

# **HOLY WEEK AND EASTER IN QATAR**

The Services of the Holy Week and of the Luminous Resurrection were observed at the Holy Cathedral in Doha and at the Holy Chapel of the Dormition, in conformity to the instructions of the Ministry of Health due to the covid-19, and according to the Order of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, enabling thus the participation of more faithful Christians.

The Church Services were officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, with the ministering Priest Demetrios. A great multitude of faithful from various cities of the Emirate received the Holy Communion in reverence and contrition.

The Services were observed in Greek, Arabic, Slavonic, Serbian, Romanian and English for the greater attendance of the multi-lingual flock. The choir gave a marvellous performance on the hymns and the Lamentations of Great Friday in Arabic, Greek and Serbian.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy of the Resurrection, the Easter eggs were blessed, and His Eminence distributed the blessed bread with the Easter eggs to the faithful, wishing them the Paschal joy of the Resurrected Christ, our God.

**From the Holy Archdiocese of Qatar**

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## **LITURGY IN JERICHO FOR SAINT ZACCHAEUS THE PUBLICAN**

On Tuesday of the Bright Week, 21 April/ 4 May the Patriarchate observed by transference due to Pascha the

commemoration of Saint Zacchaeus the former publican, which is normally celebrated on 20<sup>th</sup> April annually, at the Holy Monastery of Prophet Elisha in Jericho, where still stands the sycamore tree on which Zacchaeus climbed to be able to see the Lord passing by. Since that event, he repented and became later on Bishop of Caesarea of Palestine.

The Divine Liturgy was led by His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, the Hegoumen of Saint Gerasimos Monastery Archimandrite Chrysostom and Hierodeacon Eulogios, with the attendance of the Arab-speaking members of Jericho community.

After the Divine Liturgy, the good keeper of the Monastery Archimandrite Philoumenos hosted a reception for the Episcopal Entourage at the Hegoumeneion.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **EASTER MONDAY AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Easter Monday 20 April/ 3 May 2021, the joyful Feast of the Resurrection was celebrated at the Patriarchal Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, led in participation at the prayers by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. The Service included Matins, the Canon of the Resurrection and then the Divine Liturgy, at the chanting of the Byzantine Choir Leader of the Church Archimandrite Eusevios and the Typikon Keeper Archimandrite Alexios. The Brotherhood Fathers attended the Service, the Consul General

of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, and a few faithful from Jerusalem.

After Dismissal the Patriarchal Entourage went to the Patriarchate Reception Hall where they sang the Paschal hymn, the Fathers exchanged Paschal wishes and received Easter eggs from His Beatitude.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE SERVICE OF THE SECOND RESURRECTION AT THE PATRIARCHATE (VESPERS OF LOVE)**

The Service of the second Resurrection was observed at 12 noon on Easter Day.

This ceremony, just as bright as that of the All-night Vigil Liturgy of the Resurrection, began at the Patriarchate Reception Hall with the reading of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hour of Easter, as the choir was chanting "Christ is risen" in slow Byzantine music.

Then the magnificent Patriarchal Entourage dressed in their liturgical vestments with the choir and the faithful on either side of the road marched to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and offered a special prayer. The Service of Easter Vespers began in the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection.

The Gospel narrative according to Saint John regarding the

appearance of the Resurrected Lord was read in many languages for the love of the Resurrected Christ to the world and the universality of the Gospel. 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 local faithful Christians, Greeks, Russians, Palestinians and others, but not any pilgrims.

After Vespers, the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Reception Hall in joy and gleefulness and doxology of our Trinitarian God for the salvation of people through Christ.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE FEAST OF PASCHA AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

The glorious exit from the dead and the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was celebrated by the Patriarchate on Easter Sunday 12 April/ 2 May 2021.

On this Feast, the Church, being grateful, luminous and rendering glory to God, commemorates that our Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ went down to Hades from the Cross and was risen from the dead; He liberated the long-ago departed from the power of the devil and redeemed them and Paradise.

The Church of Jerusalem celebrated this Feast at the Life-giving and empty Tomb according to the Status Quo.

The Service began with the Canon of Holy Saturday, until the officiator the Feast, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and the Archbishops put on their Paschal liturgical vestments.

Then the Patriarchal Entourage exited the Catholicon and marched on a Procession three times around the Sacred Edicule, before the Matins Gospel narrative on the Resurrection was read: "When the Sabbath was over..." (Mark 16:1-8), then the "Glory to the Holy and Consubstantial and Undivided Trinity" followed by the chanting of "Christ is risen" by the whole congregation, and the exclamations of this in various languages, along with the verses, ten times in total. The Canon "It is the Day of Resurrection" by Saint John Chrysostom began and the Easter Matins was completed.

Then the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom was officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos at the Holy Sepulchre. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences; Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sabastia, Philoumenos of Pella, and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hieromonks, Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons.

The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos with the Patriarchal School Students, while all people were crying out loud "Christ is risen!" The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

Before the end of the Service, the Sermon by Saint John Chrysostom was read and the Dismissal concluded with "Christ is risen".

Finally, the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Epitropikon

of the Central Monastery, bells tolling, to receive cheese and easter eggs.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE SERVICE OF THE HOLY LIGHT AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Holy Saturday at noon, 18 April/ 1 May 2021, the Service of the Holy Light was observed according to the Status Quo of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

At 13.00 o'clock (summertime) the Patriarchal Entourage and other Hagiotaphite Fathers with the Greek Delegation – the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Vlasis, his Excellency the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and the Consulate General of Greece staff, went down to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre through the staircase of Saint James Cathedral.

Inside the Church, the representatives of the Armenians, Copts and Syrians came to receive the blessing by His Beatitude the Greek Orthodox Patriarch to participate in the ceremony and receive, each according to their right, the Holy Light.

Immediately after that the Procession three times around the Sacred Edicule began, under the chanting of “Thy Resurrection Christ Saviour” and “Joyous Light”, with the attendance of the Delegations and the faithful Christians, who were allowed to

enter by the Health Authorities due to the covid-19 measures.

At the end of the Procession, His Beatitude took off His Patriarchal vestments and remaining with the white sticharion entered the Holy Tomb, prayed and gave the Holy Light through the South window of the Edicule to the Priest of Saint James Cathedral, and then through the Sacred Edicule doors to the Priests and the attending people.

Once all people received the Holy Light, they touched their faces and hands and glorified God Who gave His Son to be Crucified and Resurrected and saved us all.

When all ceremony finished, the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters, as the faithful were cheering, the Scouts parading, and the Big bells tolling. At the Reception Hall of the Patriarchate, His Beatitude gave the Holy Light to the Greek Delegation to transfer it to Greece by plane and sanctify the Greek people.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE EPITAPH SERVICE AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Good Friday evening, 17/30 April 2021, the Epitaph Service was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

On this feast, which was led by our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos the chanting began with the Canon of Holy Saturday, until His Beatitude, the Archbishops and the Priests were dressed in their liturgical vestments. Then the Synaxarion of the day was read, about the Burial and the

Cathode into Hades of our Lord Jesus Christ, followed by the Procession with a special prayer around each of the shrines. After the shrines on the ground floor, the Procession marched up to the Horrendous Golgotha, the Gospel narrative on the Crucifixion was read and the silk corporal, full of flowers, was removed from the Altar, to be placed at the Holy Deposition slate, before marching three times around the shrine, then around the Sacred Edicule and the silk corporal was placed on the Holy Tomb.

Then the chanting of the 3 Parts of the Lamentations began, to conclude with the Epitaph Sermon which was read by Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina. The Sermon is as per below:

***“How shall I bury Thee, my God?***

***How shall I wrap Thee in a winding sheet?***

***How shall I touch Thy most pure body with my hands?***

***What song at Thy departure shall I sing to Thee,***

***0, compassionate Saviour?***

***I magnify Thy sufferings; I sing the praises of Thy burial  
and Thy Resurrection crying: 0 Lord, Glory to Thee”***

*With these weeping words,*

*Your Beatitude Father and Master,*

*Reverend chorea of Hierarchs,*

*Your Excellency Mr Consul General of Greece,*

*Reverend Fathers,*

*Noble Christians*



Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus took the Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ the Nazarene, down from the Wood and buried Him in a new tomb "wherein was never man yet laid" (John 19:41).

This event, the deposition from the Cross and the burial of the Divine Body of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ and His descent into Hades, is commemorated by the Church today. It is held at Matins before the dawn of the Holy and Great Saturday, during this modest contrite Epitaph Service on Holy and Great Friday evening.

Today the Church primarily commemorates the Cross. It gratefully remembers that for the salvation of the people, the Lord willingly accepted the Passion on the Cross, for which He was condemned unjustly and illegally.

It commemorates the Lord's words: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17-18). The Cross was God's Providence in order to heal the man, the great wound. This redeeming Providence of God does not make the crucifiers choice a necessity. They behaved according to their own free will. They crucified Jesus of Nazareth because they did not recognize the Son of God in Him. The healings He performed on the Sabbath days were considered a violation of God's Law; the remission of sins and the revelation that He is "the Christ, the Son of the Blessed" (Mark 14:21). However, in His love, God turned the iniquity of men into their benevolence. He granted them remission of their sins by the Blood of the Incarnate Son of His; "by the emptying of Your divinely flowing blood, O Master Christ, from Your pure and life-giving side" (Octoechos, Sunday Matins, Ode 9, tone 5) as it is inscribed on the Holy Altar of the Horrendous Golgotha. "Springs of remission, life, salvation and eternal life" are gushing out from the Blood and Water

that were shed from the Cross once and for all, and from the Blood that is shed in every Holy Eucharist "the Blood of the New Testament" (Luke 22:23).

The great Prophet Isaiah foretold centuries ago about this mystery of the Divine Philanthropy: "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes, we are healed. All we, like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not his mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter" (Reading of Isaiah, 6th Royal Hour of Good Friday).

Despite this foretelling by Isaiah and of the other Prophets' words, despite the fact that the Incarnate Lord "Jesus of Nazareth spent" His life on earth "benefiting and healing people"(Acts 10:38), despite the signs and the miracles, despite that fact that "never man spake like this man" (John 7:46), "the preaching of the Cross" according to Saint Paul remains for "the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:23), but to those who believe in Him "it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

Christ's Cross, "as God's power and God's wisdom" is believed and venerated by the Church, His Body, which has been gushed from His pierced side. The Church accepts and preaches Him to the world, as her Crucified Bridegroom and as the one who through the meekness of the Cross is "the King of Glory", Who by the power of His sacrifice on the Cross and humility went down to Hades with Divine authority and His descent into Hades, as it is also depicted in the icon, is **already** His Resurrection for the Church, as He co-raises Adam and his long-ago bound descendants, and they return to Paradise; this

is the event that we experience at this moment with the Cross. For this reason, the grateful Church sings thus: "We venerate Thy Cross Oh Master, and we magnify and glorify Thy Resurrection".

The Church has also included our Roman Greek nation among those who accept the Cross of Christ as "God's power and God's wisdom". This nation has been distinguished at all fields of science and left an incomparable beneficial – classical and scientific – heritage to all the nations; it also distinguished itself – what an irony! – at mythological imagination and ingenuity. However, it realised the non-existence of its mythology "at the appointed time" and accepted Christ and was transformed from a pagan nation to a Christian nation, a holy nation. The first fruits of this "little leaven which leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6), were those who believed in Apostle Paul's preaching unto Areopagus, "among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them" (Acts 17:34). Ever since, as Rum Orthodox, we gratefully accept the gift of "believing in Christ and suffering for Christ", as grace and a blessing, and as a talent, we need to multiply, without boasting over "the good olive tree" (Romans 11:24), always remembering that we were a wild olive tree, and were "grafted in among them, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree" (Romans 11:17) and pray for Christ's crucifiers, just as Christ prayed for them from the Cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), and co-suffer with them, just as Paul said: "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren", meaning that I could wish, if possible, to be separated for good from Christ for the sake of my brethren, "my kinsmen according to the flesh, which are the Jews" (Romans 9:3). We do not forget that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Romans 11:29), which means that the first-called Jews and all the unbeliever Gentiles are still awaited at the Cross of Christ. This was and shall be the mindset of our

*nation, that of Paul's, that is, Jewish, Evangelical, not anti-Jewish or Anti-Semitic.*

*These marvels of God, of the salvation of the people in Christ Incarnate and Crucified, Who slept in the flesh and was Resurrected, the Church of Holy Sion, "which was the first to receive the remission of sins through the Resurrection", holds like a gift and a consignment not only to experience physically but also to preach and proclaim them at the land where they were revealed. At this hour, surrounding the blessed and life-giving Tomb, in this contrite Epitaph Ceremony, which is blessed by its Holy Primate, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, the Church of Jerusalem primarily prays for the rapid and complete cure of the tested humanity by the infectious pandemic, for the peace and good state of the whole world, for the stability and unity of the Holy Orthodox Churches of God and for the advancement and progress of our nation for the glory of our Trinitarian God. So be it."*

After the Sermon the changing by Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos continued with the Blessings, the Praises and the contrite Service finished. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and the Consulate staff, along with many faithful, due to the lifting of the covid-19 restrictions. However, there were no pilgrims, as they are still not allowed to travel to Israel.

At the end of the Service, the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters to prepare for the Service of the Holy Light the next morning.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **GOOD FRIDAY VESPERS AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Good Friday afternoon, around 3.00 pm of 17/30 April 2021, the Service of Vespers took place at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in commemoration of the deposition from the Wood of the Immaculate Body of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Vespers was held with every modesty, meditation and contrition appropriate for the day, according to the Typikon Order of the Church of Jerusalem and the Status Quo.

At first of the events was the descent of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre through the stairs of Saint James Cathedral, who did not wear their decorations, while His Beatitude was wearing a cross. The Entourage firstly venerated the Horrendous Golgotha.

Then the hymns of the Service followed for the completion of Great Vespers, under the chanting of Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Gostopoulos with the help of the Patriarchal School Students.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE PROCESSION ON VIA DOLOROSA – THE ROYAL HOURS OF**

# **GOOD FRIDAY**

On Good Friday morning, 17/30 April 2021, the Royal Hours were read at the Church of Praetorion, followed by the Procession from there through Via Dolorosa to the Horrendous Golgotha. This is done in commemoration of the event when Pilate presented the Lord to the crowds, and then He was given the Cross and marched towards Golgotha, the place of the skull, where He was crucified.

The Procession was led by His Eminence Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, who carried the cross, followed by Hieromonks, Monks and Nuns, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangleos Vlioras and the Consulate staff, along with many faithful Christians who participated in this marching towards the Lord's Passion.

Upon their arrival to the Holy Courtyard, His Eminence Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella entered the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and went up to the Horrendous Golgotha carrying the Cross then the reading of the Royal Hours, 1,3,6 and 9 of Good Friday began.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE SERVICE OF THE PASSIONS AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Holy Thursday evening, 16/29 April 2021, 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, we commemorate the beatings, the spitting, the dressing of the red cloak and the other insults the Lord suffered, through the contrite Troparia and the reading of the twelve Gospel narratives, the chanting of "today is hung upon the Wood..." the Beatitudes, the Synaxarist, the Lord's burial and the sealing of the Tomb.

This contrite service was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, Who read the 1<sup>st</sup> Gospel narrative, and Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Hieromonks, who read the other narratives. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, Monks, Nuns and local faithful from our Arabic, Greek, and Russian flock, but not any pilgrims due to the covid-19 pandemic.

**From Secretariat-General**