

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY IN TUR'AN OF GALILEE

On Sunday 24 May /6 June 2021, Sunday of the blind man according to the book of Pentecostarion, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of Saint George the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer, in the Rum Orthodox Arab-speaking Community of Tur'an, a small town near Cana which belongs to the Metropolis of Nazareth.

The Rum Orthodox Community has approximately 400 members and is supervised by Dean Priest Spyridon.

His Beatitude was warmly received by the Scouts, the Priests and the parish members.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences: Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Archimandrites; Parthenios, Hilarion and Artemios, Dean Priest Spyridon and other Arab-speaking and Russian-speaking Priests, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the parish choir, as the service was attended by the people of this community.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“As Jesus passed by on His way from the temple, He found a man who was blind from his birth; and taking compassion on him, He put clay on his eyes and said unto him: Go wash in the pool of Siloam. And when he had washed, he received his sight, and sent up praise unto God” (Vespers, Sticheron 2).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The almighty grace of our Saviour Christ has gathered us today in your beautiful town Tur'an of south Galilee, to co-celebrate the miracle Christ worked on the man who was born blind.

“Jesus answered, I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing” (John 9:3-7).

Interpreting these words of the Gospel, Saint Cyril of Alexandria notes: firstly, that Christ is both physical and noetic light. “Without doubt, the Only-begotten Son is also noetic light, and knows and is able to illumine not only the things of this world but also the whole of the other creation above this world”.

Secondly: That He cured the blind man willingly and impulsively, while the healed man did not recognize Christ. “The Saviour made the decision to cure the blind man, out of His own will and impulse, without any petition, and without anyone's asking of Him to do so”.

Thirdly, Christ showed that He was the One who fashioned man out of clay (Gen. 2:7). “The Saviour does not do anything by chance. By anointing the blind man with the clay, He completed that which was lacking from the nature of the eye, and this way, He shows that He is the One who fashioned us from the beginning, the founder and creator of everything”.

It is noteworthy, that in Jesus' command, “Go, wash in the

pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent)", Saint Cyril distinguishes a hidden reason, as he says: "We consider that the 'Sent' is no other than the Only-begotten Son of God, Who was sent by the Father and visited us from above, to banish the sin and deception of the devil. Knowing that the Saviour invisibly swims in the waters of the Holy Pool, we are washed in faith, not for the cleansing of the impurity of the flesh, according to the scriptures (1 Peter 3:21), but for the washing of the infection and impurity of the noetic eyes, and having been cleansed, we may be able to gaze at the divine beauty clearly. This way we believe that Christ's body is life-giving, since it is both the temple and the dwelling place of the Living Word of God, and has the fulness of the energy of God. Likewise, we say that He is also the reason of illumination. Because it is the body of the One who is light both in nature and truth".

In other words, the sight the blind man received by Jesus' touch proved that Christ is the Son and Word of God, perfect man and perfect God. It also proved that not only through the divine power of His word, but also through the divine power of his body and hands, He raises the dead, as He did with the son of the widow in Nain (Luke 7: 13-14), and gives sight to the blind as in the case of this man.

To those who "turn away their ears from the truth" (2 Tim. 4:4), namely those who do not believe and refuse the wonders Jesus worked before them, Jesus says: "But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him" (John 10:38).

Christ, my dear brethren, is present, living and acting from within through the Church, especially at the Holy Eucharist Sacrament. Christ, we repeat, is the physician, the healer and the illuminator of our souls and bodies. This is testified by the words of Saint Luke the Evangelist: "Jesus cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits, and unto many that were blind he gave sight" (Luke 7:21). And He gave

this authority and power to His disciples, as Saint Matthew writes: "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matt. 10:1).

In other words, Christ, whose God-human body is the One Catholic and Apostolic Church, is the spiritual pool of Siloam, as Saint Chrysostom says: "Just as Christ was a spiritual rock, likewise, Siloam (which means Sent) is also spiritual".

We are called to seek this divine power of the spiritual pool of Siloam in faith, love and humility. And let us say along with the hymnographer: "Thou spiritual sun of righteousness, Who with Thine immaculate touch didst enlighten both the body and soul of him who from his mother's womb was deprived of sight, illuminate the eyes of our souls also, and show us to be sons of the day, that we might cry to Thee with faith: Great and ineffable is Thy compassion toward us, O Friend of man; glory be to Thee" (Vespers Stichera Pascha, Glory, tone 5).

Christ is risen! Many happy returns!"

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception and then a meal at noon, where His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

"The Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Psalm 135: 5-6).

Your Excellency Mr President of the Ecclesiastical Committee,

Respected members of the Ecclesiastical Committee,

Dear Brethren in Christ,

Our meeting on this Paschal day, the sixth Sunday after Pascha

has a special meaning. Because by the ineffable mercy of our Holy Trinitarian God the forced obstacles of the covid-19 pandemic have been lifted.

Of course, we as members of the Holy Church of Jerusalem never ceased to serve in our ministry in Christ, both the liturgical and the pastoral. This spiritual ministry has always covered the physical distance between us.

The Church of Christ, which is the body of Christ, cannot be comprehended without its members. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, ... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:12-13) Saint Paul preaches.

The Church of Christ, as we mentioned in our Sermon, is the spiritual pool – according to Saint Chrysostom – and Christ is Siloam, which means the 'Sent' by God the Father, His Son and Word.

This means that we see our Lord Jesus Christ in the Church, as the physical and spiritual healer of our bodies and souls. In other words, my dear brethren, the Church of Christ is our secure refuge, the Ark of salvation and the Pool of our regeneration in the Holy Spirit. These words are not vague but true. These words become clear when our faith in Christ crucified and resurrected remains steadfast and increases. Christ is the Light of the world and especially the Light of those who love and believe in Him. And the Church of Christ is the sanatorium for all our infirmities. Therefore, as Saint Paul advises, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, ... Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work" (2 Thess. 2:15-17).

Christ is risen! Many Happy Returns!"

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINTS CONSTANTINE AND HELEN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, 21 May / 3 June 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Holy glorious God-crowned Sovereigns and Equal to the Apostles, Constantine and Helen.

This feast was celebrated as a feast of the Throne of the Patriarchate because Constantine the Great and his mother Saint Helen established the All-holy Shrines, the Horrendous Golgotha, the All-holy Sepulchre, and set the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood as their guardian.

This feast was celebrated at the Patriarchal and Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen at the heart of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, with Vespers on Wednesday afternoon, which was attended by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. The Service was observed by the ministering Priests of the Church and other Hagiotaphite Fathers, with the participation of the Archbishops, Hieromonks and Monks of the Brotherhood. The chanting was delivered by the Byzantine choir leader of the Church Archimandrite Eusevios and Hierodeacon Simeon. After Vespers, His Beatitude and the Fathers received the traditional boiled wheat with wine and dried bread outside the Epitropikon.

On the Feast Day, Matins and the Divine Liturgy were

officiated by His Beatitude, with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, according to the Typikon order of the Brotherhood. The Liturgy was attended by faithful Christians from Jerusalem and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

At the end of the Liturgy, His Beatitude and the other Fathers dressed in their liturgical vestments went up to the Reception Hall, followed by the congregation.

On the way to the Hall, Nun Seraphima, who is in charge of the Bakery, distributed the customary small loaves of bread to everybody.

At the Reception Hall, His Beatitude delivered the following address:

“He who was drawn up upon the Cross, the Creator of the sun and creation, drew thee near with stars from Heaven, since thou wast thyself a shining star, and He entrusted the royal dominion to thee first of all. Wherefore, we acclaim thee, O most pious King, Constantine, together with Helen thy Godly-minded mother” the hymnographer of the Church proclaims (Minaion Matins, Kathisma 2).

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians

Our Holy Church of Christ rejoices mystically today on the commemoration of the Holy Glorious and Equal to the Apostles Sovereigns Constantine and Helen, who stopped the religion of idolatry and established the Precious Cross, in which the divine righteousness and the truth in Christ were revealed.

Therefore, we went to the Monastic Church dedicated to them and festively celebrated the Divine Liturgy surrounded by the

Hagiotaphite Fathers and our brethren, honouring thus their commemoration.

The God-pleasing work and the piety of Constantine the Great are praised by the Church Historian Eusebius of Caesarea, who writes: "Constantine is the only King of the Romans who has honoured with excessive piety to God the King of all, God Himself, and the only one who has preached boldly the Word of Christ, and the only one we can say that glorified more than anyone else His Church, and the only one who banished the fallacy of believing in many gods, and delivered us from idolatry in any way, and moreover, he is the only one who was deemed worthy both in this life and in that after death, for which no man was ever able to become participant".

Indeed, Constantine the Great excessively glorified the Church of Christ and in particular the Church of Jerusalem. We can say that, up to the present day, the presence of the Christians in the Holy Land and in the wider area of the Middle East is owed to Constantine the Great and his mother, Saint Helen, who established the all-holy shrines with the construction of magnificent monuments, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Basilica Church of the Nativity of our Saviour Christ in Bethlehem.

Because of Constantine the Great, the Christians became the pious Royal nation of the Rum Orthodox and developed the insurmountable spiritual greatness of Romiosyne, as George Metalinos says: "Constantine the Great is the one who becomes Romios from Roman, who leads 'Christ's citizenship' to the Greek Orthodox universality and globalization". And according to Father George Florovsky, Constantine the Great significantly contributed to the integration of Hellenism into the Orthodox Christian tradition.

And we, my dear brethren, being grateful for the divine gifts of the Father of Lights, and of the great benefits of the Saints Constantine and Helen the Equals to the Apostles, let

us say along with the hymnographer: "Rejoice, O great and all-wise Constantine, thou fount of Orthodox Faith, that dost water continually all the lands beneath the sun with thy sweet and delightful streams. Rejoice, O root from the which there sprouted forth the fruit that nourisheth Christ's most holy Church. Rejoice, thou most glorious boast and fame of all the farthest ends of earth, first of Christian kings. Rejoice, thou joy of faithful men" (Minaion, Praises, Troparion 1). Christ is risen! Many Happy Returns!"

At noon there was a monastic meal for the Brotherhood.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

On Sunday, 17/30 May 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman at the shrine of Jacob's well in Nablus of Samaria.

On this feast, the whole Church and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates the meeting and the conversation of the Samaritan Woman from town Sychar with our Lord Jesus Christ, at Jacob's well, when the Lord revealed her manner of living and told her He is the Messiah the Christ. He also told her that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth", neither on Mount Gerizim nor in Jerusalem (John 4:5-42).

In commemoration of this redeeming Evangelical event, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the magnificent Church built

above the well by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Ioustinos. The Church is dedicated to the Samaritan Woman who believed in the Lord and suffered a martyr's death for Him and her family members, sisters Saints Anatoli, Foto, Fotida, Paraskevi Kyriaki and her two sons, Saints Foteinos and Iosis.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences; Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Arab-speaking Priests and Deacons, at the chanting of Doctor Yacubi and other Byzantine singers, from the neighbouring parishes, as the service was attended by many local faithful and pilgrims from Israel, and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“When the Lord came unto the well, the Samaritan Woman entreated Him Who is compassionate, saying: Grant me the water of faith, and I shall receive the streams of the font of baptism, unto exceeding gladness and redemption. O Giver of Life, Lord, glory be to Thee” the hymnographer of the Church proclaims (Vespers, Idiomelo 2 of the Saint).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

Christ our God, the fountain of life and immortality, has gathered us all in this holy shrine of Patriarch Jacob's well, where the Samaritan Woman met the Lord, to celebrate her feast in Paschal doxology and thanksgiving.

In His meeting with the Samaritan Woman by Jacob's well, when “Jesus, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well” (John 4:6), He said to the Woman: “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I

shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw" (John 4:13-15).

Interpreting these words of the Lord, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "we should know that the Saviour calls the grace of the Holy Spirit 'water'. If anyone becomes a participant of this grace, then he will have in him the spring of the divine teachings, namely the power of the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. He will be able to admonish with blessings those who thirst for the divine and heavenly word. Such men were in their earthly life the Holy Prophets and the Apostles, and the heirs of their [apostolic] mission".

The Samaritan Woman became also a participant of this grace of the Holy Spirit, according to the Lord's word, "the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

It is also noteworthy, that the Samaritan woman was not in the position to fully understand the meaning of the Lord's words; however, Jesus revealed Himself to her, as Saint John the Evangelist testifies: "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he comes, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He" (John 4:25-26).

Not only did Christ reveal Himself to her, but also taught her the truth that is preached in the Old Testament (3 Kings 8:27), that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

We say this, because, as Saint Cyril of Alexandria points out, Christ does not reveal Himself to uneducated people such as the Apostles who were fishermen, nor to illiterate people who sinned in ignorance, such as the Samaritan woman, but also to people whose souls thirst for the truth, and the faith for the

knowledge of the perfect mysteries has been born in them (in their souls).

In other words, Christ “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4), challenges, somehow, the Samaritan Woman, not to remain in her introductory faith, but to proceed to the perfect faith, which leads to deification, namely to her enlightenment by the Holy Spirit; which is what happened, because she became equal to the Apostles and a martyr of the love of Christ.

The fervent desire of the perfect faith is brilliantly described by Saint Ignatios the God-bearer in his epistle to the Romans with the words: “The love [eros] of mine is crucified and there is no material fire in me; “living water” (John 4:10) is inside me, talking to me and saying: rush to the Father. I find no pleasure in the food of corruption, nor in the delights of this life. The bread of God I want, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, from the seed of David, and the drink I want is His Blood, which is love incorrupt”.

The Samaritan Woman, who was later on given the name Foteini by the Lord, who also received the crown of martyrdom by Roman Emperor Nero, is dancing with all the Saints in heaven.

Saint Foteini never ceased to preach the correct manner of “worshipping God the Father in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:14), as well as the fear of God in reverence, which means to live our Christian lives in Godly actions and vision.

And we say this because “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21) the Lord says. Rebuking those who have distant to the Divine Will thoughts, desires and works, Jesus refers to the Prophet Isaiah’s words: “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for

doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:8-9 / Isaiah 29:13).

In other words, my dear Brethren, the Samaritan Woman whom we celebrate today, is an example to imitate, regarding our interest for the truths of our Orthodox Faith, and Tradition, and of the healthy worship of God.

Now let us thank our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who was born by the Virgin Theotokos, and worship Him in Spirit and in truth, in repentance and humility of heart and say along with the hymnographer: "Thou art the water of life, cried the Samaritan Woman unto Christ. Give me to drink, therefore, who always thirst for Thy divine grace, O Lord, that I may no longer be held by the drought of ignorance, but may proclaim Thy mighty acts, O Lord Jesus" (Matins, Ode 7, Troparion 4 of the Samaritan Woman). Amen! Christ is Risen!"

At the end of the feast the Hegoumen Archimandrite Ioustinos hosted a reception and then a meal, where His Beatitude addressed all present as follows:

"Thus saith the Lord unto the woman of Samaria: if thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee: Give Me water to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee to drink, that thou mightiest never thirst unto eternity, saith the Lord" (Matins, Praises, Stichera of the Samaritan Woman, Troparion 2).

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece,

Reverend Archimandrite Ioustinos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Let us thank our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Resurrected from the Tomb, Who deemed us worthy to celebrate in Paschal festivities the feast of the Samaritan Woman, at this place of Jacob's well, where she drank from the spiritual

waters of God's gift.

This gift of God is the Holy Spirit, Who brings together and unites the institution of the Church, namely the body of our God Jesus Christ. And the greatness of this divine gift cannot be put into words, as Saint Paul says: "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).

My dear brethren in Christ, being members of the Precious Body of Christ, we become communicants and participants of the Holy Spirit, namely of the heavenly gift (Hebrews 6:4), through the Holy Baptism.

This heavenly gift is granted by our Holy Church, which testifies throughout the centuries the infinite love and philanthropy of God worldwide, especially in our region. We are called to appreciate this invaluable gift of our calling to Christ and His Church, especially at this time of disorder and apostasy, hearkening to Saint Paul's advice: "I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:16-18).

Let us entreat the Samaritan Woman, whom we honour today, who became a martyr of the love of Christ, so that along with the new co-martyr of hers, Saint Philoumenos the Hagiotaphite, may intercede the Lord our God, for all of us, and for the peace in the Holy Land, and moreover, for the relief from the covid-19 plague.

Christ is Risen! Many Happy Returns!"

From Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY IN THE TOWN OF REINE

On Sunday 10/23 May 2021, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Sunday of the Paralytic man at the Holy Church of Reine town, near the city of Nazareth.

On this Sunday the Church commemorates the Lord's healing of the man who suffered paralysis for thirty-eight years and had "no man, when the water is troubled, to put him into the sheep's pool" ... but with the Lord's word, he "took up his bed, and walked" (John 5:2-9).

For this festive event, having first visited the Metropolis of Nazareth, His Beatitude officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of Reine Community, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Metropolitans Isychios of Kapitolias and Kyriakos of Nazareth, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Lord in Tabor Archimandrite Hilarion, Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nektarios, Priest Nektarios and the Dean Priest of this Church Father Simeon. The chanting was delivered by the community Byzantine choir.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"At the Sheep's Pool, a man lay in sickness; and when he saw

Thee, O Lord, he cried: I have no man, that, when the water is troubled, he might put me therein. But when I go, another anticipateth me and receiveth the healing, and I lie yet in mine infirmity. And straightaway, taking compassion on him, the Saviour saith unto him: For thee, I became man, for thee, I am clothed in flesh, and sayest thou: I have no man? Take up thy bed and walk. All things are possible for Thee, all things are subject to Thee. Remember us all and have mercy on us. O Holy One, since Thou art the Friend of man" (Vespers, Entreaty, Glory).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the One Who is the healer of the bodies and souls, our Lord Jesus Christ, has gathered us all in this holy place of your town, Reine, so that in Paschal joy, we may celebrate the miracle of the paralytic man's healing, who had been waiting for the healing of his infirmity for thirty-eight years.

The mystery of the Divine Providence in Christ had a sole purpose, the healing, meaning the salvation of the souls and the bodies of us men, from the infirmity, which is the sin, as the hymnographer clearly expresses: "For thee, I became man, for thee, I am clothed in flesh, and sayest thou: I have no man?" the Lord says.

In today's Gospel narrative of the healing of the paralytic man we distinguish and marvel at the power of patience and hope. The thirty-eight-years sick man was not overwhelmed by despair, because he was drawing power and hope from his faith in the merciful God. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18;27) the Lord says. And we say this because the paralytic man was not healed by the Angel, who "went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water" (John 5:4), but by the Master of the Angels, Christ

Himself, as Saint Chrysostom notes: "The Angel went down to the pool and troubled the water, and one man was healed; the Master of the Angels went down to the [river] Jordan and troubled the water and healed the whole universe".

And according to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Christ's presence among men is redeeming, meaning it is therapeutic. Let us hear the words of the Holy Father: "Whenever Christ appears, there salvation lies; whether He sees the publican sitting at the receipt of custom, He makes him a Disciple and an Evangelist, whether He is buried with the dead, He raises the dead and makes the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and He passes by the pools, not seeking the buildings, but healing the sick".

If God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ in His Incarnation from the pure flesh of the Ever-Virgin Theotokos Mary, through the Holy Spirit, appeared in the heavens and on the earthly world; now through His three-day burial, the cathode into Hades and His glorious and victorious Resurrection, He appeared even to the nethermost depths, as the hymnographer Saint John Damascene says: "When Thou didst descend unto death, O Life Immortal, then didst Thou slay Hades with the lightning of Thy Divinity. And when Thou didst also raise the dead out of the nethermost depths, all the powers in the Heavens cried out: O life-giver, Christ our God, glory be to Thee" (Octoechos Apolytikion tone 2).

Christ's resurrection my dear Brethren, announced our transition from death into life, into the freedom from the bondage of sin, as Saint Paul preaches: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). Interpreting this phrase, Saint Theodoritos says "law of sin means 'dynasty' of sin", while Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "he calls sin and law of death the carnal mindset which leads us to every evil deed".

According to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Jesus chose the bedridden paralytic man because he had a heavy load of sins

and long-term suffering due to his sickness ...he was sick in both body and soul", for this reason, He told him "Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5:6). And our Holy Father Cyril adds: "Because salvation stems from faith, for this the paralytic heard the word 'wilt', so that his will would bring the reaction, and this happened only with Jesus' word, which is not comprehended by the physicians. Those who heal the infirmities of the soul cannot say to anyone; 'wilt thou be made whole?' However, Jesus grants the will and receives the faith, and offers the gift [of healing] for free".

This historic event of the paralytic man's healing manifested the excessive power of God-man Christ, because He healed an incurable disease, and also showed His philanthropy, because, as Saint Chrysostom says: "the one who was most worthy of His mercy and benevolence, [the paralytic man] did the guardian and philanthropist [Christ] see before all others".

Indeed, the paralytic man received the mercy and benevolence of Christ because he showed "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21), according to His preaching: "repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). In other words, repentance is considered true when it is accompanied by faith in the Resurrected Christ, as our Redeemer and Saviour, as the only way we are led to God in safety. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

We, my dear Brethren, are called to face all the trials in our lives but also our infirmities, having as an example the Paralytic man who endured his infirmity for thirty-eight years (John 5:5). And along with the hymnographer, let us entreat the physician of our souls and bodies, saying: "raise up my soul which is palsied by diverse sins and transgressions and by unseemly deeds and acts, that, being saved, I may also cry out: O Compassionate Redeemer, O Christ God, glory to Thy dominion and might" (Kontakion). Amen. Christ is Risen!"

After the Divine Liturgy there was a reception and then a meal, where His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“Come all peoples, and learn the power of the awesome mystery! For Christ our Saviour, who is the Word from the beginning, was crucified and freely suffered burial for our sake, rising from the dead that he might save all things: Come, let us worship Him” (Ochoechos, Praises tone 3, Troparion 1).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble President of the Church Committee,

Respected Members

We thank the Holy Trinitarian God Who deemed us worthy to co-celebrate with you, the feast of feasts, the Resurrection of Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, on the fourth Sunday since Pascha.

The event of the resurrection from the dead of our Lord Jesus Christ is being repeated in the Great Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, namely in the Divine Liturgy, during which we are called to participate in the Body and Blood of the resurrected Christ.

The Holy Church of Christ, and especially the Church of Jerusalem, has preserved throughout the centuries “the good thing which has been committed unto us” (2 Tim. 1:14), which is our Apostolic faith and tradition, along with the unity of the members of the body of the Church and the Rum-Orthodox identity, or better say, their “Al-Intima”.

For the second time this year, we celebrate Easter amidst challenges and sad episodes. Peoples and nations are tested by the fear, insecurity and wounds caused by the covid-19 pandemic and the fire of the warfare. Nevertheless, the hypostatic and unwaning Light of Christ’s Resurrection shines through. And this because “Jesus Christ the same yesterday,

and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), Saint Paul preaches. An undeniable testimony of this truth is the empty Tomb of the Resurrected Christ, our Saviour, but also our Holy Church, the Body of Christ in this world, which became the guardian of the empty Tomb, but also the herald of the joyous and hopeful message "Christ is Risen!"

This very message, "Christ is Risen!", has given the Christians of the Holy Land the power and the courage to face death, destruction, the oppression of slavery and of fear, but also of the insecurity, always paying heed to Saint Paul's advice: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity" (1 Cor. 16:13-14).

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In conclusion, we assure you, my dear brethren, that the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem is the spiritual and physical Ark that the Lord has created and no man, for the salvation of those who dwell in it.

Christ is Risen! Many Happy Returns!"

From Secretariat-General

On Sunday 10/23 May 2021, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Sunday of the Paralytic man at the Holy Church of Reine town, near the city of Nazareth.

On this Sunday the Church commemorates the Lord's healing of the man who suffered paralysis for thirty-eight years and had "no man, when the water is troubled, to put him into the sheep's pool" ... but with the Lord's word, he "took up his bed, and walked" (John 5:2-9).

For this festive event, having first visited the Metropolis of Nazareth, His Beatitude officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of Reine Community, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Metropolitans Isychios of Kapitolias and Kyriakos of Nazareth, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Lord in Tabor Archimandrite Hilarion, Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Priest Nektarios and the Dean Priest of this Church Father Simeon. The chanting was delivered by the community Byzantine choir.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“At the Sheep’s Pool, a man lay in sickness; and when he saw Thee, O Lord, he cried: I have no man, that, when the water is troubled, he might put me therein. But when I go, another anticipateth me and receiveth the healing, and I lie yet in mine infirmity. And straightaway, taking compassion on him, the Saviour saith unto him: For thee, I became man, for thee, I am clothed in flesh, and sayest thou: I have no man? Take up thy bed and walk. All things are possible for Thee, all things are subject to Thee. Remember us all and have mercy on us. O Holy One, since Thou art the Friend of man” (Vespers, Entreaty, Glory).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the One Who is the healer of the bodies and souls, our Lord Jesus Christ, has gathered us all in this holy place of your town, Reine, so that in Paschal joy, we may celebrate the miracle of the paralytic man’s healing, who had been waiting for the healing of his infirmity for thirty-eight years.

The mystery of the Divine Providence in Christ had a sole

purpose, the healing, meaning the salvation of the souls and the bodies of us men, from the infirmity, which is the sin, as the hymnographer clearly expresses: "For thee, I became man, for thee, I am clothed in flesh, and sayest thou: I have no man?" the Lord says.

In today's Gospel narrative of the healing of the paralytic man we distinguish and marvel at the power of patience and hope. The thirty-eight-years sick man was not overwhelmed by despair, because he was drawing power and hope from his faith in the merciful God. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18;27) the Lord says. And we say this because the paralytic man was not healed by the Angel, who "went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water" (John 5:4), but by the Master of the Angels, Christ Himself, as Saint Chrysostom notes: "The Angel went down to the pool and troubled the water, and one man was healed; the Master of the Angels went down to the [river] Jordan and troubled the water and healed the whole universe".

And according to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Christ's presence among men is redeeming, meaning it is therapeutic. Let us hear the words of the Holy Father: "Whenever Christ appears, there salvation lies; whether He sees the publican sitting at the receipt of custom, He makes him a Disciple and an Evangelist, whether He is buried with the dead, He raises the dead and makes the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and He passes by the pools, not seeking the buildings, but healing the sick".

If God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ in His Incarnation from the pure flesh of the Ever-Virgin Theotokos Mary, through the Holy Spirit, appeared in the heavens and on the earthly world; now through His three-day burial, the cathode into Hades and His glorious and victorious Resurrection, He appeared even to the nethermost depths, as the hymnographer Saint John Damascene says: "When Thou didst descend unto death, O Life Immortal, then didst Thou slay Hades with the lightning of Thy Divinity. And when Thou didst also raise the dead out of the

nethermost depths, all the powers in the Heavens cried out: O life-giver, Christ our God, glory be to Thee" (Ochoechos Apolytikion tone 2).

Christ's resurrection my dear Brethren, announced our transition from death into life, into the freedom from the bondage of sin, as Saint Paul preaches: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). Interpreting this phrase, Saint Theodoritos says "law of sin means 'dynasty' of sin", while Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "he calls sin and law of death the carnal mindset which leads us to every evil deed".

According to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, Jesus chose the bedridden paralytic man because he had a heavy load of sins and long-term suffering due to his sickness ...he was sick in both body and soul", for this reason, He told him "Wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5;6). And our Holy Father Cyril adds: "Because salvation stems from faith, for this the paralytic heard the word 'wilt', so that his will would bring the reaction, and this happened only with Jesus' word, which is not comprehended by the physicians. Those who heal the infirmities of the soul cannot say to anyone; 'wilt thou be made whole?' However, Jesus grants the will and receives the faith, and offers the gift [of healing] for free".

This historic event of the paralytic man's healing manifested the excessive power of God-man Christ, because He healed an incurable disease, and also showed His philanthropy, because, as Saint Chrysostom says: "the one who was most worthy of His mercy and benevolence, [the paralytic man] did the guardian and philanthropist [Christ] see before all others".

Indeed, the paralytic man received the mercy and benevolence of Christ because he showed "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21), according to His preaching: "repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). In other words, repentance is considered true when it is

accompanied by faith in the Resurrected Christ, as our Redeemer and Saviour, as the only way we are led to God in safety. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

We, my dear Brethren, are called to face all the trials in our lives but also our infirmities, having as an example the Paralytic man who endured his infirmity for thirty-eight years (John 5:5). And along with the hymnographer, let us entreat the physician of our souls and bodies, saying: "raise up my soul which is palsied by diverse sins and transgressions and by unseemly deeds and acts, that, being saved, I may also cry out: O Compassionate Redeemer, O Christ God, glory to Thy dominion and might" (Kontakion). Amen. Christ is Risen!"

After the Divine Liturgy there was a reception and then a meal, where His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

"Come all peoples, and learn the power of the awesome mystery! For Christ our Saviour, who is the Word from the beginning, was crucified and freely suffered burial for our sake, rising from the dead that he might save all things: Come, let us worship Him" (Ochoechos, Praises tone 3, Troparion 1).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble President of the Church Committee,

Respected Members

We thank the Holy Trinitarian God Who deemed us worthy to co-celebrate with you, the feast of feasts, the Resurrection of Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, on the fourth Sunday since Pascha.

The event of the resurrection from the dead of our Lord Jesus Christ is being repeated in the Great Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, namely in the Divine Liturgy, during which we are called to participate in the Body and Blood of the resurrected

Christ.

The Holy Church of Christ, and especially the Church of Jerusalem, has preserved throughout the centuries “the good thing which has been committed unto us” (2 Tim. 1:14), which is our Apostolic faith and tradition, along with the unity of the members of the body of the Church and the Rum-Orthodox identity, or better say, their “Al-Intima”.

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On this Sunday the Church commemorates the Lord's healing of the man who suffered paralysis for thirty-eight years and had "no man, when the water is troubled, to put him into the sheep's pool" ... but with the Lord's word, he "took up his bed, and walked" (John 5:2-9).

For this festive event, having first visited the Metropolis of Nazareth, His Beatitude officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of Rene Community, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias and Kyriakos of Nazareth, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Lord in Tabor Archimandrite Hilarion, Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nektarios, Priest Nektarios and the Dean Priest of this Church Father Simeon. The chanting was delivered by the community Byzantine choir.

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From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN THE HEAVENS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday 7/20 May 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the appearance of the sign of the Cross in the heavens.

On this feast, the Church, and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates that on 7 May in the year 351, the sign of the Cross appeared in dazzling light, radiating more than the sun rays, and was visible from the Horrendous Golgotha to the Mount of Olives. All the inhabitants of Jerusalem saw it and came out from their houses.

The Church has this piece of information from the Letter written by Saint Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, who was also the Catechist for Emperor Constantius, the son of Constantine the Great.

Saint Cyril's Epistle reads as per below:

"Epistle of Saint Cyril Archbishop of Jerusalem to Constantius

The Most Pious King

On the appearance of the sign of the Cross covered in light, visible in Jerusalem

To the Most Beloved by God and Most Noble Constantius Augustus

Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem,

Rejoice in the Lord

In the days of the Most Beloved by God Constantine of blessed memory, your Father, the redeeming wood of the Cross was found in Jerusalem, as divine grace allowed the hidden holy places to be discovered by someone who truly seeks reverence. But in your days, Most Pious King, who surpasses ancestral piety with greater reverence for God, miracles do not come from the earth, but from heaven, and the trophy with which our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ won death, that is, the Holy Cross, became visible in Jerusalem, shining with radiating beams of light.

Because in these holy days of the Holy Pentecost, in the first nine days of May, at about the third hour of the day, an enormous Cross, formed of light, appeared in the heaven above Holy Golgotha and extended to the holy Mount of Olives; it was not seen by one or two only, but was made manifest with perfect clarity to the whole multitude of the city; not, as one might suppose, rushing swiftly past as it were a figment of the imagination, but it was seen openly above the earth for many hours in plain sight, overcoming the beams of the sun

with its dazzling rays. Because the Cross would really be overshadowed by the sun if it were not for its brightness to be stronger for those who saw.

As a result, at the same time, the crowds of the city rushed to the holy Church in multitudes, overwhelmed by the divine fear but also with joy; young and old, men and women of all ages and even the secluded maidens; locals and foreigners, both Christians and the visiting pagans in the city. And unanimously all, as if it were one mouth, praised Jesus Christ our Lord, the Only Begotten Son of God, the miracle worker, realising in practice and with personal experience that the Christian Doctrine is of the highest reverence, not because it is confirmed with words of wisdom, but in proof of Spirit and power; and it is not only confessed by men but it is also testified by God from the heavens.

In the year of our salvation three hundred and fifty-one."

For this feast, the Divine Liturgy was officiated at the Horrendous Golgotha on Thursday morning, by His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia with co-celebrants the Archbishops; Meletios, Artemios, Makarios and Kallistos, the Ministering Priest of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Priest Athanasios and Hierodeacons Eulogios and Simeon. The chanting was delivered by Mr Gotsopoulos and the Patriarchal School Students. The Service was attended by the Nuns and the faithful Christians of Jerusalem.

After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy the Episcopal Entourage went down to the Holy Deposition slate, the other Archbishops arrived and a litany three times around the Holy Edicule followed.

After the litany, the officiating Archbishop read Saint Cyril's Epistle in Greek and Arabic.

Finally, the Episcopal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters and paid their respect to His Beatitude.

From Secretariat-General

ALL-NIGHT VIGIL AT THE HOLY SEPULCHRE WITH A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE PONTIANS' GENOCIDE

On Tuesday night to Wednesday dawn, 6/19 May 2021, day of remembrance of the Pontians' Genocide, their Eminences the Archbishops Demetrios of Lydda and Aristovoulos of Madaba co-celebrated the All-night Vigil with a memorial service at the Holy Sepulchre. The Service was observed with the blessing and encouragement of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos for the blessed memory and eternal repose of the souls of the 400.000 Pontians and Minor Asia inhabitants who were slaughtered by the Turks in 1922, during the population exchange.

The two Archbishops who officiated the Divine Liturgy and the Memorial Service come from Pontus.

From Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY IN RAMLE – ANCIENT ARIMATHAEA

On Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women 3/16 May 2021, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of Ramle Monastery of the Patriarchate.

On this feast the Church commemorates Joseph of Arimathaea – present-day Ramle – who was a noble counsellor, accepting and longing for the Kingdom of God, who dared to go to Pilate and ask for the Body of our Lord, the Crucified Jesus Christ, and having received It, he buried It with the help of the Myrrh-bearing Women at his new Tomb (John 19:38-42, Matt. 27:57-60).

For the commemoration and honour of Joseph of Arimathaea and the Lord's burial, the Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Beatitude, with the co-celebration of their Eminences the Archbishops: Damascene of Yaffo, Aristarchos of Constantina, Philoumenos of Pella and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, along with Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons. The chanting was delivered by the Ramle Byzantine choir as the Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangleos Vlioras and many faithful Christians with mixed feelings; joy for the end of the pandemic and intense prayer for the ceasefire between Israel and Gaza, and the episodes in the cities of Ramle and Lod.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Let Joseph, the noble counsellor be praised, together with the Myrrh-bearers and the divine disciples, since he also is a

herald of the Arising Christ", the hymnographer of the Church proclaims (Matins, Ode 9, Troparion 15).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians,

The grace of the hidden disciples of the Lord, Joseph of Arimathaea, the biblical city of Ramle, and Nicodemus, as well as of the Myrrh-bearing Women, have gathered us all in this holy place, to give glory to our Resurrected God, Jesus Christ, who has delivered us from the corruption of death and its darkness.

The undeniable fact of the Resurrection of the Son and Word of God, Christ, is characterized as the primary volcano, whose scorching lava and light have covered the whole creation, and this light is that of the mystery of the divine providence, namely the incarnation of God the Word and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:31-32) the Lord says. Interpreting these words of the Lord, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "When the beast [the devil] was deposed, then Christ drew towards Himself the seduced nation, not only the Jews, but all the people, for their salvation, calling them to Him through faith; for with the Law, the call was limited, but with Christ it is general for all people".

Their faith in the Resurrected Christ, of both the hidden disciples and the Myrrh bearers, does the Church honour and venerate today on the third Sunday after Pascha. Moreover, these disciples and the Myrrh bearers became witnesses and preachers of the resurrection of Christ. "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him [Jesus]. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw

a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you" (Mark 16:1-7) Mark the Evangelist says.

Indeed, my dear brethren, through His luminous resurrection, our Lord Jesus Christ, who said: "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), abolished the kingdom of darkness and ignorance and completely overthrew the tyrannical power of the devil over men, as Saint John Damascene says: "Thou didst descend into the deepest parts of the earth, and didst shatter the everlasting bars that held fast those that were fettered, O Christ. And on the third day, like Jonas from the sea monster, Thou didst arise for the grave" (Pascha Canon, Ode 6 Heirmos). And according to Saint Gregory of Nice, through the resurrection of Christ, the power of the death of sin was abolished, and there was a transmutation of our human nature. "The kingdom of life came and the power of death was abolished, and another birth happened, another life, another kind of life, the transmutation – recast of our nature".

This transmutation or recast of our nature happened through Christ, when He received our human nature through the pure flesh of the Ever-Virgin Theotokos Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and He absolved it [our human nature] from the corruption and from sin.

And now, through His resurrection, Christ highlighted the human nature as victorious over the bodily death, while through His Ascension to God the Father, He deified the human body 'the whole substance" He had assumed, as Saint Simeon the translator says.

Behold, therefore, why Saint Chrysostom triumphantly

proclaims: "The Lord's death mortified death". And according to Saint John Damascene: "we celebrate the mortification of death", namely the abolishment of our primary enemy, as Saint Paul says: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15"26).

Saint Gregory Palamas says that the Lord's resurrection is the renewal of the human nature, it is the reviving and reshaping and restoration to the eternal life of the first Adam, who was devoured by death because of his sin, and through death, [it is] a retrogression towards the earth from which he was created.

As mentioned above, true witnesses of Christ's resurrection were the Myrrh-bearing Women and especially the Theotokos Maria, the Mother of God, who was the first to see the Lord-risen from the dead, as Saint Gregory Palamas says: "The Theotokos was the first to receive the good news of the Lord's resurrection, as it was befitting and just, and she was the first to see Him resurrected and delighted in His divine words".

Commenting on the presence of the Myrrh bearers at the burial and resurrection of Christ, Saint Theophylaktos of Bulgaria notes characteristically: "the condemned nation was the first to receive the vision of the goodness and while the disciples run away, the women endure and wait". This means that the condemned nation of the women, due to Eve's disobedience in paradise, was the first to enjoy the vision of the Lord. And this was because Christ's disciples ran away to hide in fear, but the women persevered.

This very delight of the vision of Christ's resurrection are we also called to seek, my dear brethren, imitating the hidden disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus and especially the Myrrh-bearing Women. Let us say along with the hymnographer: "Let us arise in the deep dawn and instead of myrrh, offer praise to the Master; and we shall see Christ, the Sun of Righteousness,

Who causeth life to dawn for all” (Canon of Pascha, Ode 5).

“Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all” (2 Thess. 3:16).

Christ is risen! Many happy returns!”

At noon, Archimandrite Niphon hosted a meal for the Patriarchal Entourage and the Consul General, and His Beatitude addressed all present as follows:

“Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Our Holy Church is called the Church of the Resurrection, namely of the light of truth and of the hope of God’s Kingdom. “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

We comprehend these words of Saint Paul within the Church, especially through our participation in the Divine Liturgy, where we become communicants of the Body and Blood of the resurrected God, our Saviour Christ.

We say this because the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is the heart of the body of the Church, and the protection wall for us Christians, who preach the peace and love of Christ.

The Church of Christ, and especially the Rum Orthodox is the lighthouse that illumines the world with the holy light of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, namely the light of Christ’s resurrection.

We celebrate today the three-day burial and resurrection of our Saviour Christ, however, we are not hidden, like His disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, but like the Myrrh-bearing Women, who dismissed fear, and ran to the Tomb, seeking Christ.

We are called to do this very thing, my dear brethren, and do this not only for ourselves but for all our fellow men,

indiscriminately. We are called to always hearken to the Lord's command: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Humanity and especially our region are tested by both the coronavirus pandemic and the difficult political situation and the eruption of violence.

Having our hope in the resurrected Christ, "we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4), praying for the ceasefire and the rule of peace, which is so much needed in the world and in the Holy Land. "For He is our peace", namely Christ, as Saint Paul preaches (Eph. 2:14).

Christ is risen!"

The feast of the Sunday of the Myrrh bearing Women was also celebrated at the Chapel of the Myrrh bearing Women of Saint James Cathedral, with Vespers on Saturday afternoon and and the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning. The Services were officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, with the co-celebration of the ministering Priests of the Cathedral, Fr Farah/ Haralambos Bandour and George Baramki at the chanting of the Cathedral's choir under the lead of Mr Rimon Kamar. The Services were attended by the members of the 'Myrrh bearing Women' s association and the representative of the Greek General Consulate Mrs Christina Zaharioudaki.

From Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM OFFICIATES THE DIVINE LITURGY IN CANA OF GALILEE

On Sunday of Thomas, 26 April/9 May 2021, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of the Shrine in Cana of Galilee.

The Divine Liturgy was observed in commemoration that Thomas touched the Lord's side and the miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences: Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and the Hagiotaphite Fathers from the Cana neighbouring districts, Archimandrite Parthenios from Tiberias, and Archimandrite Hilarion from Tabor, along with the Hierodeacons Eulogios and Simeon. The changing was delivered by the Cana Byzantine choir, and the Service was attended by the Orthodox laity from Cana, in joy for the Resurrection of the Lord and for the pandemic almost coming to an end.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"It is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant, O ye peoples; Pascha, the Lord's Pascha; for Christ God hath brought us from death unto life, and from earth, unto Heaven, as we sing the triumphal hymn" Saint John Damascene says (Pentekostarion, Easter Sunday, Ode 1, Troparion 1).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all in this holy shrine, at the place where our Lord Jesus Christ blessed the marriage and marked the start of His miracles, in order to celebrate the touching of the Lord's side by Apostle Thomas and the inauguration of Christ's Resurrection, namely the Pascha, as well as the commemoration of the Wedding in Cana of Galilee.

Today, all of us who participate in this Divine Liturgy, participate in Christ's Resurrection, in Pascha, as Saint Chrysostom says: "Pascha is not the fasting, but the offering and the sacrifice, the daily observed synaxis [the officiated Holy Eucharist]".

In other words, "Pascha" is the very Resurrected Christ, therefore, Saint John Damascene calls Christ "Pascha" in his hymns: "O great and most sacred Pascha, Christ; O Wisdom and Word and Power of God". "...a new and holy Pascha, a mystic Pascha, an all-venerable Pascha, a Pascha that is Christ the Redeemer...a Pascha that hath opened to us the gates of paradise" (Easter Sunday, Ode 9, Troparion 3, Sticheron 1). In essence, Sant Damascene interprets Saint Paul's words: "For even Christ, our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7). Behold, therefore, why Saint John the hymnographer says: "Pascha the Lord's Pascha; for Christ God hath brought us from earth unto life, and from earth unto Heaven".

If Jerusalem became the place of the martyrdom and the testimony of the peak of the signs Christ performed on earth, namely of His sacrifice on the Cross and the victory over death through His Resurrection, according to the foretold: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:54-55 / Isaiah 25:8), also this blessed place of Cana became the testimony of the beginning of the signs and the revelation of the glory of Jesus Christ with the changing of the water into

wine here (John 2:1-11).

According to Saint Cyril of Alexandria, the Lord honoured with His presence the Wedding in order to sanctify the beginning of the birth of man, and change the old sadness regarding childbearing, as Saint Paul says: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). And the glory of our Saviour shone like the sun rays and His Disciples marvelled at it and were made steadfast in their faith.

According to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, with the changing of the water into wine in Cana, our Lord Jesus Christ confessed [promised] to the sons of the bridal chamber, namely to the baptized members of the body of the Church, the gift of enjoying His body and blood. And our Holy Father continues: "So, in all detail as body and blood we partake of Christ, in this type the body is given, and in this type the blood is given, so that by receiving this communion, the body and blood of Christ, one becomes of one body and blood with Christ. In this manner, we become bearers of Christ, of His body and blood in our body parts. In this manner, we become partakers of the divine nature, according to blessed Peter" (ref. 2 Peter 1:4).

The Lord is One, "and many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book" (John 20:30), Saint John the Evangelist says, testifying the touching of the Resurrected Lord's side by Apostle Thomas.

The impulsive unfaithfulness of Apostle Thomas, as well as the chance he was given to touch the wounded side of the deified body of the resurrected Christ happened – according to Saint Cyril of Alexandria – "so that we can also securely believe that He resurrected His Temple and that the confession of the communion of the mystical blessing (the Holy Communion) is a confession of Christ's Resurrection". Moreover, it is to this cause that we are called, according to Saint John Damascene:

“let us partake of the vine of divine gladness and of the Kingdom of Christ, praising Him as God unto the ages” (Easter Sunday, Ode 8, Troparion 2).

In other words, through our participation in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, we are called to become “partakers of the Resurrection and the Kingdom of Christ. And the Kingdom of God is within us” (Luke 17:21).

Interpreting these words, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: “it is our option and within our power to receive it; for it is possible for every single man to enrich himself with the righteousness in Christ through faith, and having become illumined with every virtue, gain the Kingdom of Heaven. (In more detail: For every man who acquires righteousness through the faith in Christ and is decorated with all virtues, is also worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven). “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men” (Romans 14:17-18) Saint Paul preaches.

Through His signs, in Cana here and throughout His earthly life, as well as by His appearance to His Disciples when Thomas touched His immaculate deified side, after His Resurrection, our Lord Jesus Christ revealed His Kingdom to the world, through His enlisted Church, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).

This treasure, namely the Church, the resurrected from the dead body of Christ let us love with all our heart and mind, my dear ones, and along with the hymnographer say: “Christ is risen from the dead, by death He hath overcome death, and to those in the graves, hath He given life”.

Chris is risen! Many happy and blessed returns!”

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a litany around the Church and the reading of the Gospel narrative regarding the miracle

at the wedding in Cana by the Lord.

At noon the good keeper and Hegoumen of the Monastery Archimandrite Chrysostom hosted a meal.

From Secretariat-General

THOMAS ' SUNDAY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday 26 April/ 9 May 2021 the Patriarchate celebrated according to the Book of Pentecostarion Thomas' Sunday. On this Sunday the Church commemorates that eight days after His Resurrection the Lord appeared to His Disciples while the doors were locked in the Upper Room when Thomas was also with them. The Lord told Thomas "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" and "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:26-29).

This feast was celebrated as a "Paressia" at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with Great Vespers on Saturday afternoon at the Catholicon and the Divine Liturgy at the All-Holy Tomb on Sunday morning, officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias. Co-celebrants to His Eminence were the Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew and Hierodeacon Patrikios, under the chanting of Mr Gotspoulos' choir with the attendance of faithful Christians from Jerusalem. Pilgrims are still not allowed to travel.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Episcopal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters where His Eminence wished everybody the joy of the Resurrection.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ST GEORGE THE GREAT MARTYR AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday 23 April/ 6 May 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy Great Martyr George the Trophy-bearer, in which the Church commemorates his martyrdom in Rome, in AD 303 during the reign of Diocletian.

His commemoration was celebrated as per below:

1. At the Holy Monastery dedicated to him in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, with Vespers on Wednesday afternoon, led by the Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew. The Divine Liturgy on Thursday morning was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias and Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archimandrite Kallistos and the Hierodeacons Eulogios and Simeon. The chanting was delivered by Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos and the Patriarchal School Students, as the service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and many Nuns of the Patriarchate and faithful

Christians.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“The all-glorious memorial of the servant hath shined upon us as a companion of the Resurrection of Christ, whereon let us gather, ye faithful, and joyfully keep the feast” (Minaion, Matins, Ode 3, Troparion 1).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The unwaning light of the Resurrection of our Saviour Christ has guided our footsteps to this Holy Monastery dedicated to Saint George the Great Martyr, to celebrate his holy commemoration in boldness.

Saint George became a great martyr of the love of Christ during the brutal persecutions of the Christians by the Roman Emperor Diocletian (AD 284-305). George was the son of a wealthy and noble family of Cappadocia and served as an officer at the Roman army. He confessed his faith in Christ and was seized, subjected to horrible tortures and finally his head was cut off. The Church of the first centuries canonized him among its Great Holy Martyrs. The pre-Christian city of Diospolis in Palestine, our later and modern city of Lydda, where the majestic Church of the Saint is located, erected above the cenotaph of the Saint, became the centre of the Martyr's honour. Saint George's honour was spread to all Roman Empire in both the West and the East.

We wonder, why the marvellous and glorious George sought the martyrdom for Christ; “For longing conquered nature, persuading the lover to pass through death to the Beloved, even Christ God, the Saviour of our souls” (Vespers, Aposticha Glory), his hymnographer says. And Prophet-King David says: “As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be

satisfied when I awake in Your likeness" (Psalm 17:15).

Stephen the first-martyr became a viewer of this glory when he was stoned by those who hated him, according to Saint Luke the Evangelist: "being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55).

Both the murdered Prophets of the Old Testament, who foretold the light of the world, namely Christ, and the first-martyr Stephen contributed decisively to the embracing of the brave athlete George of the word of Jesus: "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Interpreting these words, Cyril of Alexandria says: "God was known only in Judea, and His Name was great only in Israel, and a deep darkness covered the rest of the earth, as none other nation in the world had the divine and heavenly light, but Israel".

Indeed, the wise George lives and moves in times when the demonic darkness of idolatry reigns over the whole earth and the Roman Emperors deify themselves and demand worship from all their subjects, much more from the Christians, as his hymnographer says: "As thou manfully strovest in piety and didst cast down deluded impiety, O Martyr, thou troddest down the audacity of the foe; for thy mind being kindled like fire with godly zeal, thou didst quench the ungodly presumption of tyrant kings. Wherefore, as is fitting, in return for the torments thou now hast received the crown and dost grant healings unto all, O most valiant prize winner George" (Matins, Ode 3 Kathisma 1).

The wonderful George is in the chora of the great martyrs of the Church, because he was not ashamed of the martyrdom of our Lord, as Apostle Paul commands his disciple Timothy: "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor

of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God" (2 Tim 1:8). In other words, Saint George became an apostle and a preacher of the redeeming truth of Christ's Gospel, being inspired by Saint Paul's preaching: "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" (Hebrews 13:14).

And the continuing city is no other than the eternal life in the Kingdom of God, for which the Lord says: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22), Saint Paul preaches.

The martyrs of Christ's love are the boast and the glory of the Church, and for this reason, they have special honour. This is because the martyrs' relics bestow healings to those who honour and venerate them, and their incorruptibility testifies and confesses Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Moreover, the bloody martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs is a practical and unquestionable testimony of the sacrifice of the Son of God and our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, for the salvation of our human race. That is why Saint Paul says: "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him" (Romans 6:8-9).

Today's honoured Saint George the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer was clad in this very death of incorruptibility of Christ, namely the light of Christ's resurrection. The cultivator of reverence George longed for this Saviour of the world, Who bore our human flesh and was born from the Virgin Theotokos Mary. Therefore, as we honour his sacred commemoration in his Holy Monastery in the Old City of Jerusalem, let us entreat him along with the hymnographer and say: "As thou standest filled with light at the worshipful

tribunal of the Sovereign of all, O George, thou crowned Martyr of Christ, preserve by thine entreaties and thy protection those who call on thee with most fervent faith and love" (Matins, Ode 2, Troparion 1). Amen. Christ is Risen!"

After the Divine Liturgy, the renovator of the Monastery Reverend Abbess Marianna hosted a reception for the Patriarchal Entourage and the Congregation at the Hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Church.

2. At the Holy Church of Saint George in Acre-Ptolemais, with Vespers on Wednesday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Thursday morning, by the Patriarchal Representative Archimandrite Philotheos.
3. At the Holy Monastery of Saint George of the Hospital in the Old City of Jerusalem, which is adjacent to the Holy Monastery of the Archangels, by Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, under the chanting of Archimandrite Eusevios, with the attendance of monks and laity from Jerusalem. The congregation was offered a reception by Nun Pansemni, who has renovated the Church and preserved the icons.
4. At the Holy Monastery of Saint George in Beitjalla, an area of Bethlehem and Hebron, in the middle of a Muslim village. His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa observed Vespers and the Divine Liturgy at the chanting of local Byzantine singers, with the attendance of monks, nuns and Palestinian faithful Christians from Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Beit Sahour.
5. At the Holy Church of Saint George in Lydda, where the cenotaph of the Saint lies, with the Divine Liturgy in the morning by the Hegoumen Hieromonk Marcellus and the attendance of local faithful Christians.

From Secretariat-General

