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

On Saturday of the Cheese fare week of the Triodion, March 3/16, 2024, the Patriarchate celebrated by transference for pastoral reasons the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, on the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs, one of whom is Saint Theophilos (celebrated on 9th March).

This feast was celebrated according to the Typikon of the Church of Jerusalem and the Status Quo, with Great Vespers on Friday afternoon at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with the welcoming reception of His Beatitude and the veneration of the Holy Sepulchre. This was followed by the incense offering around the shrines, the Great Entrance and the blessing of bread. The service was presided over by His Beatitude, with the participation of the Holy Sepulchre High Priests, Hieromonks and Hierodeacons.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated likewise in the Catholicon on Saturday morning, presided over by His Beatitude, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitans Isychios of Kapitolias and Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Archbishops, Damascene of Yaffo, Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia, Dimitrios of Lydda, Isidoros of Hierapolis, Nectarios of Anthedona, Philoumenos of Pella, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, the Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, Fr Vassianos from the Church of Moscow, Fr Ioannis from the Church of Romania, Priests from all places of the Patriarchate's jurisdiction, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacons Eulogios and Dositheos, at the honorary presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos,

the Ambassador of Russia to Israel Mr Anatoly Victorov, and the participation of faithful Christians from Jerusalem and other cities.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by Doxology and the reading of the prayer for the boiled wheat in honour of the Forty Martyrs.

After the return to the Patriarchate Hall, the Elder Chief Secretary Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina addressed His Beatitude as follows:

"Your Beatitude Father and Master,

By the Grace of God, we have already completed the third prefasting Week of the Triodion, tomorrow is the Cheese Fare Sunday, and after this we enter the First Week of the Great Lent, to enter "the stage of virtues, which is being opened", as brave athletes. We are fortified today by the example of the geniality and determination of the Holy Forty Martyrs, who confessed Christ, against the persecutor King Licinius in 320; the martyrs who were exposed to the frost of the lake of Sebastia of Pontus overnight, and had their legs torn apart in the morning; they fought well and were crowned.

Today, the entire Church throughout the world honours these all-lauded holy martyrs, for their example to the members of the sacrificial living faith in Christ, while the Mother of the Churches of Jerusalem held a solemn Divine Liturgy and a Doxology in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, especially honouring their co-martyr, Saint Theophilos, in whose name Your Beatitude is honoured.

In honour of these martyrs and of Your Beatitude, we gathered all the members of our Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, High Priests, Hieromonks, Deacons, and Monks, as well as the pious clergy and the Christ-named congregation from the jurisdiction

of the Patriarchate in Israel, Jordan and Palestine and in the Holy Eucharist, we prayed for Your health, stability, and strength in the Pastoral Patriarchal work entrusted to You by God.

In our prayers in the Church, here in this historic Hall of the Patriarchate, we add our prayers and thanksgiving for what Your Beatitude has accomplished and continues to accomplish for the good and benefit of our Holy Common.

Let us say at first, that Your Beatitude successfully brought together again under Your leadership in the Patriarchate, the Leaders of the other Christian Churches of the Holy Land and took the initiative to jointly find a way of modest celebration of the Christmas and New Year Feasts while maintaining the Status Quo and taking into account the difficulties that the Christian Community and the entire people of Gaza are going through as a result of the raging war. In their joint statements, the Christian Churches called for an end to all hostilities and asked for permission to send humanitarian aid for food, sustenance, and survival of those affected by the war, the wounded, the starving, and the homeless. This was particularly underlined by Your Beatitude during the customary visit on the 1st of the New Civil Year to the President of the State of Israel, recalling the continued provision of asylum to the members of our Community in Gaza in the Monastery of Saint Porphyrios. The fruit of this cooperation with the other Churches, at the initiative and leadership of Your Beatitude, was the lifting of the impasse of the interruption by the Armenians of the exchange of holiday visits with us, and the support of the Churches to the Armenians' problem of the opaque multi-year lease agreements for strategically important land within the boundaries of their Patriarchate. The Patriarchate also extended a hand of closer cooperation to the WCC, of which it was a founding member, when its General Secretary Mr Jerry Pillay came and

met on the 17th of February in this same hall with all the leaders of the Christian Churches and by Your Beatitude's address, he visited the President of the State of Israel. Hence, a new chapter was opened in their relations for the support of the Christians of the Holy Land and the assumption of a mediating role of the WCC in the prevailing and unhelpfully intensified Israeli-Palestinian conflict. To the representatives of the European Union and other countries who frequently visited You, Your Beatitude recommended and conveyed a spirit of dialogue and reconciliation as a solution to the political problem, whereas, many times, to the Orthodox church leaders You stressed the need to restart the dialogue for the return of the Orthodox Church to the normal way of its existence and life, that is, Solidarity.

Regarding the Pastoral care of the Patriarchate for its flock, let us remember that despite the financial need created by the war. However, falling short at times, financial assistance came to the needs of the flock of its communities for the completion of renovation works of Churches and adjacent halls of meetings. For the Community of Zdeide in northern Israel, the purchase of a piece of land that increased and protected the property of the Church. Nevertheless, more important than the flock-building projects was the solution of reconciliation provided by Your Beatitude to the prevailing chronic division of the Kufr Smea Community of northern Israel. This was sealed by a solemn Patriarchal Divine Liturgy on the 10th of the past month of February at the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, which was built in many toils and troubles, where many Orthodox prayed and representatives of other religions also attended. Let us also mention that despite the difficulties of transportation, as from the war, Your Beatitude reached all the desert Monasteries of the Patriarchate, and presided over their feasts.

At the same time, there was the interest of Your Beatitude in

the uninterrupted continuation of the conservation of the books of the historical Library of the Holy Cross Monastery and its building premises by the expert conservator of icons and manuscripts from Cyprus Mr Stavros Andreou to house the Research of the Theological Studies Centre in collaboration with the Theological Schools of the Universities of Athens and Thessaloniki. For the promotion of these conservation projects as well as the conservation of the woodcarvings of the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, many efforts were made to find the required resources, thanks to well-disposed donors such as Mr Athanasios Martinos and Mrs Maria Georgallidou.

The things that have been said, Your Beatitude, happen to be only a few words taken from the rich pastoral care of the Patriarchate, mentioned not in a mood of boasting, since we follow the Apostle of the nations saying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14), but with a disposition to strengthen hope, so that in hope we the Holy Sepulchre Fathers, may continue, inspired by Your example, meeting in brotherly love with each other, obeying You and moving from better to the best, fulfilling and perfecting our sacred mission of Christian Rum Orthodox testimony in the Holy Land.

Raising the glass, Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the Brotherhood, I pray for unfailing health for many years to come and governmental power from on high, so that You may lead the Patriarchate from progress to progress and from glory to glory to the praise of our blessed nation and glory to our Triune God. So be it."

The Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos delivered the following address:

"Your Beatitude,

I have the honour and pleasure to submit to you the warmest wishes of the Hellenic Republic and me personally and my associates on Your venerable Name Day. As we celebrate Your Name Day, we reflect with feelings of profound respect on Your work and Your struggle, during Your long journey in the Holy Land and at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

You devoted Yourself from a young age to the Church and to a high and arduous mission, to which you have diligently dedicated Yourself with self-denial, serving for decades the work of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, to conclude to the holy Jerusalem Patriarchal Throne. Your conscientious efforts to preserve the tradition, heritage and rights of the Patriarchate, to strengthen its prestige and radiance and to protect and restore the holy places of the Holy Land, rightly enjoy international recognition and respect.

In the same way, your high pastoral work is recognized with admiration, for the benefit of the spiritual guidance of a flock that over time faces extremely increased trials and challenges.

We celebrate today under difficult and depressing circumstances, while the war conflict that erupted last October is already in its sixth month, with no visible prospect of an end, the crisis is still threatened to spill over to other fronts and a worsening humanitarian crisis is plaguing the Gaza Strip. Your flock there honours this day under dire circumstances, which threaten the existence of the entire Christian community in Gaza. Our thoughts turn in particular to the Monastery of Siant Porphyrios, in which numerous of our fellow human beings have found precious refuge. I assure you, Your Beatitude, that we will continue to act to protect and assist them.

At this dark time, we express our appreciation and gratitude

for Your unceasing efforts in favour of settlement, moderation, peace and alleviation of suffering from the wounds of war. In the Holy City of Jerusalem, Your work to promote unity among the Christian Churches, but also in favour of the peaceful coexistence of the three monotheistic religions, is a guide against intolerance and religious rivalry.

Greece will continue to surround Your Beatitude, the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood and the Patriarchate with its sincere respect and support for Your work.

Please also accept my personal thanks for the always warm and cordial welcome and for our cooperation, for the common benefit of the Holy Institution and the Hellenic Republic, for which the preservation of the rights of the Patriarchate and the Christian presence and heritage in the Holy Land is historically an important priority of all Hellenism.

Together with my colleagues at the Consulate General of Greece in Jerusalem, I wish You, Your Beatitude, health, longevity, success in Your mission, and many blessed returns."

Consequently, addresses to His Beatitude were delivered by the Ambassador of Russia to Israel, Mr Anatoly Victorov, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth on behalf of the community of Nazareth, His Eminence Metropolitan Benedictos of Diocaecarea on behalf of the community of Bethlehem, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Yaffo, on behalf of the community of Yaffo, the representative of the Moscow Patriarchate, Archimandrite Vassianos, the representative of the Patriarchate of Romania, Archimandrite Theophilos, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba with the Russianspeaking members of Beer Sheba community and of Haifa, Archimandrite Ignatios on behalf of the Beit Jala and Beit Sahour communities, Mr Yusef Nasser on behalf of the Kufr-Smea community, Priest Stavros Aranki on behalf of the Bir Zeit

community, Mrs Panagiota Kafetzi on behalf of Saint Dimitrios School, Priest Farah Bandour on behalf of Saint James Cathedral.

To these all His Beatitude delivered the following address:

"Truly blessed is he who martyred, so that he may be a martyr to the occasion and conclude to be worthy of the same rewards as theirs, without persecution, without fire, without whips, without being scourged" Basil the Great says.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos,

Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

The sacred memory of the Holy Forty Martyrs and their comartyr Theophilos, who martyred in the city of Sebastia, has dawned like a light in the Holy Land, which is being tested under the darkness of war, where our Lord Jesus Christ God "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2,8).

Imitating Christ's humility and obedience unto death, the admirable Forty Martyrs also became "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1,10). Because they are recognized as true witnesses of the mystery of reverence, as Saint Paul preaches saying: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). "For there is not a man of virtue, that is, of piety, leading the path of virtue, that is of reverence, without experiencing sorrow, pain, temptations", Saint Chrysostom says. "Though condemned to pass the night in the freezing cold in the open air because of the persecutor's insensate fury,

the athletes sang a hymn of thanksgiving unto God" the hymnographer exclaims (Matins, Ode 5, Troparion 1).

Because truly the holy Forty Martyrs had exercised their devotion to Christ and brought forth their love for God, "a hymn of thanksgiving to God without ceasing" and thus denounced the fury of their tyrant, listening to the Lord's word: "Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh" (Lk 6:21).

Basil the Great, praising the saints, the Forty Martyrs, says: "We do not admire one, not two alone, not up to ten the number of those who are blessed, but forty men, as having one soul in divided bodies, in one mind and unity of the faith as they showed both the inclination towards suffering and resistance for the sake of truth".

According to Basil the Great, the martyrdom of the Forty Saints is divided into two parts, on the one hand "in the unity of faith", and on the other "in the resistance for the sake of truth". Both faith and truth refer to the Son and Word of God the Father, our Saviour Jesus Christ, saying: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). And in another verse, he says: "I am the way and the truth" (Jn. 14,6), "I was born into this and came into the world to testify to the truth." Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice" (Jn. 18,37).

This means that faith and truth in Christ constitute the foundation of the Church of Christ, and death through martyrdom is the confirmation of Christ's resurrection. In other words, the holy Forty Martyrs sealed the truth in Christ with their blood, i.e. the resurrection of Christ, conforming to the preaching of the wise Paul saying: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13,14). And "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection...

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him" (Rom. 6, 5, 8-9).

The holy Church of Christ especially honours the memory of the holy Forty Martyrs, because as Basil the Great says, these "freely of the voice, boldly and courageously, not being suspicious of the men, not overwhelmed by the threats, they declared themselves Christians". This confession also introduced the holy Martyrs to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem and to a myriad of angels, who celebrate and spread joy (cf. Heb. 12,22-23).

This glorious day of the feast of the holy Forty Martyrs and especially of their co-martyr Theophilos, whose name Our Mediocrity bears, is, according to the expression of Athanasios the Great, "a type of the joy above", namely of the heavenly joy of the Angels. And this is because those who loved Christ and were born of His (Christ's) martyred blood "passed from death to life" (cf. 1 Jn. 3:14), and the life is Christ according to His own testimony: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

The recognized father of the Church, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, proceeds to praise the holy Forty Martyrs, "so that [we] may be convinced that the Martyrs live and are satellites and guardians of God, who today serve and adorn the Church". According to Saint Asterion of Amaseia, "the holy Martyrs, men immortal by a good death, living forever for they despised life, have changed the kingdom of the blood and transformed the harmful flesh beneficial to the soul".

Our holy Church in joy and gleefulness honours the martyrdom's birthday of the holy Forty Martyrs as well as of their comartyr Theophilos and held in it the place of the Crucifixion, the three-day burial and the Resurrection of our Saviour Christ, the divine eucharist and bloodless sacrifice, presided

over by Our Mediocrity and surrounded by the choir of the honourable members of our Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, High Priests, Priests, Hierodeacons, with the participation in prayer of pious Christians from our tested pious flock.

Moreover, we rendered thanksgiving praise to the Holy Triune God on the occasion of the Name Day of our Mediocrity in the name of the holy Martyr Theophilos, and we blessed Christ the Saviour; "This, the Son of God we worship, while the martyrs, as disciples and imitators of the Lord we love, since they have worthily found insurmountable favour of the king and teacher Himself" the holy martyr Polycarp of Smyrna says.

We should point out that today's feast of Saint Theophilos, the co-martyr of the Forty Saints, does not only refer to Our Mediocrity but mainly to the Apostolic Throne of James the Brother of God and the God-given institution of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church, which is the body of Christ.

Therefore, we call upon all our brethren in Christ, the Heads of the Orthodox Churches in all places, so that we may work together for the restoration of the community of the Churches according to Saint Paul's advice: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3), but also according to the voice of the great Athanasios "I beg you for Christ's sake, do not allow the members of Christ to be divided, do not believe in prejudices, but prefer the peace of the Lord".

This is exactly what we, my beloved brothers, have been called to, "to the ministry of salvation, indeed of peace, given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ" (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18). Let us seek and pursue this peace and settlement of the Lord, especially during the blessed stage of the fast of the Holy and Great Lent, so that by the intercessions of the blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary together with the prayers of the Holy Forty Martyrs and their co-martyr Theophilos, we may be

granted to reach the glorious Resurrection of our God and Saviour of our souls, in repentance and peace.

Therefore, we appeal to all those praying with Us and honoring this solemn memory of the holy Martyrs, the power from on high, the free gift of the Holy Spirit, the grace of the Holy and Life-giving Sepulchre, "And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed" (cf. Rom. 5:4-5), expressing warm thanks to those who addressed Us, the Elder Chief Secretary, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, speaking on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Holy Sepulcre brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos, the Reverend Archimandrite Vassianos, representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Russia, conveying to us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, His Holiness Archimandrite Father Theophilos, representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Romania, conveying to us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania, Daniel, His Eminence the Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, speaking on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, His Eminence Metropolitan Benedictos of Diocaecarea on behalf of the community of Bethlehem, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Yaffo, on behalf of the community of Yaffo, the representative of the Patriarchate, Archimandrite Vassianos, representative of the Patriarchate of Romania, Archimandrite Theophilos, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba with the Russian-speaking members of Beer Sheba community and of Haifa, Archimandrite Ignatios on behalf of the Beit Jala and Beit Sahour communities, Mr Yusef Nasser on behalf of the Kufr-Smea community, Priest Stavros Aranki on behalf of the Bir Zeit community, Mrs Panagiota Kafetzi on behalf of Saint Dimitrios School, Priest Farah Bandour on behalf of Saint James Cathedral and all those who participated in this feast.

To the health of you all!"

The reception was followed by a meal at the refectory of the Patriarchate.

From Secretariat-General

FORTIETH-DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE HEGOYMEN OF KATAMON ARCHIMANDRITE THEODORITOS

On Monday, February 27/ March 11, 2024, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Horrendous Golgotha by the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, with the Archimandrites, Stephen, Ieronymos, Makarios, Claudios, Christodoulos and Dionysios, Priest Athanasios, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Simeon. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Dositheos and Priest Ioannis as the service was attended by monks, nuns and members of the Church of Jerusalem.

After the Divine Liturgy, the fortieth-day memorial service of the blessed Holy Sepulchre Archimandrite Theodoritos, Hegoumen of Katamon was presided over by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the participation of Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina and Isidoros of Hierapolis, Hieromonks and Hierodeacons of the Patriarchate, who prayed for the repose of his soul in the land of the living along with the holy and the righteous, where they enjoy the light of the three-sun divinity.

THE FEAST OF SAINT PORPHYRIOS BISHOP OF GAZA AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, February 26/March 10, 2024, the commemoration of the Holy Martyr Porphyrios, Bishop of Gaza, was celebrated by the Patriarchate in the Holy Monastery named after him in the currently afflicted city of Gaza.

On this feast, the whole Church, especially that of Jerusalem, remembers that Saint Porphyrios, originally from Thessalonica, came to the Holy Land and was ordained a Priest and then Bishop of Gaza. At the imperial command, he destroyed the last stronghold of the national idolatry in Gaza and consecrated a Holy Church along with the Christian presence in Gaza through the centuries.

In this Monastery, the Patriarchal Commissioner His Eminence Archbishop, Alexios of Tiberias, with the Hieromonk Sila, celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the feast, under the prayerful participation of approximately four hundred members of our flock. These are the asylum seekers who receive all the accommodation and hospitality and are saved by divine providence from the war, victims of which there were eighteen people; may the Lord rest their souls in the land of the living.

From Secretariat-General

THE SATURDAY OF THE SOULS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

Following the order of the Triodion, the Patriarchate dedicated Saturday, February 25/March 9, 2024, as a day of prayer for the repose of souls.

To this end, on Friday afternoon, in the Monastic and Patriarchal Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, the Canon for the departed was chanted and a memorial prayer was recited, led by His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the prayer for the repose of the Holy Sepulchre Patriarchs of Jerusalem, High Priests, Priests, monks and nuns who have been sleeping in the Lord for centuries.

On the morning of the Saturday mentioned above, a Divine Liturgy was celebrated by the Priest Ioannis, with the concelebration of Fr George Baramki, under the care of the Managing Director of the Patriarchal School, Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Matthaios in the Cemetery of Holy Zion. At the end of the Liturgy, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina held a memorial service and Trisagia for the departed Holy Sepulchre Fathers who are buried there, and the Priests Farah Bandour and George Baramki also held Trisagia for the departed members of our Orthodox flock.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR CHARALAMBOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, February 10/23, 2024, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Holy Hieromartyr Charalambos in the Holy Monastery, which is adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the north and near the Gate through which the Lord passed to Golgotha, which is also known as the 8th Station of Via Dolorosa.

On this feast, the Church remembers that Saint Charalambos was a priest in Magnesia in Thessaly and martyred as a confessor of Christ during the reign of Severus and ruler of Magnesia Lucian in the year 198.

Saint Charalambos is venerated by the faithful as the saint who protects from the plague and other infectious diseases.

Saint Charalambos was honoured in the above-mentioned Monastery with Vespers on Thursday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Friday morning, presided over by His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Jerash, with Archimandrites Philoumenos and Amfilochios, the Presbyter Charalambos Bandur and HierodeacoDositheos. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and the students of the Patriarchal School of Zion, in the presence of members of the Greek Consulate General in Jerusalem, nuns and monks and lay members of the Church.

Before the Holy Communion, His Eminence preached the Divine Word on the holiness, martyrdom and antiquity of the Holy Martyr Charalambos in the Orthodox Church, as well as his protection for the Orthodox believers.

During the Divine Liturgy, the Holy Monastery was visited by

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with Holy Sepulchre Fathers for veneration.

The Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages and the people were offered a reception by the zealous guardian of the Monastery, Archimandrite Kallistos.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINT SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, February 3rd/16th 2024, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the commemoration of Saint Simeon the God-receiver in his Holy Monastery in West Jerusalem near the Monastery of the Holy Cross.

On this holiday, the Church honours Saint Simeon the God-receiver, as he especially ministered in the mystery of the Meeting of Jesus in the Temple, when he recognized Him as the Saviour and exclaimed: "mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, And the glory of thy people Israel" and asked to depart from this world: "now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word", (Lk. 2, 29-32).

For this feast, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy in the above Church, with concelebrants their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, and Methodios of Tabor, Holy Sepulchre Hieromonks, with first in rank the Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, the Archimandrites Claudius and Ieronymos, Vassian of the Russian Spiritual Mission to Jerusalem (MISSIA), Priest Simeon, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacons Eulogios, Dositheos and others. The chanting was delivered by Fr Hanna Awad-Antoniou, the Patriarchal School Students and Mr Fadi Abed Al Nour, in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos and the prayerful participation of monks, nuns and members of the Greek Parish.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2,29-32), the Elder Simeon exclaimed.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

The Holy Spirit, Who was with the righteous and pious Simeon has gathered us all today in this holy place where the Saint's tomb lies, to honour his sacred commemoration in joy, and to celebrate the Meeting of the baby Jesus and our Lord and God and Saviour Christ in the Temple.

The Elder Simeon is distinguished among the rest of the holy prophets and people of the Holy Bible because he was deemed worthy to receive in his arms the "salvation of God", namely Christ, that is why he says: ""Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2,29-32).

Interpreting these words, among the established Fathers of the Church, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "It was prepared for Christ even before the beginning of the world, and it was revealed in the end of times". Zigavinos says: "You (God) has provided the salvation before all, so that it may be visible to all". Origen marks the wholistic nature of the salvation, saying: "This which they saw is the salvation not only for the Jews but for the whole world...before the face not only for one nation, not only for Israel but before the face of all the peoples".

Indeed, "the salvation of God", whom the righteous Simeon's eyes saw, refers to the wholeness of the salvation of the human race. And this is so, because "the salvation of God" is no other than the mystery of the Divine Providence, namely the Incarnation of God the Word, as the God-bearing Church Fathers explain. "He called salvation the Incarnation of the Only Begotten Son", Saint Theophylaktos says. "Salvation does the Bible call the Christ of God", Saint Basil the Great says. And according to Saint Athanasios the Great, "salvation means the incarnate presence of God the Word".

Moreover, the prophetic words of the pious Simeon, "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2,32) testify that the Incarnate God the Word, through the pure flesh of the Ever-Virgin and Theotokos Mary is the presence of the divine light in the world of ignorance and idolatry. That is why the psalmist proclaims: "In Thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36,10). The Lord clearly says in His preaching, "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). "Christ is the light of the nations because He was bound to enlighten with His teaching the nations that lay in darkness", Origen says. "He became light to those who were in darkness and deluded, and had fallen into the devil's hand", Saint Cyril of Alexandria says. "Being a light to light the Gentiles and those blinded by fallacies; he calls

revelation the ability to see again clearly; to the glory and prosperity of Your people Israel. Glory to them was the sprouting from them according to the human nature. Indeed, His redeeming incarnation enlightened the nations with the knowledge of God and virtue, while it glorified the Jews because He became a native to them (PG 129,893A), Zigavinos says.

Moved by the Holy Spirit, the Elder Simeon told Mariam, the mother of Jesus, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against" (Luke 2,34). Interpreting this word, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "Emanuel is laid by God the Father a chief cornerstone, elect, precious (c.f. 1 Peter, 2,6). But those who believed in Him were not put to shame; whereas the unbelievers who did not manage to see this mystery in Christ, fell and were crushed. God the Father said again: "Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Romans 9,33, PG 72,505B).

Indeed, my dear brethren, since Christ, the Son and Word of God the Father came into the history of man, He became the reason for the fall and the rise of many; fall to those who did not believe in Him, and rise for those who accepted and believed in Him. That is why up to this day Christ remains "a sign which shall be spoken against" (Luke 2,34). That is what Saint Paul also means when he says, "Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached" (Phil. 1,18). According to Saint John the Evangelist, this precisely "is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (John 3,19).

To our question, what is that which prevents people from seeing the light of truth, namely Christ? The answer is, two things; on the one hand, it is the free will of man, and on the other, man's evil deeds. For this the God-inspired Apostle

Peter says: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (1 Peter 2,24). This means that no one can rely on Christ as the Saviour unless he has abandoned sin and lives with "righteousness".

The way to be free from sin is our encounter with Christ according to the righteous Simeon's example, who "received Christ in his arms" (c.f. Luke 2,28). Our Holy Church calls us to this cause through the hymnographer's voice: "Come let us as well, with songs inspired by God, go together to meet Christ and let us receive Him Whose salvation Simeon hath now beheld" (Vespers, Sticharon 3). "Let us pay heed so that the Lord will not find us asleep", Athanasios the Great says.

Our meeting, my dear brethren, with our Saviour Christ is always feasible within the Church, through prayer and the cultivation of the virtues of humility and repentance, especially through participation in the sacrament of the Eucharist, where the one who has a clear heart is vivified and deified on the one hand, and sees through the eyes of the soul the salvation of God, that is, Christ, on the other. Amen. Many peaceful returns!"

Before the Dismissal, His Beatitude blessed the boiled wheat and held a Trisagion on the completion of nine days since the departure of the blessed Hegoumen Archimandrite Theodoritos, who served for forty-five years with devotion to the Holy Monastery and this Greek Community.

After the Divine Liturgy, Hierodeacon Simeon and nun Maria, who devotedly served the departed father Theodoritos for many years, hosted a reception for the Patriarchal Entourage and the congregation.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE

On Thursday, the 2nd/15th of February 2024, the Patriarchate celebrated the Despotic feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple:

- In the Patriarchal and Monastic Church of the patrons of the Patriarchate Saints Constantine and Helen, presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the attendance of the High Priests and Priests of the Brotherhood.
- 2. At the Holy Monastery of Panagia Sayda Naya, near the Patriarchate in the Christian quarter.

On this feast, the Church remembers that our Lord, the Creator and Giver of the Law on Mount Sinai to the Prophet Moses, observed this Law, being brought as an infant in the arms of His parents to the Temple of Solomon, when Simeon the righteous received Him in his arms, thus becoming "Godreceiver" and recognized Him as the Christ, saying: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2, 29-32) thus confessing the incarnation of Christ.

On this occasion, Vespers was held in the evening and the Divine Liturgy in the morning in the above-mentioned Monastery, presided over by the Elder Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, with concelebrants the Archimandrites; Ieronymos and Makarios, the Presbyters Fr. Farah Badur and Father Nikolaos Kulinsky,

Hierodeacons Eulogios and Dositheos. The chanting was delivered by the Secretary of the Holy Synod, Hierodeacon Simeon and the Patriarchal School Students in Greek and by Mr Rimon Kamar and his assistants from Saint James Cathedral. The service was attended by monks, nuns, pilgrims and members of the parish of Saint James the Brother of God, in the presence of the Greek Consul Mrs Anna Madika and other members of the Greek Consulate General and the wife of the US Consul in Jerusalem.

Before the Holy Communion, His Eminence preached the divine word about the ecclesiological and theological interpretation and significance of this feast (see video).

During the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude visited the Monastery for veneration with the Holy Sepulchre Fathers.

The Patriarchal and Episcopal Entourages and the congregation were offered a rich reception by the Abbess, nun Seraphima, who has renovated the Holy Monastery and maintains it as a functional Spiritual Centre.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE THREE HIERARCHS AT THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL OF ZION

On Monday, January 30/February 12, 2024, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Three Hierarchs, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom.

On this feast, the Church honours the Three Hierarchs as teachers of the faith, defenders of the decision of the First Ecumenical Council on the one essence of the Son with the Father and the teaching of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, and the Virginity of the Mother of God. The three Saints were authors of a multitude of theological writings explaining the Holy Bible, and great teachers, "the three greatest luminaries of the Three-sun God", as their apolytikion says, who drew the boundaries between Christian teaching and ancient Greek philosophy, mainly through the writing of Saint Basil to the young, " $\delta \pi \omega \zeta$ $\delta \chi$ $\delta \chi$

This common feast was established in the 11th century by the Church under Metropolitan John to resolve a dispute between the faithful Vasiliites, Gregorites, and Johnites about which of the three Hierarchs is greatest.

In their honour, a Divine Liturgy was held in the Holy Trinity Church of the Patriarchal School of Zion in the morning by the Chairman of the School Board and Elder Sacristan, His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, with the co-celebration of the Archimandrites Claudius, Amfilochios, Fr Nektarios, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Dositheos. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and the students, as the service was attended by the School teachers, the parents of the students, nuns and believers from Jerusalem, in the presence of the Greek Consul Mrs Anna Mantika.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Elder Dragoman and Managing Director of the School, Archimandrite Mattheos hosted a rich reception for the Episcopal entourage and the congregation in the School's event hall.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE THREE HIERARCHS IN THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

On the occasion of the feast of the three Hierarchs, Vespers was held in the evening and the Divine Liturgy on the day of the feast, on Monday, January 30/February 12, 2024, in the Holy Church of Saint Basil in the Old City of Jerusalem, where a part the relics of Saint Basil the Great is kept. The services were led by Archimandrite Filomenos, under the chanting of Fr Ioannis and Hierodeacon Alexander with the attendance of faithful of Jerusalem, monks, and nuns, under the care and hospitality of the Elder Hegoumen Kamarasis Archimandrite Nektarios.

From Secretariat-General

THE PATRIARCH OF THE HOLY CITY PRESIDES OVER DIVINE LITURGY IN THE VILLAGE OF KUFR SUMEI

Kufr Sumei, Western Galilee

The Holy Land

February 10, 2024

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, presided over a divine liturgy at the newly inaugurated Church of Saints Constantine and Helena in the village of Kufr Sumei, on Saturday morning, February 10th.

His Beatitude was accompanied by His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, and His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina as they were warmly welcomed by the local community of the village, including a large number of sheikhs of the well-known tribe. Head of the Kufr Sumei local council, Mr. Yasser Ghadhban and members of the council welcomed the Patriarchal envoy along with the heads and members of the local pastoral councils of the Diocese of Akko. The Greek Consul in Haifa, Mr. Kostas Zenovius, and His Excellency the Consul of the Russian Federation, Mr. Dr. Amin Safiya, were among the attendees of the liturgy with a large gathering of local Christians from the cities and villages of Galilee.

Following the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude gave a speech highlighting the necessity of preserving the cohesion between brothers of the same family, that is the church, the warm and safe home that brings together believers and unites them on the rock of love and harmony, stressing the preservation of the good social fabric in the village of Kufr Sumei.

Later at the church hall, The patriarchal representative in the city of Acre, Archimandrite Silwanos Hanouneh, opened his speech by welcoming His Beatitude and Their Eminences to the village of Kufr Sumei, congratulating the parish and expressing his satisfaction with this reconciliation that took place today after many decades. He then presented the head of the local council of Kufr Sumei, who delivered a moving speech expressing his joy at this event, singing the words of Jesus Christ about love and unity, "That they all may be one, as

You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." (John 17:21).

Then Mr. Bassam Nasser also welcomed, with ultimate joy, the honorable delegation and the attendance, congratulating the parish on this achievement that they had long awaited, thanking everyone who sought and worked to make this day happen. Later, Mr. Youssef Nasser, continued, citing the words of Jesus Christ about harmony and unity, which brought together the joyful celebration with the blessing of His Beatitude and the tireless efforts he made to reach this blessed moment. Mr. Youssef Nasser and his sons played a major role in supervising the construction of the church.

Soon after the speeches, everyone was invited to a meal offered by the parish in honor of His Beatitude and the accompanying delegation. Warmth and joy filled the room, depicting thus the true symbol of the good parishioners who followed the words of the Lord, praise be to Him: "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23).

His Beatitude's Sermon before the Holy Communion follows below:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133,1), the psalmist proclaims.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians,

The grace and peace of God has gathered us all in your beautiful town of Kufr Smea to celebrate the Holy Eucharist and thus declare in the common Chalice of the sacred body and blood of our Saviour Christ our ecclesiastical communion and unity.

We do this according to the fatherly advice of Saint Paul to the Ephesians: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4,1-4).

Stressing the idea of unity, Saint Paul says that God the Father "gave him [Christ] to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1,22-23). "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12,27), "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12,13) he writes to the Corinthians.

Moreover, realizing the danger and the unexpected malice of division, the wise Paul urges the Corinthians again in fervent love: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1,10).

Indeed, my brethren, the schisms and the hatred tear apart the Church in various places, which is our Christian community, resulting in competing groups that contradict the fact that the Church is the body of Christ. Moreover, the schisms and the divisions oppose the mission of the Church in the world. And the mission of the Church is no other than the witness of Christ's love. According to Saint John the Evangelist, the quarrels and divisions tarnish the testimony of the Church for Christ, since Christians are recognized as disciples of Christ

by their mutual love. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another" (John 13,35).

According to Saint Paul, the division is the body of Christ, the Church, reveals the works of the flesh, which feed sin (c.f. Gal. 5,19). On the contrary, the unity in Christ of those who believe in Him is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5,22-23).

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133,1), the psalmist says. Yes, my dear brothers and sisters, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church in general, and the Church of Jerusalem in particular are the dwelling place of God. "Rejoice, Holy Zion, Mother of the Churches, dwelling place of God", Saint John of Damascus proclaims.

And the Church is the dwelling place of God because the "great mystery of reverence" was given to it. Moreover, in the Church and through the Church we receive "the fruit of the Holy Spirit" (Gal. 5,22). For this, the blessed Paul says in his letter to Timothy: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3,14-15). And in detail, I write these to you to let you know how one should live and behave in the house and family of God, that is, the Church of God, Who is a living God. And the Church is another pillar and strong foundation, which upholds the truth.

This "house of God" is also the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and dwellers in it are the pious members of its Christian flock, who live in the Holy Land.

In other words, the Patriarchate has proven to be the feeding

mother, who, as the Scripture says, found its people in a desert land, and in the waste-howling wilderness; it led them about, instructed them, it kept them as the apple of its eye (c.f. Deuteronomy 32,10). And the chief and finisher of our faith is Jesus Christ (c.f. Hebrews 12,2), Who says, "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6,37).

For this reason, we have been gathered and called upon today, all of us, in your respected community, my dear brothers and sisters, to declare Christ's love to one another, and the unity of "a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6,12), namely, the unity of faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

The God-inspired advice of Saint Paul also calls us to the same cause: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3,8-10). In other words, the ultimate goal of the one who puts on the new renewed man is to progress in the perfect knowledge of God, Who is the redeeming truth. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18,37), "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8,32), the Lord says.

How, therefore, my brethren, can we be free, when we carry in our hearts only hatred and malice against our fellow citizens, especially against our brothers and sisters in Christ? For this reason, Christ urges us: "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11,25).

Indeed, today's liturgical gathering of clergy and laity and the members of this community is a sacred work of action. Because, as Saint Paul preaches, "For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14,18-19).

In conclusion, we would like to thank those who strove in zeal for the construction of this marvellous Church, Mr Yusef Nasser and his sons, and all those who contributed to its beautification, either morally or materially. Amen. Many peaceful returns!"

His Beatitude's address at the meal follows below:

"Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1,22), Saint James the Brother of God asks.

Reverend Holy Fathers and brothers in Christ,

Respected members of our community in Kufr Smea

We rend glory and thanksgiving to the Holy Triune God on this blessed gathering of clergy and people today in your multicultural town.

The purpose of the Holy Eucharistic gathering which we celebrated in the Holy and bloodless Altar, has been and is still the application of the Lord's words: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13,34). And, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14,27).

The lack and absence of love and peace in God and in the world are the main reasons for divisions, quarrels (Gal. 5,20) and wars (James, 4,1).

The mission of the Church in the world, which is the body of Christ, is no other than the evangelism of Christ's commandments about love and peace, which [commandments] are the prerequisites of unity in the Holy Spirit. "There is nothing that angers God more than the division of the Church. A holy man said: not even a martyr's blood can erase such a sin", Saint Chrysostom says.

While we participate in the great sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, we participate in Christ's Resurrection, therefore, we are called to declare this joyful event along with the hymnographer, proclaiming: "It is the day of Resurrection; let us be radiant for the festival, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, 0 brethren, even to those that hate us: Let us forgive all things on the Resurrection; and thus let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, by death hath He trampled down death, and on those in the graves hath He bestowed life" (Pentecostarion, Sunday of Pascha, Stichera, Glory). Amen. Many peaceful returns!"















