

THE FEAST OF ST ONOUPHRIOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday the 12th/25th of June 2013, the feast of St Onouphrios was celebrated at the Holy Monastery bearing his name, which lies at the Gihon valley opposite the Pool of Siloam. This Monastery, dedicated to St Onouphrios of Egypt, is one of the ancient Monasteries of the Patriarchate. It lies on rocks and carved tombs of the cemetery which was “purchased for the burial of foreigners” by the chief priests of the Jews for the three hundred silver pieces the repentant Judas Iscariot, who had delivered the Lord, had returned to them (Matthew 27, 6-8).

At the church of this Holy Monastery, founded long ago by Archimandrite Metrophanes, Guardian of the Holy Sepulcher, in 1893, His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem led the Divine Liturgy. Co-officiating were the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias and Patriarchal Commissioner; Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Elder Sacristan; Priest-Monk fr. Christodoulos from the Metropolis of Patras, Priest-Monk fr. Ieronymos from the Archbishopric of Cyprus; the very Reverend Archimandrite Ieronymos, hegoumen in Fhes and Vice-President of Financial Affaris; Archdeacon fr. Athanasios and Priest-Deacon fr. Eulogios.

Monks and nuns participated in this divine Liturgy in devoutness and reverence, together with laymen and laywomen, pilgrims, and residents of Jerusalem and the Hill of St Sion.

To this pious congregation, His Beatitude Theophilos preached the Word of God, an excerpt of which is cited here:

[...] Hosios Onouphrios, Our Father, set deification as his only purpose in life, bearing in mind the words of the Great Athanasius, that God was humanized, became a human after us,

so that us humans would become deified.

This is precisely the purpose of the descent, on behalf of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Paraclete, namely the Holy Spirit, upon the world through His holy Church, to make us into vessels of the perceptible and heavenly light, that is the Holy Spirit, as was the case with our Hosios Onouphrios according to his hagiographer: "A light that is perceptible and heavenly you have received in your heart, of the undefiled Trinity you have become a vessel, Onouphrios. And now among the angels you are counted, crying Alleluia".

[...] Our Church, my dears, promotes we would say in a special manner the great figures of the martyrs and ascetics of Christ's love. And this, so that it may be known and revealed to men that the man who does not accept the light of Christ, namely the Holy Spirit, shall remain in darkness".

"I", says Christ, "have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness" (John, 12, 46). I have come to the world to be a spiritual light for this man, so that no one of those who believe in me should stay in the moral darkness of sin and fallacy. [...]

After the Divine Liturgy, a procession followed to the graves of the Monastery's proprietors and other men entombed there, where a supplication was made for the repose of the souls of the Fathers there entombed and of the recently departed Nun Serapheima.

After the procession and the apolysis of the Divine Liturgy, there followed a brief reception at the quarters of the Mother Superior, the Very Reverend Paisia.

From the Secretariat General

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HOLY SPIRIT MONDAY CELEBRATED AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On the Monday of the Holy Ghost, the 11th/24th of June 2013, the Pentecost was celebrated at the Patriarchate in special honour of the Holy Ghost, sent by the Father through the Son to the holy disciples and apostles.

I. At the Holy Sion

The feast, dedicated par excellence to the All-holy Spirit, was celebrated at the Holy Sion, where the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles.

From the previous evening, the Vespers was held, led by the Most Reverend Dorotheos, Archbishop of Avila, at the chapel standing in the cemetery of the Holy Sion, followed by a reading out of the Genuflection prayer.

On the day of the feast, Archbishop Dorotheos led the Matins and the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Holy Trinity within the building housing the Patriarchal Hieratic School.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the procession began with the reading out of the first wish at the Church, the second at the chapel-catacomb – which a fortnight ago was broken into by young religious Jews – with a supplication at the Tomb of David and the reading out of the third wish at the Hyperoon, where the All-Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles.

From there, the procession returned to the Church, passing through the Cemetery and extending a supplication for the repose of the deceased.

II. At the Russian Church of the Holy Trinity

In the New City of Jerusalem, at the Church of the Holy Trinity of the Russian *Missia*, the Divine Liturgy was held in celebration of the Monday of the Holy Ghost, led by His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, and co-officiated by the Grand Chancellor, Archbishop of Constantina Aristarchos, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Ieronymos, Hegoumen in Fhes and Vice-president of the Committee on Finance, the Very Reverend Ieronymos, representative of the Archbishopric of Cyprus and other priest-monks, presbyters and deacons.

During the *Koinonikon* of the D. Liturgy, His Beatitude proclaimed the word of God to the congregation. This is an excerpt from His speech:

“In other words, the Church is the body, namely the supplement of Jesus Christ as a human being. It is the supplement of Him Who as God replenishes everything to their every need and provides each of His creations with anything they may require. This great sacrament of the Holy Pentecost, explicitly the descent of the Holy Ghost from heaven in the form of tongues of fire upon the holy disciples and apostles, declares the ineffable condescension and philanthropy of God towards us humans.”

Archimandrite Theophanes translated the speech to Russian. (See link: en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ru/2013/06/24/8959/)

After the Divine Liturgy, the Head of the Russian *Missia* hosted a reception in honour of the Patriarchal delegation and other guests from the Russian-speaking, Arab-speaking and Greek-speaking congregation.

Offering a toast at the table, His Beatitude wished that the Holy Ghost replenish the mind, the soul and heart of each and every man, and guide the Church of Christ to the whole truth.

From the Secretariat-General

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THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD CELEBRATED AT PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, 31st May/13th June 2013 the feast of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, was celebrated at the Patriarchate.

1. At the Patriarchate

On the evening of the feast, the Vespers service was officiated at the monastic church of Sts Constantine and Helen. In the same morning, the Matins service and divine liturgy were held, led by His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

2. At the site of the Ascension

In the evening, at the holy site where the Ascension took place, a holy water rite was performed, as the Altar of the site remains to this day out-of-doors and exposed within the area of the mosque. The service was followed by the 9th Easter Hour and the Vespers, in Greek and Arabian alike, due to the participation of the Arab-speaking community, led by the Reverend Demetrius, Archbishop of Lydda.

[...] On the morning of the feast, the divine liturgy was officiated at the pilgrimage site, again led by the Reverend Demetrius, Archbishop of Lydda, in the presence of numerous pilgrims, both residents of Jerusalem and visitors from afar.

During the Divine Liturgy, HB Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem arrived at the site with members of the Holy and Sacred Synod, as well as pilgrims, before visiting the Muslim imam at his residence which is adjacent to the Pilgrimage Site.

Subsequently, His Beatitude and retinue visited the holy monastery of the Ascension, headed by father Achillios, and from there, the Holy Monastery of the Men of Galilee in Little Galilee, headed by Archimandrite Anthimos.

They were followed by the Reverend Demetrius, Archbishop of Lydda, after the conclusion of the divine liturgy at the Pilgrimage Site.

From the Secretariat-General

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END OF EASTER SEASON CELEBRATED AT PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, 30th of May/12th of June 2013, the end of the Easter Season was celebrated at the Patriarchate under its rule for conduct and veneration schedule.

Early in the morning, the Easter matins service was chanted, and the divine liturgy held at the monastic church of Sts Constantine and Helen, during which His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the Guardians of the Holy Sepulcher proceeded for veneration at the Deposition from the Cross, the Holy Sepulcher and the Horrendous Golgotha.

The veneration took place even as the Easter procession and divine liturgy were being officiated at the katholikon of the Church of the Resurrection, led by the Grand Sacristan Isidoros, Archbishop of Hierapolis, in the presence of several pious pilgrims.

At the end of the divine liturgy, the Archbishop and priests arrived at the Patriarchate to pay their respects to His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, who welcomed them with the rejoicing Easter greeting "Christ is risen!"

From the Secretariat-General

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DEACON ORDAINED AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On the night of Monday to Tuesday, the 28th to the 29th of May/10th to the 11th of June 2013, the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias, following a decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod, during a liturgy at the Holy Sepulcher, ordained as deacon Savvas Haj, originally from the town of Abelin, Northern Israel, in the presence of the Elder Sacristan Isidoros, Archbishop of Hierapolis, of Archimandrite f. Philotheos, the hegoumen of Accra, the ordinand's wife and a group of his countrymen.

In the following morning, the ordained deacon, together with Archimandrite f. Philotheos, the hegoumen of Accra, and the Most Venerable Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias, arrived

at the Patriarchate to receive the blessing of HB Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, and wishes for a prosperous ministration, agreeable to God and men alike.

From the Secretariat-General

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TONSURE FOR TWO MONKS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, the 22nd of May/4th of June 2013, the tonsure took place of two monks by HB Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem. The monastic initiation was conducted at the Chapel of the Pentecost which is adjacent to the Patriarchate Hall, in the presence of Fathers of the Holy Sepulcher, novice Paris Vasiloyiannis of Achaea, serving at the Tomb of the Mother of God in Gesthemane, who took the name Palladios, and novice Constantinos Papachristos of Leivadeia, serving at the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, who took the name Cyril.

After the tonsure rite, His Beatitude addressed the two tonsured monks, declaring that the Grace of God has merited them with prosperously concluding their novitiate and with now being received into the Angelic Schema of the Holy Sepulcher, which includes the period of novitiate but also the diaconate in which they have already been ordained, bearing responsibility for thousands of pilgrims who resort to the All-Holy Pilgrimage Sites in order to quench their thirst through life and salvation incarnated, crucified and resurrected in Christ.

From the Secretariat-General

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CELEBRATING THE SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

The Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Samaritan Woman on Sunday the 20th of May/ 2nd of June 2013, at the pilgrimage site of Jacob's Well.

On the word of the Old Testament and the Gospel of John in the New Testament (Jn, 4, 1-38), the Well was dug in the land of Samaria by Jacob the patriarch between the mountains Yeval and Yoresin.

At this precise Well did the Samaritan woman, who arrived here from the town of Sychar in order to draw water, come upon the Lord who, as by fishing, initiated her into Himself as Christ and changed her life so that she would depart from sin and receive holiness and this very testimony. Indeed, she is commemorated within the cycle of movable feasts on the fourth Sunday after Easter.

It is in this Pilgrimage site that, in the course of our days, the neomartyr St Philoumen of the Holy Sepulcher died a martyric death. The site has been laudably exalted since a few years by its Hegoumen, the Archimandrite father Ioustinos by means of the construction of a magnificent Church, an ornament to the city of Neapolis. Here, on the aforementioned day, His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem,

officiated the divine liturgy together with Patriarchal Vicar, Esychios, the Right Reverend Metropolitan of Kapitolias; His Eminence Aristarchos, the Archbishop of Constantina and Grand Chancellor; His Eminence Damaskinos, the Archbishop of Ioppi; His Eminence Theophylaktos, the Archbishop of Iordanis; his Eminence Philoumenos, the Archbishop of Pella; Hieromonks of the Holy Sepulcher and Priests of major parishes from townships adjoining Neapolis, such as Raphidia, Toumba and Zampapde, in the presence of the faithful who had reached Neapolis from adjoining towns.

During the *Koinonikon* of the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude proclaimed to everyone the word of God in the Greek language.

This is an excerpt from His speech:

Today, on the fifth Sunday after Easter, the Church of Christ celebrates the feast of the Samaritan woman in this very site where also lies the Well of Jacob the Patriarch.

This site is of special importance, for it is not only a historical and sacred one, but also a site evangelizing the testimony of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that God is a spirit and those that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (Jn 4, 24). In addition, the spiritual well built upon the actual Jacob's well, namely the holy Altar of this splendid Church in honour of St Photini, the Samaritan Woman, attests to the Word of our Savior Christ to the Samaritan Woman and to any man with a thirst for the salvaging truth, that: "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jn 4, 13-14).

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a litany thrice around the Holy Church.

After the litany, the proprietor and hegoumen, Archimandrite f. Ioustinos, hosted a festive meal for His Beatitude, His

Retinue and scores of people.

From the Secretariat- General

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THE NAME DAY OF HIS BEATITUDE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS III.

On Thursday, the 9th / 22nd of March 2012, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem celebrated according to the order of the rite and the Status Quo, the Feast of the Forty Martyrs and in this context celebrated particularly the Name Day of His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, named after one of these glorious Martyrs.

On the eve of this Feast, the 9th Hour was read at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, followed by the solemn descent via the Christian Road to the Church of Resurrection.

In front of the Shrine of the Stone of the Anointing our Father His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III venerated. His Beatitude was then received in front of the Holy Sepulchre by priests and deacons, members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, dressed in full vestment and offered thymiama-insense. His Beatitude venerated the Holy Sepulchre followed by the Archbishops and Hieromonks.

The entrance to the Catholicon took place and then the veneration of the Holy Calvary by the Archbishops and the hieromonks, members of the Holy Synod. The Vespers then

initiated with the ceremony of the Blessing of the Bread presided over by His Beatitude, whilst the deacons offered thymiama to the surrounding Holy Shrines.

After the Vespers where concluded the solemn ascent of the Brotherhood to their Central Monastery took place.

The morning of the Feast Day started with the solemn descent to the Church of Resurrection where the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts was initiated, presided according to the order, only by His Beatitude, whilst the Archbishops of the Brotherhood were praying in the Holy Altar of the Catholicon. His Eminence Anthimos Metropolitan of Alexandroupoleos was also present as the representative of the Church of Greece. Present at the celebration were: the General Consul of Greece in Jerusalem His Excellency Sotirios Athanasiou, the Ambassador of Greece in Amman of Jordan His Excellency Heracles Asteriadis and the Ambassador of Belarus to Israel. Numerous hieromonks, members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, participated devoutly along with married Priests of our local community, pilgrims and local faithful.

When the Holy Liturgy was completed it was followed by the Doxology – Te Deum, presided by His Beatitude, concelebrating with Hierarchs dressed with Epitrahilio & Omoforio.

After these ceremonial events at the Church of Resurrection, an official and panegyric ascent took place to the Patriarchate, where at the Throne Hall; the Elder Chief Secretary His Eminence Aristarchos Archbishop of Constantina addressed His Beatitude, in the name of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.

Address of the Elder Chief Secretary His Eminence Aristarchos Archbishop of Constantina on the occasion of the Name Day of His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III at The Throne Hall:

“Your Beatitude,

Today on the 9th of March, in the middle of the Lenten period, the Orthodox Church is spiritually rejoicing and solemnly exalts on the Feast day of the Forty Saint Martyrs; in memory of their martyrdom death at the lake of Sevasteia in Pontos. In addition, the Church of Jerusalem is celebrating the Name Day of its Father and Shepherd, worthy to bear the name of one of these crowned martyrs.

This double Jerusalemite feast was celebrated with the sacrifice of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts and the Doxology-Te Deum taken place at the Church of Resurrection. Participating were pious priests and believers of our Lord's people from nearby areas, but also from those afar areas of the Church of Jerusalem. Present was the whole of the August Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre whose superior – Your Beatitude – was elected with the canonical and unanimous votes of the Holy and Sacred Synod six years ago.

We manifest our joy at this historic hall of the Patriarchate and congratulate Your Beatitude adding 'whatsoever things are true and just, lovely and of good report' (Phil.4,8). This is declared by Your works with the cooperation and assistance of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and that of the Holy and Sacred Synod.

From this cooperation, and despite the imperfections and deficiencies that accompany all human works, resulted in good deeds, liturgical, sanctifying, heraldic, pastoral, philanthropic and social.

Your Beatitude responded positively to the invitations received from the numerous churches of Our flock and willingly visited them in addition to the ones Your Beatitude deemed necessary to, or the ones that imposed Your guidance for the resolution of a problem and for providing aid morally or materially, where needed. Likewise Your Beatitude advocated to representatives of state Organisations and to those of Non Governmental Organisations for the needs of the flock of our

Sion Church and for the presence of the Christians in the Middle East in general. Your Beatitude advocated for their education and the protection of their rights; in favour of their survival in conditions of prosperity and dignity at their respective countries of birth. This support of the Middle East Christians is rendered at present stronger through the Middle East Council of Churches. The Patriarchate played a paramount role in the reorganization and upgrade of the Council. For this purpose, of collectively supporting the rights of the Christians as a minority in their birthplace, the Holy Land, Your Beatitude directed properly and with agility numerous meetings of the Leaders of the Christian Churches of the Middle East realised at the Patriarchate under Your Beatitude's auspices. These rights of the Christians Your Beatitude properly presented them, during last December's meeting in Fhues to the King of Jordan and at the Presidential Palace during Your address to the President of the State of Israel, on behalf of the Christian Communities on occasion of the new secular year of 2012.

Regarding the section of the inter-Orthodox Ecclesiastical Cooperation there was considerable improvement. Between others, the recent visit to the sister Autocephalous Church of Cyprus, was marked from the laying of the foundation stone for the restoration of the Exarchate of the Holy Sepulchre, nearby the Archbishopric of Cyprus. Fruit of this cooperation is also the enrollment of five members of our Arab-speaking flock at the Religious Seminary of the Church of Cyprus.

Our historic rights on the Holy Shrines stipulated by the prevailing Status Quo where safeguarded and where exercised entirely. This was demonstrated by successfully protecting these rights from the provocation of the Armenians which caused problems during the yearly cleaning of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. With the cooperation of the Franciscans and the support of the Palestinian Authority, the damage caused by the Armenians on the floor of the Holy Grotto

in Bethlehem, was restored.

There was also success in the efforts to staff the Holy Shrines and due to the creation of a climate of trust and security, new students arrived at the Patriarchal School of Holy Sion as well as new members were admitted to the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.

These are mentioned as the fruits of the common efforts of Your Beatitude and of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, not for the boast and not for repose, but for the just praise which deservedly accounts for whoever demonstrates good deeds. Thus the members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre be encouraged to advance creatively in performing and fulfilling our duties for the years to come, reinforced by the grace of God.

Your Beatitude in the name of the Holy and Sacred Synod and of our Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, we wish You from our heart many healthy years to come, power, peace and constancy with joy in the view of the good deeds for the glory of the Trinity, our God and praise of our blessed genus. Amen.

With these, the Church of Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of the Forty Martyrs and the Name Day of His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

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Chief Secretary's Office.

THE FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

The feast of the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple was festively celebrated at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

In the morning of the day of the feast, Sunday November 21st / December 4th 2011, His Holy Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos celebrated at the Holy Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, opening the Christmas season with katavasias "Christ is born, give glory!"

This feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos, as commemoration of the Entrance of the Theotokos at The Holy of Holies in the Temple so as to prepare Her for the following event of the Annunciation and of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary incarnation of the Word of God and our Savior Jesus Christ, was celebrated gloriously at the Holy Church named after the Entrance of the Theotokos at the adjacent to the Patriarchate Holy Monastery of Great Panagia.

At this Monastery initially moved from the Holy Zion Hill the Fathers of the Holy Zion or the Fathers of the Holy Sepulcher in 516AD during the service of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Elias, according to Cyril of Skythopolis author of the Holy Saints in Palestine, so as to be spiritually and locally close to the Temple of Resurrection.

During this feast of the Monastery celebrated on the eve at Vespers and presided over the Divine Liturgy on the day of the feast the Holy Metropolitan of Kapitoliada Isichios, concelebrating with the Reverend of the above mentioned Holy

Monastery Archimandrite Dimitrios, Hieromonks and deacons and chanting with the Fathers of the Holy Sepulcher and the Fathers of the Church.

At the feast arrived monks and nuns and members of the Greek dispersion of Jerusalem as well as Arabic speaking natives, participating piously with devoutness.

Likewise arrived and venerated His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with escort, at the end of the service at the Holy Church of Saints Constantine and Helen.

After the Divine Liturgy the recently appointed Abbess Holy Nun Melani hosted the Archieratical escort and everyone at the Hegumeneion (Office of the Abbot/Abbess). His Beatitude reassured her with pleasure that she will always have His support for her new duties.

Chief Secretary's Office

(translated from the original document in Greek by Mrs. Irini Valasi)

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THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM PRESIDED OVER THE DIVINE LITURGY IN NAZARETH

On Sunday, October 10th/ 23rd 2011, His Holy Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos presided over the

Divine Liturgy at the Holy Pilgrimage of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Nazareth. His Beatitude presided over this Divine Liturgy, responding to the invitation of the Administrative Committee and the Representative Convention of the Greek orthodox Arabic speaking Community of the Patriarchate in Nazareth on their re-election.

With His Beatitude concelebrated the Holy Metropolitan of Nazareth Kyriakos, the Holy Metropolitan of Kapitoliada Isichios, his Eminence Elder Chief Secretary Archbishop of Constantina Aristarchos and the sojourn from France Archbishop of Komana of the Ecumenical Patriarchate Gabriel, the Father of the Holy Sepulcher Archimandrite Abbot of the Holy Monastery of the Precious Cross Klavdios, the Father of the Holy Sepulcher Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Mount Tabor Archimandrite Ilarion, Archimandrite Father Adrianos Primate of the Russian Church in Geneva, the priests of the Pilgrimage in Nazareth and several priests from the neighboring towns.

To the pious and devout Congregation who attended the Divine Liturgy massively His Beatitude preached the Divine Word in Greek as follows:

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” confesses the Apostle of the Nations the Great Paul, (2 Corinthians 12, 9).

Beloved Brothers in Christ,

God's Grace and the power protecting the Theotokos and Mother of God gathered all of us clergy and people so as to glorify and thank God on the honest occasion of the newly and perfectly legitimately elected Ecclesiastical and Community Council of the Holy Metropolitan Church of Nazareth.

The Church, being the body of the Godman Christ, constitutes an incontestable reality in the human history, a reality that

no one could ever and no one can ever doubt. Testament of this reality is the Church of Christ and in this connection the ancient Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

This very testament of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem stems from the Apostolic and sermonic experience of salvation of the Apostle Paul, in which he was given "a thorn in the flesh, to buffet me" (2 Corinthians 12, 7). And he confesses: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness", (2 Corinthians 12, 9).

We carry this thorn "in the flesh", being the priests and deacons of the apostolic succession in Christ of James the Brother of Christ. Howbeit we state this, because we as men in flesh and habitants of this world do not do anything by ourselves, or are we able to do anything without God's grace and strength that is made perfect in weakness. The founder of the Church promised this exact strength to the disciples and apostles stating: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth", (Acts of the Apostles 1, 8).

Yes, my beloved, the presence of Christ, that is the living Christian Testament in the Holy Land through the Church, is the work of the power of the Holy Spirit that comes to those who hold the mystery of faith "Crucified and Risen Lord in pure conscience", as the wise Paul states, (1 Timothy 3,9).

In other words, my beloved, it is not enough to verbally testify the name of Christ: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven", states Christ, calling upon the words of the prophet Isaiah: " This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me", (Mathew

15,8)

It is time, my beloved, for us to awake. It is time for us to realize because we live as divine Paul reminds us in perilous times, (2 Timothy 3, 1), during which "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Timothy 3, 2-5)

It is time, we repeat my beloved, for us to open our hearts to accept the Divine glow of God "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ", (two Corinthians 4, 6). We have the treasure of the illuminating and glorious knowledge, as the Divine Paul states in our bodies, the fragile and earthen, so as to prove that the excessive glory of our power that overcomes the obstacles and the dangers is the power of God and it doesn't derive from us the frail and weak: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us", (2 Corinthians 4, 7).

This howbeit-earthen vessel that contains this priceless divine treasure is the Church of Christ. In the extraordinary sociopolitical situation of Christians in the Middle East, especially the Holy Land the earthen vessel is the Patriarchate of Jerusalem namely the Church of the Holy Testaments (Pilgrimages) the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Nazareth, the Nativity in Bethlehem the Cross and the Resurrection in Jerusalem, of our Savior Jesus Christ.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity", (Psalm 132, 1) Behold, chants Prophet David, what more beautiful and what more pleasing is there other than brothers living together in amity: "not bound by love of nature, but by faith, not by consequence of kinship, but by unity of faith in the Holy Spirit" according to the melodist of the Church.

Having the treasure of the divine strength made perfect in weakness let us express our glory and gratitude to the Son of God and our Father and to the Son of the Ever-Virgin Mary our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen”.

And in Arabic as follows: (e-address <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2011/10/23/721/>)

After the Divine Liturgy, a reception with refreshments followed at the next to the pilgrimage hall and after the reception dinner at the restaurant of the YMCA, hosted by the Representatives of the Administrative Committee and the Representative Assembly of Nazareth.

At the Reception Hall there were allocutions from both sides emphasizing the importance of the continuation of the close spiritual cooperation between the Patriarchate and the congregation the continuation of the signed agreements for the construction of a Church and a School at the estate of Kasr-Il- Moutran and the intention of His Beatitude to construct a new bell tower at the Holy Church of the Annunciation with the donation of a pious pilgrim from Greece and to respond to the extent possible for the rest that is needed.

The allocution of His Beatitude at the Reception Hall is as follows:

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them, which are sanctified. I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel”. (Acts of the Apostles 20, 32-33)

Holy Metropolitan of Nazareth and brother in Christ, Mr. Kyriakos.

Elected President of the Community Council of Nazareth, Dr. Azmi Hakim and honorable members of it

Beloved brothers,

With the above words from Paul, we greet you and in this, we congratulate you on your perfectly legitimate re-election and settlement as President of the Community Council of our Greek orthodox-in Christ congregation of Nazareth.

We call upon the words of the wise Paul because he urges that we must "Rejoice with them that do rejoice" (Romans 12, 15)

In fact on your appointment through the vote of confidence of the devout members to protect and care the congregation in Christ.

Mister President,

You take charge of our respectable Community in very perilous however welcoming times according to Paul. Perilous though, because of the unpredictable and rather threatening sociopolitical developments that take place in the Middle East especially in our territory. Welcoming as they forge bonds of unity between clergy and laity, Community and Patriarchate. We state in fact this because it was gloriously proven that the unity of the congregation in Christ together with the spiritual and ecclesiastical reference has stemmed until now from the harmonical cooperation, based on the dialogue of love and truth in Christ.

Not less than the order of the Lord stating, "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many". (Matthew 20 27-28).

For no reason do we doubt that the enemy of the Church and the enemy of Its amity and unity that is the adversary devil, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour", (1 Peter 1 5,8)

Not are we afraid or defeated because we have the master of

our faith and the triumphant over death, the crucified and resurrected Christ on Whom we rely for our whole care, “for he careth for you”, (Peter 5, 7)

We conclude our allocution with the words of Apostle Paul, stating: “resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world”. More analytically speaking: against this adversary resist, supported in faith, consoled by the knowledge that the very same afflictions happen to all the brothers in Christ who are dispersed throughout the great world of God.

On the above calling upon our Fatherly and Patriarchal wishes and blessings , we wish you Mister President and your pious associates the grace of the Holy Sepulcher and the Holy Pilgrimage of the Annunciation of the Ever-Virgin Mary and highly-blessed Mother of God/Theotokos so as to conduct your new demanding duties successfully .

Congratulations and all the best to you. Amen”.

The allocution of the President of the Administrative Committee Mr. Azmi Hakim in Arabic is as follows (e-address <http://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2011/10/23/717/>)

Chief Secretary’s Office

(translated from the original document in Greek by Mrs. Irini Valasi)

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