee". "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2).

The Great Father and luminary of the Church Basil, whose commemoration is co-celebrated with the circumcision in the flesh of our Lord God Jesus Christ, calls us on this ceremony which is being done in his honour, the cutting of the New Year Cake, to imitate his fervour, faith and humility, so that we ask first for the spiritual rebirth of our souls, namely the Kingdom of Heaven, hearkening to St. Peter's advice: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the

revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13).

Bearing in mind this sobriety and the consideration of time according to Christ, and girding up the loins of our minds, let us entreat the Bishop of Caesarea of Cappadocia Basil the Great, to intercede to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls, for the peace of the world and of our tested region, and for the cessation of the schisms in the Churches.

And let us say along with St. John of Damascus; “O Thou Who hast made all things in wisdom, O Word of the Father Who art from before all eternity, Who hast constituted the whole of creation by Thine almighty word, bless the crown of the year with Thy goodness” and protect our venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, our reverend Christian flock and the Holy City of Jerusalem, through the Theotokos, grant the world the great mercy. Amen.

Many happy returns and a Blessed New Year.

Consequently His Beatitude cut the New Year Cake wishing a happy and joyful New Year 2019 and distributed the pieces while the students of the Patriarchal School were singing the carols and then they went out to sing the carols to the Hagiotaphite Fathers at the Central and at the Greek Community of Jerusalem.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**MUSIC                      EVENT                      OF                      THE**

# **PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL AND THE MUSIC SCHOOL OF ALIMOS**

On Friday evening, December 15/28, 2018, at the Reception Hall of the Patriarchal School of Holy Zion there was a Music event in cooperation of the School Students under the Management of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the Students of the Music School of Alimos under the Management of the teacher Mrs. Ioanna Aggelou. The Music event began with the opening address of the Managing Director of the Patriarchal School and Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos and was honoured by the presence of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, the Chairman of the School Board and Geronda Sacristan Most Reverend Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis. The event was attended with much interest by the Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Priests, monks and nuns and members of the Greek community.

On this music event, the students of the Patriarchal School sang the apolytikion and kontakion of the Feast of the Nativity, the katavasia "Christ is born give ye glory" and the Hagiotaphite Christmas carols, while the students of the Music School of Alimos played musical instruments and sang the Christmas carols from various places of Greece, Thraki, Peloponese, Crete, Pontos, Aegean islands, Sporades, Constantinople and Asia Minor.

The performance of the students from both Schools was praised accordingly by His Beatitude and the Consul General.

**From Secretariat-General**



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# CHRISTMAS CEREMONY HELD BY THE CHURCHES OF JORDAN

On Tuesday, December 5/18, 2018, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos attended a Christmas ceremony held by the Churches of Jordan, under His Majesty the King of Jordan Abdullah Ibn Hussein, protector of the Muslim and Christian shrines in Jerusalem. The event took place at the Cultural Centre of the Prefecture in Amman, in order to underline and support the peaceful co-existence between Muslims and Christians in Jerusalem as a reference of their identity and in honour of the Christmas Feast.

There was a large participation on behalf of governmental officials of Jordan and imams representing the religion of Islam, the President of the Palestinian State His Excellency Mr. Abbas Abu Mazen and Christian leaders from the Churches of Jerusalem and representatives of the Churches from Jordan.

Escorts of His Beatitude from Jerusalem were; Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, and the Arabic Mass Media Manager Fr. Issa Musleh, from Amman, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia, the Patriarchal Commissioner in Amman Most Reverend Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba and Patriarchal Representative of Madaba, the Hegoumen of Fhes, Archimandrite Ieronymos, the Patriarchal Representative of Irbet Archimandrite Raphael, and many Priests from our flock in Jordan.

His Beatitude addressed all present through the Most Reverend Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis in Arabic and also

the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem Mr. Pierre Battista Pizzaballa spoke, underlining the joy of the Christmas Feast and the difficulties faced by the Churches of Jerusalem and the Middle East. He also referred to the support of His Majesty the King of Jordan towards the Churches and congratulated the King for His recent Templeton Prize award.

Then the Sheikh who is responsible for the Muslim waqfs (Arabic وقف) spoke.

During the event there were songs from Jordan and Christmas songs, the Katavasia "Christ is born, give him glory" by a choir and the Ave Maria by a talented girl.

After the end of the ceremony, His Majesty the King offered a royal meal to all the guests.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF MOLDAVIA AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Monday morning, December 4/17, 2018, the President of the Republic of Moldavia Mr. Igor Dodon visited the Patriarchate, escorted by his wife, a team of his associates and the Ambassador of Moldavia in Israel Mrs. Gabriela Moraru.

His Excellency the President and his escorts were warmly

received by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers, saying that the Patriarchate, the first historic Church and the beacon of Christianity modestly welcomes him at the Patriarchate and the Tomb of the crucified and resurrected Christ.

His Excellency the President expressed his joy, saying that he is visiting the Patriarchate after 2004, as the first President of a country with 3.000.000 inhabitants and more than 1000 monasteries, having Saint Stephen as a patron Saint.

His Beatitude referred to the bonds of the Patriarchate with the country of Moldavia, when the Patriarchs visited Moldavia and strengthened it spiritually, while the Moldavian people supported the Patriarchate materially for the maintenance of the shrines.

In recognition of the support of Moldavia to the Patriarchate, His Beatitude offered the President the honorary distinction of the Great Cross bearer of the Order of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and an icon of Theotokos of Jerusalem, of the Sacred Edicule and a painting depicting the city of Jerusalem.

The President thanked Him for this honour, which has an impact upon his country and committed himself to support the Patriarchate and the Church of his country.

Then the President visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, escorted by His Beatitude and under the sounds of bells tolling.

On this visit he was welcomed by the Hegoumen of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Most Reverend Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis and the ministering Fathers of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

**From Secretariat-General**