

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

On Wednesday, the 9th / 22nd of March 2023, the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was celebrated internally, on the commemoration of the holy Forty Martyrs, who martyred in the lake of Sebasteia of Pontus in the year 320 under Licinius, with the Service of Matins, Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts, at the Holy Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, of His Beatitude.

After the Divine Liturgy in the Epitropicon, His Beatitude received the congratulations of the Brotherhood and its wishes for health, prosperity and longevity.

On Saturday, March 12/25, 2023, the Name Day of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was celebrated with transference on the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs, in accordance with the Status Quo of the Church of Jerusalem as a "Paresia" with Great Vespers on Friday afternoon at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, after which the Fourth Stasis of the Salutations to the Theotokos was held, presided over by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos.

On the morning of the main day of the feast, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth, Isychios of Kapitolias, Benedictos of Diosaecarea and the visiting Nikolaos of Mesogaia and Lavraiotiki from the Church of Greece, the Archbishops, Theophanes of Gerassa, Damascene

of Yaffo, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Isidoros of Hierapolis, Philoumenos of Pella, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, Archimandrite Mattheos among the other Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, the representative of the Moscow Patriarchate Archimandrite Alexander, the representative of the Romanian Patriarchate Archimandrite Ioannis, Arab speaking Priests and others, Archdeacon Mark, Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Byzantine choir under the lead of the President of the Byzantine singers of Greece, Mr Georgios Naoum, with the help of Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Gotsopoulos. The service was attended by a large congregation of local faithful and pilgrims, with the honorary presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Ambassador of Russia Mr Victorov and the Ambassador of Georgia to Israel Mr Lasha.

After the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, a Doxology was held for His Beatitude's Name Day.

The service concluded with the return to the Patriarchate Reception Hall, where His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina addressed His Beatitude as follows:

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

Ascending the spiritual steps of time and of the Holy and Great Lent for the reception of the Holy Pascha, we find the feast of the Holy Forty Martyrs as an oasis of spiritual refreshment and mental recreation. They confessed Christ, exposed to the cold of the lake Sebasteia of Pontus, persevering all night, having their legs broken in the morning and thus exercising well and being crowned during the reign of Licinius in AD 320. The blood of these as well as of all the martyrs is joined with the blood of Christ on the cross and

establishes and strengthens the body of the Church, the ark of salvation for the people. Thanking them for their martyrdom, the Church perpetuates the name of each one and is strengthened by their example and intercessions on its behalf to the Lord.

In honour of their martyrdom, especially of their co-martyr, Saint Theophilos, in whose name Your Beatitude is honoured, the Church of Jerusalem, Mother of the Churches, in accordance with its Status Quo, held a solemn feast at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, co-celebrating with the Bishops of the Patriarchate, the Hieromonks of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the clergy of the Patriarchate, with the participation in prayer of the monks and many pilgrims and in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, the Ambassador of Russia and the Ambassador of Georgia and diplomatic representatives of other states and many faithful people.

Having prayed for the health and stability of Your Beatitude in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, we came to this holy "house" of Ours, so that we may congratulate You on Your Name Day and ascribe to You all that is auspicious, true and honest, due to You, presumed from Your works.

First of all, it should be noted that Your Beatitude took the initiative of cooperation with the Christian Churches of the Holy Land in order to support not only the rights of their Holy Places and properties but also the identity of the existence and residence of Christians in their birthplace. This happened in collective events, such as in the full gathering of the Christmas tree in the Imperial hotel of the Patriarchate in Jaffa Gate, the hotel threatened by the corrupt agreements concluded against it in 2004. In the unreserved support of the other Churches as well as in reciprocity, Your Beatitude visited the place that received sabotage of its tombs, the cemetery of the Anglican Church on the hill of Holy Sion and the chapel of the Franciscans in the

area of Praetorio, in which the relief icon of Christ was broken by extreme fanatical Jewish elements, who didn't even hesitate to attack the Holy Tomb of the Theotokos last Sunday, the day of the Adoration of the Holy Cross. Your Beatitude courageously supported these rights of the Christians in the established meeting of the New Year of the Churches after the President of the State of Israel Mr Herzog.

After the Leaders of the Local Churches, Your Beatitude also worked tirelessly to preserve the Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Status Quo of the Temple of Solomon in cooperation with the King of Jordan, who has the custody of the Muslim and Christian Holy Places in the Holy Land. In order to support and promote the interests of the Patriarchate and all the Christians of the Holy Land, Your Beatitude undertook an overseas trip to the United States of America.

In the pilgrimage sector, with a view to preserving our rights, Your Beatitude cooperated primarily with the Franciscans for the consolidation of the subsoil and the maintenance of the floor of the rotunda and the Seven Chambers of the Church of the Resurrection based on a scientific study by the Sapienza University of Rome.

In particular, Your Beatitude worked for the preparation of studies and the finding of resources for the consolidation and beautification of the dedicated area of the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection and its sacristy and for the reopening of the Museum of the Patriarchate in cooperation with the businessman and Governor of Mount Athos Mr Athanasios Martinos.

Included in this renovation program are the already completed conservation works of precious old icons and the disassembled parts of the chandelier of the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, found in the Brotherhood's refectory above the Cathedral of Saint James the Brother of

God, since the time of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophanes. The work was completed by specialist conservators who came from Russia under the guidance of the icon and book conservator from Cyprus, Mr Stavros Andreou, who is also continuing his work in the antiquities of the rich Library of the Monastery of the Cross. In this Monastery, which housed the famous Theological School of the Holy Cross, Your Beatitude is already preparing, in cooperation with the Universities of Athens and Thessaloniki and the Church of Cyprus, the establishment and operation of a Centre for Biblical Research Studies.

Despite the economic difficulties of our time, there was no lack of financial support for the flock, within the limits of the Patriarchate's capabilities, in the maintenance works of its holy Churches, such as Kufr Smea and Sakhnin, and elsewhere, and the guidance of Your Beatitude of them as well as that of the pilgrims, once again flooding the Patriarchal Hall and the Holy Shrines after the severe test of the Covid virus. In these pilgrimage meetings, which were attended by accompanying High Priests from all the Orthodox Churches, Your Beatitude did not cease to emphasize the need to continue the Orthodox dialogue for the restoration once again of the lost Orthodox unity and communion in Christ.

The aforementioned, Your Beatitude, are only a few Analects, emanating from the spiritual waist of the Church of Jerusalem, empowering us, the Hagiotaphite Fathers, so that we work and cooperate, complementing each other and creating pastoral or renovation work, each of us at the place of his ordination, enriching the consignment of our Fathers.

Raising the glass, Your Beatitude, I wish, on behalf of the Holy and Holy Synod and the entire Brotherhood, health, stability, longevity and receiving the Divine energy and strength from above, so that you may continue Your God-pleasing and precious Patriarchal Pastoral work towards the building of souls, praise of the Church of Jerusalem and of

our race and glory of our Triune God. So be it.”

The Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras as follows:

“Your Beatitude

Your Eminences,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Participating in today’s celebration is a special honour and joy for all of us, as the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the venerable Flock, among them those serving at the Consulate General of Greece in Jerusalem, are honouring the Name Day of the Primate of the Church of Jerusalem, His Holy Beatitude, the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

Your Beatitude,

On behalf of the Greek State, we express to you, the respect, love and gratitude of our country both for your varied pastoral work and for the important national work of preserving and highlighting the Holy Places in the Holy Land.

At the same time, I would like to express the like-minded support of our Motherland to our respective Patriarchate, especially in the current climate of growing intolerance, condemning, unequivocally, the recent attack on the Holy Shrine of the Mother of God in Gethsemane, as well as the, unfortunately, growing wave of violence against Christian places of worship in Jerusalem.

For Greece, the defence of the institution of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, its rights, as well as the customary Status Quo, is a top priority.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem is a constant point of reference for Hellenism everywhere, a witness and beacon of our

centuries-long presence here and a Shepherd of the Greek Orthodox faithful in the Holy Land.

For all of us, the Holy Foundation is associated with the preservation of the integrity of the Holy Places of Christianity, which it defends with devotion and self-denial.

Today's feast is a timely occasion to reflect on all that we "heard of", "we heard and our hands were lifted up", according to the Biblical verse.

Your diligent efforts for the restoration and promotion of the Holy Shrines of our Faith and for the spiritual guidance and well-being of a flock that is undergoing significant challenges and trials highlight the timeless importance of the Sacred Foundation, for maintaining the necessary balances in the environment of the Holy Land.

Your words and work are undoubtedly an expression of love, anxiety and prayer for the future of the Christian Presence in the Holy Land, which includes both the pain and agony of the Cross, as well as the hope and light of the Resurrection.

In the midst of these challenges, both you and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood are strengthened by genuine faith and the authenticity of the Christian experience, so that with knowledge and understanding of the circumstances, with vigour and determination, you can take care of the present and the future of the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Your unceasing prayer and ministry at the holy altar are a source of spiritual nourishment and support for both the clergy and your flock for whom you care tirelessly.

Your Beatitude,

In the turbulent Holy Land, where life encompasses, every day, pain and hope, death and life, in tangible and not distant terms, this high mission does not allow "sleep in the eyes" and "sleepiness in the eyelids" for the Pastor and Church

leader.

Allow me therefore to express to you, both on my behalf and on behalf of my associates, our recognition and appreciation of the important work being done here, as well as of the devotion, zeal and self-sacrifice of the Members of the Brotherhood for the protection and preservation of the Holy Shrines, virtues which we have seen many times and in various ways during our regular visits here.

On this festive day, I express our most sincere and heartfelt wishes for health, longevity and support from the Lord, so that you can continue to carry out your high mission to the Glory of God, for the well-being of the Patriarchate, the Holy Congregation of the Holy Sepulchre, of Your Greek Orthodox Flock and peace in the region. Many Happy and Blessed returns.”

His Beatitude returned their wishes with His following address:

” Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified” (Ps. 70,4).

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

Today is the holy and wonderful feast of the holy athletes in the city of Sebasteia, the holy great Forty Martyrs, whose memory is honoured with rejoicing and gladness by our holy Church of Jerusalem, saying, “let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified” (Psalm 70,4).



This saviour, namely the Gospel of the salvation of Christ, was believed by the Forty Martyrs, who were " perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10) with boldness before the persecuting idolaters and their tormentors, paying heed to the voice of Saint Paul: "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils" (1 Cor. 10:20). Moreover, these holy martyrs were inspired by the first martyr Stephen, who, on the one hand, exemplified the love of his martyr's blood shed for Christ, on the other hand, he preached the testimony of the "Son of man", who, responding to Pilate, said: " To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice." (Jn. 18,37).

To the same voice of the truth of Christ, they became subject but also innate to the likeness of His (Christ's) death concerning His resurrection (cf. Rom. 6,5). Praising the martyrdom of the Forty Saints for the sake of truth, Basil the Great says: "We are not going to admire one, nor two alone..., but forty men, as having one soul in divided bodies, in one sympathy and unity of faith, and they showed one inclination towards suffering and resistance to the truth".

Having in mind, the holy Martyrs of this word of the Lord, that "the Spirit of truth, guide you into all truth" (Jn. 16,13), they did not hesitate nor were they seized by fear of cowardice, but on the contrary, like other three children in the furnace, as if from one mouth they sang and glorified and blessed God, saying: "Do not turn away your mercy from us" (Dan. 3,23).

This mercy of God, who regenerated us in hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (cf. 1 Pet. 1,3) was sought by the brave Martyrs "praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20), hoping for their redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of transgressions, the cleansing,

indeed, of their sins, according to the riches of His grace (cf. Eph. 1,7).

This annual solemn feast of the holy Forty Martyrs and especially of their co-martyr Theophilos, whose sacred name is also borne by our Mediocrity, is “a burnt offering of fragrance to their memorial to the Lord” (Leviticus 6:8), and this because, as the psalmist exclaims, “abandoning all the soldiers of the world, the Lord’s Forty Athletes worshipped the Master in heaven”, becoming citizens of the city of the living God, that is, the heavenly Jerusalem of freedom (cf. Heb. 12:22).

Indeed, the holy Forty Martyrs, the divinely crowned and divinely gathered, who were tested by fire and water, imitating Christ’s martyrdom, were shown to be true witnesses and heralds of His righteousness, as the Apostle Peter preaches saying: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pet. 3:18).

The glorious Forty Martyrs stand out in the midst of “the surrounding cloud of martyrs” (Heb. 12:1) of the Church, because these, as Basil the Great says, not having the same ethnic origin, “each of them came from a different place” were shown to be the nation of God and our Saviour Christ. “Race, the human one, another the spiritual one, one of all. God the Father is common to them, and all are brothers, not born of the same biological parents, but of the adoption of the Spirit in the unity of love joined to one another”.

“World of the Church and the joy of the people and the glory of God the strengthener ... the satellites of Christ, the builders of the Churches ... and those who fought to the end against the common enemy of humanity,” says the father of the Church, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, praising “the great and according to the blessed (Forty martyrs) phalanx”.

Our holy Church of Jerusalem joyfully honouring and upholding the holy commemoration of the holy Forty Martyrs as well as their co-martyr and of the same blood Theophilos, celebrated in the place of the crucifixion and the tomb of the Resurrection of our Saviour Christ, the bloodless sacrifice of thanksgiving, presided over by Our Mediocrity and surrounded by the honourable members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, High Priests, Priests and Hierodeacons, pious pilgrims and pious Christians from our Christian tested flock, who are praying together with us, manifesting thus our admiration to God's Saints. "We," says Asterios Amaseias, " do not worship the martyrs, but we honour them as true worshipers of God; we do not revere people, we admire them for respecting God well in times of temptation."

Moreover, we rendered a thanksgiving doxology to the holy Triune God, in the name of the holy martyr Theophilos, keeping Our holy Name Day, and "we blessed – according to the holy martyr Justin – the Creator of all things through His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit".

The solemnity of this day of the holy Forty Martyrs and especially of their co-martyr Theophilos does not refer to Our Mediocrity only, but mainly to the Apostolic and Patriarchal institution of the Church of the body of our Saviour Christ, "in whom we have redemption through His blood (Eph. 1:7). " God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5,8).

This divine and perfect love, which "casts out fear" (1 John 4:8), was noted as light in the hearts and minds of the holy martyrs who demonstrated "the perfect work of love", according to Clement of Alexandria, that is, "that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15,6).

This commandment of Saint Paul, " that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify Christ" (Rom. 15,6), is denounced to all

of us and in particular to our brothers in Christ, the honourable Prelates of the Holy Orthodox Churches of those who are in a state of “separating themselves, having not the Spirit” (cf. Jude 19), today and in the midst of the welcome time of repentance and blessed fasting, by the honoured holy Forty Martyrs, “equal in striving and equal in opinion and equal crowns holding” according to their hymnographer.

Having, therefore, accomplices and perceivers “from the adoption of the Spirit in the unity of one another by love”, according to Basil the Great, the holy Forty Martyrs and their co-martyr and our spiritual guardian Theophilos, we beseech them and the Blessed Theotokos and Mother of God Ever-Virgin Mary, so that in peace, temperance and repentance we may reach the glorious Resurrection of God and our Saviour Christ.

Therefore, we call on all those praying with Us and honouring this solemn commemoration of the holy Martyrs, strength from the Holy Cross, illumination from on high, the free gift of the Holy Spirit, the grace of the Holy and Life-giving Tomb, patience and all the blessing of the philanthropic God, expressing warm thanksgiving to those who addressed Us, the Elder Chief Secretary, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, who spoke on behalf of the Greek State, the Ambassador of Russia to Israel Mr Victorov, the Ambassador of Georgia to Israel Mr Lasha, the representatives of the Greek Navy, the Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, representative of the Holy Church of Russia, who relayed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Reverend Archimandrite Ioannis, representative of the Holy Church of Romania, who relayed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, His Eminence, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, His Eminence, Archbishop Damascene of Yaffo, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Yaffo, His

Eminence, Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the newly-founded Community in Beersheba, the Reverend Fr Farah Bandour, who spoke on behalf of Saint James' Cathedral parish, the Reverend Archimandrite Ignatios, who spoke on behalf of the Beit Jala Community, the Reverend Archimandrite Philotheos, who spoke on behalf of the communities in the Acre-Ptolemais district, Mrs Panagiota Kafetzi, who spoke on behalf of Saint Demetrios School, Mr Athanasios Abu-Aeta, from Beit Sahour, and all those who participated in this festivity.

Cheers to all!"

At noon, a monastic meal was offered.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **THE DOXOLOGY FOR MARCH 25, 1821 AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

At 10.00 a.m. on Thursday, March 10/23, 2018, a Doxology was held in the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the occasion of the national anniversary of March 25, 1821, as thanks to God for the national rebirth and liberation from the Turkish yoke and as a petition for the repose of the souls of those who heroically fell on the battlefields of the nation.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos presided over the Doxology, with the co-celebration of the High Priests and Hieromonks of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Evangelos Vlioras and members of the Greek Consulate

General. The chanting was delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, and Mr Gotsopoulos in the presence of members of the Greek community and pilgrims.

After the Doxology, all congregation went to the Hall of the Patriarchate, where His Beatitude spoke with the following address:

“What have I to do with Napoleon? However, if you want soldiers to liberate our country, I promise you 5 and 10 thousand soldiers; once we were baptized with oil, we are baptized again with blood and another time for the freedom of our country”. From the memoirs of the Elder of Moria, Theodoros Kolokotronis.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved brethren in Christ,

With infinite gratitude to the Holy Triune God, the pious generation of the Roman Orthodox and our Greek nation honours the anniversary of March 25, 1821, the day of the Annunciation of its liberation from the slavery of the Ottoman yoke.

The global historical event of the Greek Revolution of 1821 demonstrated in practice the greatness of the power of faith in Christ on the one hand and, on the other, of the mindset of the spirit for the God-given good of freedom and an independent homeland. “God... made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation”, (Acts 17,26) Saint Paul preaches.

The Hellenistic view of man as “the offspring of God” (Acts 17:29) and especially the hagiographic view that we are God’s (cf. 1 Cor. 11:7) is the inexhaustible source that fed both sacrificial dispositions through the baptism of blood and the

sure hope through the baptism of the freedom of the country.

The lively desire to seize the most precious treasure of freedom fully justified the holy struggle of the subservient Romans against the overthrow of the long-term Ottoman tyranny. «Άργιε νάλθη εκείνη ή 'μέρα / και ήταν όλα σιωπηλά / Γιατί τάσκιαζε ή φοβέρα / και τά πλάκωνε ή σκλαβιά» according to the poet Dionysios Solomos.

Admittedly, the Greek Revolution of 1821 causes admiration but also wonder, because, in the history of mankind, there is no such comparable event. We say this invoking the proclamation of the great national martyr Alexandros Ypsilantis from Iasion on February 24, 1821, in which he declared the following: "It is time to shake off this unbearable yoke, to liberate the Motherland, to descend from the clouds... to rise the sign, by which we always win, I say the Cross, and thus to avenge our Homeland and our Orthodox Faith from the ungodly scorn of the ungodly".

No one can doubt that the motives of the pioneers and fighters of 1821 were genuine, that is, pure and spontaneous. This, on the other hand, is confirmed by the motto of the Elder of Moria, Theodoros Kolokotronis, "now the fight is for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the country"; as well as the fact that the "oath was taken on the Cross of Christ" according to the will of Riga Feraios.

The rebirth of the Greek race from the ashes of slavery was the result of the principles and inalienable spiritual values of the meeting of the classical cultural heritage and the holy paternal Greek Orthodox Christian tradition, according to which -meeting- the Greek reason granted its place to the divine Word, the one made flesh and dwelling in us (cf. Jn. 1:14).

This means that today's anniversary celebration of the national rebirth of 1821 is not only about its historical

memory but also about its moral significance, that is, about the preservation of the legacy of the Gospel word of Christ and in our contemporary era of the so-called "A new order of things", according to which, as the great Paul said, "people corrupted in mind and unfit for faith resist the truth" (cf. 2 Tim. 3:8).

Remarkable is the contribution of the Church through its higher and lower clergy to the "overall struggle" against the now unbearable slavery of the non-religious Ottomans. Leading personalities, such as Patriarch Gregory V and Patriarch Cyril V of Andrianoupolis, but also the Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos water the tree of freedom with their blood. Apart from the Bishop Palaion Patron Germanos, who blessed and raised the holy banner of the Revolution, the Bishop of Salona Isaiah sacrifices himself in Alamana. Ordinary clerics, such as the fiery Athanasios Diakos and the distinguished missionary of the nation, Saint Cosmas of Aitolos, but also Hagiotaphite clerics adorn the martyrology of the 21st Revolution.

Our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, obeying the words of the wise Paul: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5,1) and dutifully participating in the celebration of the holy memory of the rebirth of the pious Roman race and nation, we went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where we sent forth thanksgiving, praise and glorification to our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us and rose from the dead. We pray for the eternal repose in the land of the living of the blessed souls of those who fought heroically for Faith and Country and fell gloriously in the holy fights of the pious race and nation of the Roman Orthodox and martyred.

For all these, allow us to raise our glass and worthily exclaim:



Long live March 25, 1821!

Long live the pious and royal family of the Roman Orthodox!

Long live Greece!

Long live our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!"

Afterwards, in the hall of the Patriarchate, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Evangelos Vlioras, spoke on behalf of the Greek State as follows:

"Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend High Priests,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In every historical period, there is a key event that marks it and becomes a point of reference for all of us later. March 25, 1821, is this milestone, in the History of Hellenism, the Balkans and Europe, when the Greeks took the heroic decision to rise up, regardless of the adversities, against the Ottoman tyranny and to claim Freedom, paying, without grumbling, the price of blood.

It is therefore a special honour for the Consul General of the Motherland to address the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Hellenism of the Holy Land, on the occasion of the celebration of the National Rebellion of 1821, a struggle, in favour of altars and hearths, a symbol for the Greek Nation that marked the rebirth of the Republic in its cradle and the establishment of the modern Greek state.

The 25th of March 1821, a peak moment of our long national

life, was the beginning of an epic uprising against the Ottoman yoke, based on the strength, determination and patriotism of the Greeks. Drawing strength from the heritage and long Tradition of the Nation, the Revolution of 1821 transcended the narrow limits of space and time and emerged as a universal and timeless symbol of virtue and the struggle for the Motherland and Freedom.

So in those times, as in any difficult time, there were many who surpassed themselves and demonstrated heroism, above what we call well-meaning duty. Simple, everyday people, who found themselves suddenly, in the foreground of History, without asking to be heroes and yet they responded to the call, without flinching, without hesitating, leaving an indelible mark on the course, History and life of Hellenism.

With meagre or even non-existent means, with the courage to make up for the lack of armament, they pushed for good the flow of our historical march towards justice and freedom. In this struggle, all served the idea of freedom, with unique patriotism, self-sacrifice and self-denial.

Theodoros Kolokotronis writes in his Memoirs: "when we decided to start the Revolution, we didn't think about how many we were, nor that we didn't have weapons, nor that the Turks were besieging the castles and cities... but like the rain, the desire of our freedom fell upon us". "The nation owes its resurrection to a miracle and not to logic," adds General Makrygiannis.

There are countless examples of heroism and sacrifice during our National Rebellion. But let us dwell for a moment on the example of the woman, who became known in our history as "Psorokostaina", Mrs Panoraia Hadjikosta from the Kydonies of Asia Minor. When her city was destroyed by the Ottomans and her husband was killed, she fled to Nafplio.

At that time, the Revolution was being tested by the rampage

of Ibrahim, who, in addition to the other disasters, left in his wake hundreds of orphans who gathered in Nafplio. Despite her problems, Panoraia asked for and took under her protection orphan children. To feed them, she went from house to house begging. She had neglected herself to such an extent that the children teased her and called her "Psorokostaina".

In 1826 a fundraiser was held for the Martyred Messolongi in Nafplio. Panoraia was the first to deposit what she had left, her silver wedding ring and a penny, for the Fight. After the establishment of the Orphanage in Aegina by Ioannis Kapodistrias, she offered to wash the clothes of the orphans without any remuneration. At the funeral of Panoraia Hatzikosta, it was the children of the orphanage who accompanied her, as an honorary pallbearer, to her last residence.

The Revolution of 1821 and its happy outcome is the great historical achievement of our country which, according to Odysseus Elytis, "is small in space but infinite in time". "A stone cape in the Mediterranean", according to Giorgos Seferis, who in the spring of 1821 defied the facts that did not favour the fight and threw himself wholeheartedly into the fire.

National anniversaries are useful for all of us, and especially for the young when we realize the need to renew with boldness and determination our adherence to the ideals for which the fathers of our freedom fought and the realization that justice, progress and our well-being can only be obtained by our own efforts.

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The revolution of March 25, 1821, is a milestone in the modern history of the Nation and the cornerstone of our national identity. The heroism, self-sacrifice and determination of the Fighters of the Revolution, define the context of our struggle to preserve the moral and spiritual values that constitute a free, just and democratic Motherland.

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, as a constituent part of our Orthodox faith and our Greek legacy, has been and still remains, the guardian of the moral and spiritual values of the Greek and Orthodox witness in the Holy Land and is a valuable source of inspiration and a great example of determination and commitment to preservation, for two millennia, of the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy Shrines of our Faith.

His high spirit and his struggles, under adverse conditions, to this day, are for all of us an invaluable national asset and a source of inspiration and encouragement.

For all of us, this special anniversary is an excellent occasion to reflect on our responsibilities and to renew our commitment to the ideals, for which the defenders of our freedom fought, "...unmoved by debt", ideals for which we must always strive for and never take them for granted, not forgetting that the price of freedom is always very high and that our Country can be proud because there are always those who pay for this price.

With these thoughts in mind, I invite everyone to exclaim:

Long live March 25, 1821!

Long live Greece!".

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# THE SUNDAY OF THE ADORATION OF THE HOLY CROSS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, March 6/19 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the Sunday of the Adoration of the Holy Cross, for the gaining of strength and help in order to continue the Great Lent which is already halfway toward the Holy Pascha.

This feast was celebrated according to the Status Quo. On Saturday afternoon the 9<sup>th</sup> hour was read at the Holy Church of Saints Constantine and Helen and then the Brotherhood went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The members of the Holy Synod venerated the Deposition Slate, the Holy Sepulchre and the Horrendous Golgotha and Great Vespers began at the Catholicon with the incense offering and the blessing of bread. The Service was presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the co-prayer of Hagiotaphite Hieromonks. The chanting was delivered by the Typikon Keeper of the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen Archimandrite Alexios on the right, and by Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the left, at the attendance of monks, nuns and pilgrims.

In honour of the Precious and Life-giving Cross, the Divine Liturgy was officiated on Sunday morning at the Holy Sepulchre by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archbishops, Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebasteia, the Archbishop Ioannis from the Patriarchate of Serbia, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons. The chanting was

delivered by the Typikon Keeper of the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen Archimandrite Alexios on the right, and by Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the left (with minor help from Hierodeacon Simeon due to illness), as the service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, Mrs Christina Zaharioudaki and other members of the Consulate along with the congregation of faithful Orthodox Christians.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a litany, three times around the Sacred Edicule and then around the Shrines, under the chanting of the Apolytikion of the Holy Cross.

Finally, there was the return at the Patriarchate Headquarters, with a reception and His Beatitude's blessing to the pilgrims.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **THE FEAST OF ABBA GERASIMOS OF THE JORDAN AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Friday, March 4/17, 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our holy Father Gerasimos of the Jordan in his holy Monastery, located on the West Bank of the Jordan River in front of its mouth at the Dead Sea.

About Abba Gerasimos, the Church has handed down to us that he came from Lycia in Asia Minor and from childhood dedicated himself to God and the monastic life.

He came to the Holy Land for pilgrimage in the year 451, the year of the Fourth Ecumenical Council.

He wandered in the Monasteries of the Jordan Valley and was initially involved in the circles of the Monophysites, who were shaking the Church throughout the 5th century, but he abandoned them with the help of Saint Euthymios the Great.

Since then, he became a canon and a model for the monks and founded a Holy Monastery, Lavra and in it a Koinobion, called the Monastery of Kalamos, and later it was given his name.

In this, he accepted and guided thousands of monks to the Orthodox life in Christ.

In his honour, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth and Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the helper of the Hegoumen of the Monastery, Hieromonk Kyriakos, to whom His Beatitude gave the officio of the Archimandrite, Arab-speaking Priests, Archdeacon Mark and other Hierodeacons. The Service was attended by a large congregation of pilgrims from various countries and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, after the joyous reception by the boy Scouts.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness” (Ps. 97:11-12), the psalmist proclaims.

Beloved brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

The Holy Memory of our Holy Father Gerasimos, who practised in

this sanctified place in the desert of Jordan, rose up today as a heavenly star, where his Monastery lies, and where the grace of the Holy Spirit gathered us all, to glorify in Eucharist the One Who glorified His righteous man.

" Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart", exclaims the psalmist. And we ask ourselves, who is this light and who are the righteous? The light, my beloved, is the light of Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit, and the righteous are the upright, that is, the pure in heart. The light of Christ dawned on them, as the Father of the Church Saint Cyril of Alexandria also interprets, saying: " To everyone who is good and righteous, in his mind and heart the noetic and divine light dawns."

Our holy Father Gerasimos proved himself to be good and righteous, as his biographer Saint Cyril of Scythopolis says: "At that time there was somebody, a great anchorite, who came from Lycia, named Gerasimos, who had achieved the monastic life in his own hometown and strove multiple strives against the evil spirits, and has recently come to the desert of the Jordan to join the anchorite life".

Our Father Gerasimos chose the Holy Land of Palestine as a place of stricter ascetic life, because both the Judean desert and the Jordan desert had turned into a real state of hermit monks. Among them, the great figures of monasticism stood out: Saint Theoktistos, Theodosios the Cenobiarch, Savvas the sanctified, Kyriakos the anchorite and Euthymios the Great, whose "sparkling grace" led the holy Gerasimos to a very beneficial meeting when they met.

Moreover, our father Gerasimos chose this desert of the Jordan, because Saint John the Forerunner lived in it and preached the baptism of repentance, who became the model for imitation of all hermit monks: " Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11), says the Lord.



It is noteworthy that the desire of Saint Gerasimos is not limited only to his dwelling in this holy place, but to his co-dwelling in the heavens after God, as the psalmist says: "Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence", (Ps. 140,14).

In other words, the righteous, that is, those who love God "with all their heart and with all their soul and with all their mind" (Cf. Matt. 22:37), will come to "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven", as the Lord Paul preaches, (Hebrews 12,23). Our holy Father Gerasimos always and unceasingly had this Church in mind, that is, the assembly of the saints in heaven. "Whose mind is always toward God, and the desire for God has increased love," says Saint Maximus the confessor.

This exalted divine love of Saint Gerasimos is expressed clearly by his hymnographer saying: "Thou didst pass an immaterial life and conversation in a material body, O righteous Father, glorifying the Lord who strengthened thee" (Minaion, Matins, Ode 9, Troparion 3).

The imperishables of which the God-bearer Gerasimos conquered, is none other than the kingdom of heaven, the heavenly gate, which he sought after zeal and patience, listening to the wise Paul saying: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come", (Heb. 13,14).

Beloved brothers in Christ, passing through the path of the God-given and blessed fasting, in contrition, we magnified in this eucharistic and solemn assembly the Holy man of God, today's celebrated Gerasimos the God-bearer, who is "present before Christ", and we beseech him, to entreat the Son of God and the Son of the Most Blessed Theotokos Mary for all those who keep his holy commemoration.

And this, is because the world is going through a great crisis. Who is this great crisis? It is the fact that "that

light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19), Saint John the Evangelist says.

The cause of the crisis, or rather the criticism of people, according to Saint Chrysostom, is due to the fact that people did not want to leave the darkness and come to the light of Christ.

Our God-fearing Father Gerasimos, who has had the light of Christ in his heart since infancy, that is, the grace of the Holy Spirit, calls us all, so that by the supplications of the Most Holy Theotokos, we may leave the darkness, that is, the works of impiety and wickedness of this world and let us run to the light of piety, “putting on the armour of God”, (Eph. 6,11) and taking up the weapons of fasting and abstinence, and through every prayer and supplication let us merit the flashes in our hearts of the divine and unwaning light of the glorious Resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. Many happy returns and blessed the remaining stage of the holy Lent”.

The Patriarchal Entourage and the congregation were offered a fasting meal by the hardworking rector and Hegoumen, Archimandrite Chrysostomos.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Sunday, February 20/March 5, 2023, the Sunday of Orthodoxy

was celebrated by the Patriarchate at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

On this Sunday, the First of the Fast of Holy and Great Lent, the whole Church commemorates and celebrates the restoration of the holy icons, their restoration to the Church under Empress Theodora and her son Michael after the persecution and destruction, they suffered under the impious iconoclast emperors Leo the Isauros and the husband of Saint Theodora Theophilos.

This restoration of the icons in the Church is considered a victory for Orthodoxy, that is, as a victory for the truth, because the icons depict the earthly presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. By decision of the empress Saint Theodora from the year 842 and henceforth, the icons were established again in the Church, not to be worshipped, as the iconoclasts claim, but to render worship to the Holy Trinity and honour to the Theotokos and the Saints through them.

In honour of the Holy icons of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mother of God and the Saints, Great Vespers was celebrated on Saturday afternoon, after incense and the blessing of bread in the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection presided over by His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

On the morning of the feast, the Divine Liturgy at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias and the Archbishops, Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebasteia, Demetrios of Lydda, Makarios of Qatar, and Aristovoulos of Madaba, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archimandrite Dometian from the Church of Russia and Archimandrite Ioannis from the Church of Romania, Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr

Gotsopoulos with the Patriarchal School Students, as the service was attended by faithful Christians from Jerusalem and pilgrims and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

After the Divine Liturgy there was a litany three times around the Sacred Edicule and then around the shrines, followed by the reading of the Gospel narrative of the day before the Holy Sepulchre, and the reading of the Synodical of Orthodoxy, with the anathema of those denying the holy icons and all heretics, and the beatitudes of those who venerate them. These were followed by the return to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

There, His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“He who is invisible in His eternal and divine nature took flesh from thy pure body, O Virgin, in His great compassion, and became visible as a mortal man. Therefore, we depict His flesh in ikons which we venerate and honour with reverence and true faith” (Small Vespers, Theotokion).

Beloved brothers in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

Today appears to be a day of cheerfulness and joy. The feast of Orthodoxy, as our holy Church commemorates the restoration of the holy and sacred icons, made by the late emperors of Constantinople, Michael and his mother Theodora, on the Patriarchal Office of the holy confessor Methodius.

Today's feast of the restoration of the Holy Icons, which we celebrated with thanksgiving at the Holy Church of the Resurrection, is not only about the triumph of Orthodoxy, but mainly and primarily about the confession of faith in the ineffable mystery, both of the Incarnation of God from the pure blood of the Virgin Mary, and the depiction of the faces of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary.

That is why Saint Anastasios of Sinai also says: "How can it be believed that [Christ] was taken up in the flesh from the Holy Virgin if He was not represented to us"?

St. John of Damascus, responding to the detractors, i.e. the critics of the worship of "the icon of our Saviour and Lady, invokes the words of the approved Father of the Church Basil the Great: "the honour of the icon over the original is passed on". "There God" adds John the Damascene, "through his tender mercies he truly became a man for today's salvation, not as in Abraham he came in the form of a man, not as in the prophets, but in essence, he made a true event that was not a man on the earth 'and with the people he was acquainted '" (Baruch 3,37).

The restoration of the Holy icons in AD 842 from the reverend empress Theodora and the Patriarch Methodius the Confessor is of great importance for Christ's Church, they preserved the intact and uninitiated the truth of our Orthodox faith.

In other words, this historical event of the restoration and veneration of the Holy icons is the one that sealed the victory of the Orthodox faith against the invisible or better said its now visible and variously named wars. For we are called to remain firm and unmoved in the Apostolic Tradition and the faith of our Holy Fathers, listening to the order of Saint Paul to his disciple Timothy: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:12). Amen. Many happy returns and blessed the stage of the Holy Lent".

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# **PRIEST'S ORDINATION AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Saturday of the First week of Lent, February 19/ March 4, 2023, His Eminence Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella ordained as a Priest the Deacon Stavros Aranki, during the Episcopal Divine Liturgy at the Horrendous Golgotha. Before the ordination, the newly ordained addressed His Eminence and the Fathers, and His Eminence also fatherly admonished him.

The ordination concluded with a visit to the Patriarchate and His Beatitude's blessing.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# **THE FEAST OF THE GLORIOUS GREAT MARTYR THEODORE THE TYRO AT THE PATRIARCHATE (MIRACLE OF THE BOILED WHEAT)**

On the Saturday of the First Week of Lent, February 19/March 4, 2023, the feast of the miracle of the boiled wheat by the Holy glorious martyr Theodore the Tyro was celebrated by the Patriarchate in his Holy Monastery, located a short distance from the Patriarchate, on the way to the New Gate.

On this feast, the Church commemorates that Saint Theodore appeared in a vision to the Archbishop of Constantinople, Eudoxius, and instructed him to inform the Christians to use

boiled wheat for their meals during the First Week of Lent, as it happened in his native Cappadocia, in Euphaita, in order to avoid the foods mixed with the blood of idolatrous meats, which the emperor Julian the Transgressor had distributed in the market.

In honour of Saint Theodore, Vespers was held on Friday afternoon and the first Stasis of the Salutations to the Theotokos was read by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Qatar. On Saturday morning the Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios of Sebasteia, with the co-celebration of the Archimandrites Mattheos and Makarios, Priest Nectarios and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and the services were attended by faithful from Jerusalem.

During the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited the Monastery for veneration, accompanied by Hagiotaphite Fathers.

The Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages and the congregation were offered a reception by the hardworking Hegoumen, Reverend Archimandrite Alexios.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **THE FIRST STASIS OF THE SALUTATIONS TO THE MOTHER OF GOD AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On the evening of Friday, February 18/March 3, 2023, in the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection and in the

context of the Service of the Small Compline and the Canon of the Akathist of the Theotokos, the First Stasis of the Salutations to the Theotokos was read, presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the participation in prayer of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and pious Christians, to whom after the end of the Service His Beatitude addressed the following sermon:

“An Angel and the chiefest among them was sent from Heaven to cry: Rejoice! To the Mother of God. And beholding Thee, O Lord, taking bodily form, he stood in awe, and with his bodiless voice he cried aloud to her such things as these: Rejoice, thou through whom joy shall shine forth. Rejoice, thou through whom the curse shall be blotted out”.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

Our holy Church established through its God-bearing Fathers, that every week of the Fast of the Holy and Great Lent is fortified through the Akahist Hymn to the most blessed Theotokos and Mother of God, the Ever-Virgin Mary.

And this is because the fasting of Holy Lent is the gate through which we enter, or rather, we return to the joy of the Lord, that is, the joy that shines on the Easter day, that of the glorious Resurrection of our God and Saviour Christ.

The response of the Virgin Mary to the message of the angel Gabriel: “Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS”, (Luk. 1,30-31). “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luk. 1,38), broke down the barrier of the enmity that existed between God and humans, due to the disobedience of the first-born Adam and Eve. “For he [Christ] is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of



partition between us" (Eph. 2:14) Saint Paul preaches.

The one that heard the bodiless voice of the Angel, "Hail, gracious", the Theotokos Mary, became the cause of the disappearance of sorrow between the Creator and creation. That is why the hymnographer Saint Andrew of Crete also calls the Virgin Mary "divine intercessor": "Hail, chosen by God before births; rejoice, divine intercessor for people; rejoice, treasure of eternal life." This divine intermediary is none other than the "heavenly ladder, i.e. the Theotokos Mary, through whom God came down to earth, but also the bridge that took those from earth to heaven", i.e. the medium, through which Christ "reconciled in the body of his flesh through death" (Col. 1:21-22). This means that because of the Theotokos, the all-pervading philanthropy of God towards the human race was manifested. God the Word assumed our human flesh from it and deified it "in Himself". As Saint Gregory Palamas says, the Blessed Virgin Mary is "the intercessor between God and the whole human race, she made God the Son of Man, and the humans were made sons of God".

And Saint John of Damascus, praising the incarnation of the Word of God from the pure blood of the Virgin, says: "The whole world was amazed at thy divine glory for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, hast held in thy womb the God of all and hast given birth to an eternal Son, who rewards with salvation all who sing thy praises" (Katavasie of the Theotokos, Ode 5).

Indeed, my beloved brothers, the divine glory of the Blessed Theotokos Mary causes the admiration of the entire world. The indescribable greatness of the Virgin Mary consists in the fact that in her womb she conceived without seed the Lord, indeed God over all", as the wise Paul preaches saying: "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:6).

Our holy Church not only honours and blesses the Theotokos and

Mother of God, but above all invokes her intercessions and prayers to her Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is because the Mother of God is inextricably linked with the great mystery of the divine Providence of salvation, albeit of man. From the Theotokos came the Sun of Justice, the light of the world, Christ. And: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12) says the Lord.

This path of light, that is, the life and the walk of those who are of God", as Saint Chrysostom preaches, we too, my beloved brothers, are called to follow during the present stage of the holy and Great Lent of the current time, during which, as the hymnographer exclaims: "The glory of the Fast has shone upon us, putting to flight the darkness of the demons. The solemn time of abstinence has come, bringing with it healing for the passions of our soul" (Thursday in Cheese week, Aposticha of Matins, Troparion 1). As Basil the Great says, "because we did not fast, we fell from Paradise; let us therefore, fast so that we may return to it".

It becomes clear that abstinence and fasting is the safe way, the gateway to the gate of repentance. According to Saint John of the Ladder, repentance means an agreement with God for a new life. "Repentance is the covenant with God of a second life". For even Saint Theodore the Studite instructs us to accept "the gift of fasting as a God-given time of repentance".

Therefore, let us beseech the gracious Theotokos Mother of God, that by her fervent intercession, she directs our prayers to her Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ. After the hymnographer, we say: "Let us praise the holy mount of God, Mary the immaculate, from whom the Sun of Justice rose to those in darkness, Christ the life of all."

Happy and blessed season of Holy Lent. Amen".

**From Secretariat-General**

<https://www.facebook.com/JerusalemPatriarchate/videos/729005675543883>

---

# **THE PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Cheese Sunday afternoon, February 13/26, 2023 around 5.00 p.m., at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen and during the service of the small Compline, the Prayer of Forgiveness was read by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos as preparation for the beginning of the Great Lent.

After the prayer, there was the brotherly osculation and the departure for the cells for three days without work or visits at the Central Monastery.

Before that, at 2.30 p.m. of the same day, the first Contrite Vespers was held at Saint Jame's Cathedral and the prayer of forgiveness was read by His Eminence, Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia.

On Ash Monday afternoon, February 14/27, 2023 the service of the Great Compline will begin and continue until Holy Wednesday afternoon at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# THE FEAST OF THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR CHARALAMBOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, February 10/23, 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Holy Hieromartyr Charalambos at the Holy Monastery dedicated to him, at the Christian Quarter, northeast of the Holy Sepulchre.

On this feast, the Church commemorates that Saint Charalambos was a Christian Priest in the town Magnisia of Thessaly. When he was called to deny Christ he confessed Him and bravely and boldly endured many sufferings, among which the torture of reaping his flesh and was finally beheaded. His martyrdom led others to believe in Christ, during the reign of Severus Loukianus, governor of Magnesia in AD 198.

In honour of the Saint, Vespers on Tuesday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Thursday morning were officiated by His Eminence, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, with the co-celebration of the Archimandrites Meletios and Klaudios, Priest Farah and Hieromonk Silas, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Dositheos. The chanting was delivered by Mr Gotsopoulos and the Patriarchal School Students. The service was attended by monks and nuns, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and many faithful Christians from Jerusalem and pilgrims from various countries.

During the Divine Liturgy, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited the Monastery for veneration, accompanied by Hagiotaphite Fathers.

The Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages, along with the whole

congregation were offered a reception by the good caretaker of the Monastery, Hegoumen Archimandrite Kallistos.

**From Secretariat-General**