

THE SERVICE OF THE PASSIONS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Holy Thursday evening, 8/21 April 2022, the Service of the Passions took place at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, which includes the Matins of Holy and Great Friday.

In it, the Holy Church commemorates the Horrendous Passions of the Lord, the beatings, the spitting, the nails, the spear and especially the Cross and the death, along with the repentance and confession of the grateful thief.

This service was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, Who read the 1st Gospel narrative, and Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Hieromonks, read the other narratives according to the rank of their ordination. The right psalter chanting of this service was led by Hierodeacon Simeon and the left by Mr Gotsopoulos, who chanted contritely the troparia, evoking contrition to the noble pilgrims and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

After the reading of the 5th Gospel narrative the “Today, He who suspended the earth in the waters is suspended on a cross” was chanted as the bells were tolling in mourning sound. The 11th Gospel narrative was about the burial of the Lord by Joseph of Arimathea, while the 12th was about the sealing of the Tomb with Custody. The Service was concluded by the Troparion “You ransomed us from the curse of the Law by Your precious Blood...”

From Secretariat-General

THE SERVICE OF THE SACRED WASHING OF THE DISCIPLES' FEET AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Holy Wednesday morning, 8/21 April 2022, the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great was officiated at Saint James' Cathedral by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina and Theodosios of Sebastia.

After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, around 9.00 a.m., the service of the sacred washing of the feet was observed on a platform in the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos washed the feet of twelve Hieromonks in remembrance of the event that our Lord Jesus Christ put a towel around His waist and washed the feet of His Disciples, setting an example of humility as the path to virtue/salvation. A great multitude of people attended this service, which is unique at the Church of Jerusalem, from the courtyard, the terrace of Saint Constantine and the Metochion of Gethsemane, along with the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

After the Service, bells tolling, the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters in joy and gleefulness, where the High Priests of the Patriarchate were waiting for the reception.

From Secretariat-General

THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY UNCTION AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Holy Wednesday afternoon, 7/20 April 2022, the Sacrament of the Holy Unction was observed at the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen as preparation for the welcoming of the Lord's Passion and of Holy Pascha.

The Holy Unction was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with six Archbishops, so that they would all be seven ministers according to the Typikon Order.

At the end of the service, His Beatitude and the High Priests anointed each other with the blessed oil, followed by the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Monks and pilgrims.

From Secretariat-General

THE PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY OF HOLY WEDNESDAY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Holy Wednesday morning, 7/20 April 2022, the last Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts of Great Lent was observed at the Holy Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-

prayer of the Hagiotaphite Fathers.

The Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts was also officiated at the Horrendous Golgotha by Geronda Sacristan, His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, with the attendance of Monks, Nuns and pilgrims.

From Secretariat-General

THE FIRST SERVICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Palm Sunday evening the First Service of the Bridegroom was held at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, namely the Matins of Holy and Great Monday. The Service was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos along with Priests, Monks and pilgrims.

Before the end of the service, His Beatitude wished to the faithful Christians that they may celebrate the Holy Week in a spiritual manner at the places of the Passion and the Resurrection of our Lord and God Jesus Christ.

From Secretariat-General

PALM SUNDAY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, 4/17 April 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the Palm Sunday, namely the triumphant entrance of the Lord in Jerusalem after Lazarus' resurrection. The Lord was sitting on a young ass and being welcomed by the children of the Jews who held palm tree branches and cried out loud, "Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord".

This Despotic feast was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as a "Great Parresia" after the reading of the 9th Hour at the Church of Saint Constantine, with the welcoming and the veneration at the Holy Deposition, the Holy Sepulchre and the Horrendous Golgotha, and the incense offering, through the Great Vespers on Saturday afternoon. The service was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the co-celebration of the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks with first in rank the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Hierodeacons and the attendance of faithful Christians from Jerusalem and many pilgrims.

On Sunday morning, 4/17 April 2022, there was the official cathode from the Patriarchate to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Catholicon by His Beatitude with co-celebrants their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archimandrites Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sebastia, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Hierodeacons, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and many faithful Christians from Jerusalem and many pilgrims from Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Georgia and Russia.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a litany with palm tree branches three times around the Sacred Edicule and then around the shrines, concluding with the reading of the Gospel narrative before the Holy Sepulchre.

After the litany the full congregation returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters, bells tolling, and with the Scouts parade leading the procession. At the Reception Hall, His Beatitude wished that we may go through the Holy Week in health and contrition and reach the Holy Pascha in joy.

From Secretariat-General

LAZARUS' SATURDAY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

1. At the place of the Ascension the Great Vespers was observed on Friday 2/15 April 2022, led by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias. Co-celebrants to His Eminence were the Archimandrites Makarios, Kallistos and Dionysios, Priest George Baramki, Hierodeacons Mihail and Dositheos. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon with the Patriarchal School Students and Saint James' choir under the lead of Mr Rimon Kamar. Within the service of the Compline in the evening, there was a litany to the Church of Men of Galilee which was blessed by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. On Saturday morning the Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias in the presence of Rum Orthodox Palestinian, Russian, Romanian and Greek pilgrims.

The Episcopal Entourage and the congregation were offered a reception by the Caretaker of the Shrine, Monk Achilios.

2. In Bethany

In remembrance of the resurrection of Lazarus, who came from Bethany, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Saturday morning, 3/16 April 2022 at the Monastery of Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences the Archbishops, Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Philoumenos of Pella, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archimandrites Klaudios and Epiphanius, Palestinian and Russian Priests, as the chanting was delivered by Mr Gotsopoulos and the service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, pilgrims and local faithful.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John 11,25-27), Saint John the Evangelist says as an eye witness.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The grace of the brother of Martha and Mary and friend of our Lord Jesus Christ, Lazarus, has gathered us in this holy place of the biblical Bethany, to celebrate Lazarus rising from the dead on the one hand and the confirmation by Christ of our common resurrection before His passion on the Cross on the other.

The detailed narrative of Lazarus' resurrection from the dead by Saint John the Evangelist is placed just before the triumphant entrance of Jesus Christ in the Holy City of Jerusalem with palm trees' branches. That is why our Holy Church calls this day "the Saturday before Palm Sunday", or the Saturday before the Passion Week of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Today Bethany proclaims beforehand the Resurrection of Christ the Giver of life, and it rejoices at the rising of Lazarus" (Matins, Ode one, Troparion 4).

The three-day burial and resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ is the peak of the mystery of the Divine Providence, namely the incarnation of the Son and Word of our God the Father through the pure flesh of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, it testifies to our freedom from sin and the corruption of death as well as the time of the last judgment, the divine righteousness. "For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5,28-29) the Lord says. Likewise, the prophet Isaiah said through the Holy Spirit: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise" (Isaiah 26,19).

Saint Cyril of Alexandria interpreting the Lord's word in the Gospel "Loose him [Lazarus], and let him go" (John 11,44), says: "To our benefit, He did not untie him by His own hands, so that there would be no chance of slander, but all became witnesses of the miracle. And this is a sample of the catholic resurrection when each one shall be set free, loosened from the bondage of sin and the corruption of death".

And Saint Paul, showing the greatness of the resurrection of our Saviour Christ says: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not

risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15,13-14).

Anticipating the resurrection of the dead, my dear brethren, let us say along with the hymnographer: "Before Thine own death, O Christ, Thou hast raised from hell Lazarus that was four days dead, and hast shaken the dominion of death. Through this one man whom Thou hast loved, Thou hast foretold the deliverance of all men from corruption. We, therefore, worship Thine almighty power and cry; blessed art Thou, O Saviour, who comes in glory, have mercy upon us and save our souls" (Praises, troparia 2,3).

Have a blessed Holy Week and a good Easter! Amen!"

From Secretariat-General

THE SERVICE OF THE AKATHIST AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On the evening of 26 March / 8 April 2022, the Service of the Akathist was observed at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

According to the Typikon order, the Canon of the Akathist was observed within the Service of the Small Compline, in remembrance of the liberation of Constantinople from the Persians and the Avars by the help of the Mother of God, and as a final reminder of the Annunciation message before our entry into the Holy Week.

The first stasis of the Salutations was recited by the officiator of the Service, His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, the second by His Eminence

Archbishop Methodios of Tabor, the third by His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis and the fourth by the Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, 25 March / 7 April 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Nazareth.

On this feast, the Church commemorates that Archangel Gabriel visited the Most Holy Mary in Nazareth and announced to her that she was going to conceive from the Holy Spirit and give birth to the Incarnate Son of God for the rebirth and salvation of the humankind. When Mary said the words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38), then along with the bodiless voice of the Angel, the Bodiless One received a body, the Son and Word of God became incarnate and Mary became the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin.

For this feast the Divine Liturgy was celebrated:

1. At the Shrine of the Annunciation in Nazareth, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with their Eminences, the Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth and Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archbishops, Aristarchos of Constantina and Methodios of Tabor,

Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Arab-speaking Priests from the Holy Metropolis of Nazareth, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Nazareth Community Byzantine choir and the service was attended by Rum Orthodox Arab-speaking faithful from Galilee, Russian Orthodox Christians and some Greek pilgrims.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14, Matt. 1:23) the Prophet Isaiah exclaims.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all in this holy place, which has been sanctified by the body of our Lord, this city of Nazareth, to glorify in Eucharist the revelation of “the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:9), the Son of God and Son of the Virgin.

And this Virgin, who had been foretold by the Prophet Isaiah is no other than the one witnessed by Luke the Evangelist, “a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary” (Luke 1:27). Coming to her, the messenger of God Archangel Gabriel said: “Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women... And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus... The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke

1:26-35).

Indeed, the Ever-Virgin Mary is what the hymnographer has said: "the capital of the salvation of the people". And this is because "the mystery of Christ's providence", namely the faith in Christ, has become the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament, as the wise Paul preaches: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5).

Interpreting the above words of Paul, Ecumenios on the one hand denotes: "he didn't say through a woman... but by a woman, showing the conceived body of the Lord in her essence, as He became the fruit of her womb". On the other hand, Eusebius says: "because sin was caused by a woman, it was by a woman that the Saviour came, namely Christ". That is why Saint Cyril of Alexandria also says in praise: "Rejoice Mary Theotokos, through Whom the unspeakable grace came forth, for which Saint Paul said: "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). Rejoice, Mary Mother of God, through whom the true Light our Lord Jesus Christ came forth, who says in the Gospels: "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12). Rejoice, Mary Theotokos, through whom the light shone to those sitting in the darkness and the shadow of death. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light" (Matt. 4:16). Who is that light, if not our Lord Jesus Christ, the true light, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). Rejoice, Mary the heirloom of the whole world".

Truly, my dear brethren, the Virgin from Nazareth became the heirloom of the whole world. And this, because the annunciation of the full of grace and blessed among women Mary (Luke 1:28), has provided "a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us" (Hebrews 10:20). In other words, the annunciation of the Mother of God has inaugurated the way of

salvation, that is the cure of man from sin, namely the infirmity and the corruption of death. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26) the Lord says.

Referring to the resurrection, the wise Paul says: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15:13-14). This means that our resurrection in Christ necessarily predisposes the great mystery of the incarnation of God the Word and our Saviour Jesus Christ through the pure flesh of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. Without the power of our faith, it is impossible to reason with or comprehend the mystery of the divine providence in Christ. "Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded; but on whomsoever, it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (1 Peter 2:6-7, Matt. 21:44) the Lord says.

This is also phrased in his hymn by Saint John Damascene: "No tongue can speak of your wonderful childbearing, for the order of nature was overruled by God! You were revealed to be a mother above nature, for you remained a Virgin beyond reason and understanding! Your conception was most glorious, Theotokos! The manner of your giving birth was ineffable, Virgin! Knowing you to be the Mother of God, devoutly we pray to you: beseech Him to save our souls" (Ochoechos, tone 7, Saturday Vespers Glory).

God's unsearchable judgments and ways past finding out (ref. Romans 11:33), became known, according to Saint Paul "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10). And the Church of Christ claimed through the God-bearing Fathers who have been inspired by the Holy Spirit in the Ecumenical Synods, that the pure Virgin Mary should be called Theotokos

(Mother of God). Let us hear the words of Saint Cyril of Alexandria: "it is, therefore, befitting to our correct and unchangeable confession of faith to say Theotokos and confess the Holy Theotokos... for the Holy Virgin did not give birth to divinity, but in flesh, she was in union with the Word of God... and it is thus true that the Virgin became Theotokos, giving birth paradoxically to Christ, making us also partakers of flesh and blood (ref. Hebrews 2:14), and of one essence for her and for us according to the flesh, as he is flesh from the Theotokos Mary".

Behold, therefore, my dear brethren, why our Holy Church magnifies in praise the Theotokos, to whom the Angel of God Gabriel announced "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God" (Luke 1:30).

And let us say along with the hymnographer: "All-Holy Virgin, thou art greater in honour than the glorious cherubim. Unable to endure the divine splendour, they veil their faces with their wings as they perform their ministry; but thou dost gaze with thine own eyes upon the incarnate Word. Without ceasing pray to him for our souls" (Triodion Monday of the 5th week, KathismaTheotokion 4), as well as for the ceasefire, for peace in our region and in the whole world. Many happy returns and a blessed Pascha! Amen".

At noon, His Eminence the Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth hosted a meal for the Patriarchal Entourage, Mr Cezar Marjieh and others, where His Beatitude delivered the following address:

"And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 40:5), the prophet Isaiah proclaims.

Your Eminence, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Your Excellency President Mr Bassim and respected members of the Ecclesiastical Council,

Dear associates,

Our Holy Church celebrates today the joyful and universal event of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, namely the appearance of "the salvation of God", which took place in your historical and biblical city, Nazareth.

The presence of the Christians in the Holy Land throughout the centuries and of course in the city of Nazareth is proof that testifies to the sacred mission of the Church of Jerusalem which preaches love, peace and the righteousness of Christ. Moreover, it is proof that the Church as the body of Christ, while Christ is its head (ref. Eph. 1:22-23), is the blessed divine fruit of the womb of the pure full of grace Virgin Mary, which bestows the light of life and truth upon the world.

This true light of life and hope shines upon all the people, as another beacon in our historic world of the so-called "New World Order", where war, disorder, lawlessness and disorder prevail. "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:16), Saint James the Brother of God and first Hierarch of Jerusalem preaches.

We say this to show the exceeding magnitude of the power of the Church and in particular, of the Church of Jerusalem, the Rum-Orthodox Patriarchate, which is the guarantee of the New Testament according to Saint Paul who says: "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament" (Hebrews 7:22), and in simple words, for as much as Christ became a High Priest, so much more He became a guarantor and broker of the high and eternal Testament.

As for us, my dear brethren, paying heed to the God-inspired voice of Saint Paul: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and

seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:12-13), we are called to remain faithful in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of which the Mother of God became also Mother of the Church of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Allow Us to announce the official approval of the funding of the renovation of the Holy Shrine of the Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Nazareth by the known Russian Foundation. We hope to start working on this project as soon as possible by the will of God.

Many happy returns and blessed Pascha".

2. At the Theotokos' Tomb in Gethsemane. The Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia, with the co-celebration of Archimandrite Klaudios, the ministering Priests of the Shrine, in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, to whom we convey our wishes for many happy returns on his Name Day.

The Episcopal Entourage and the congregation were offered a reception by the recently appointed Hegoumen, His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, to whom we wish the intercession of the Most-Holy Theotokos.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE ADORATION OF

THE SACRED CROSS AT THE MONASTERY OF THE HOLY CROSS

On Sunday, 21 March / 3 April 2022, the 4th Sunday of Lend, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Adoration of the Holy Cross at the Monastery of the Holy Cross in West Jerusalem, near the Jewish Knesset.

This feast is established by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to be celebrated at this Monastery one week after the celebration of the 3rd Sunday of Lend at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, due to the tradition of the Church that Lot planted there the three-composed wood which was later used to make the Cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified.

In honour of the Holy Cross, Vespers on Saturday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning were officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, with the co-celebration of Archimandrites Ignatios and Klaudios, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Simeon. The chanting was delivered by Mr Gotsopoulos and the services were attended by faithful Christians, Greeks and Palestinians, Russians, Romanians from Jerusalem and the occupied territories, along with the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, members of the Greek Consulate and the Ambassador of Georgia Mr Lasha.

After the Divine Liturgy, there was a litany with the Sacred Cross and His Eminence Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, who takes good care of the Monastery, hosted a reception at the Hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Monastery.

From Secretariat-General