

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

On Holy Thursday, 16/29 April 2021, the Service of the sacred washing of the Disciples' feet was observed at the Holy Courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Service began at 9.00 am, immediately after the end of the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil at Saint James Cathedral, which was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias and the Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia and Philoumenos of Pella, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Arab-speaking Priests, Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons, under the chanting of on the right in Greek and the Cathedral's Choir led by Mr Rimon Kamar on the left in Arabic.

The Service of the sacred washing of the Disciple's feet, which is unique in the Orthodox Church was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who washed the feet of twelve Hieromonks in remembrance of the event when the Lord washed His Disciples' feet, setting an example of humility for us. The relevant Gospel narratives were read by His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis.

The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the representative of the Ministry of Interior of Israel Mr Caesar Marjie and local faithful, who were standing at the Holy Courtyard and the Metochion of Gethsemane. There were no pilgrims due to the covid-19 pandemic.

At the end of the Service, bells tolling, the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters, where the

Archbishops were waiting for them according to the Order at the Reception Hall.

From Secretariat-General

THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY UNCTION AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Holy Wednesday afternoon, 15/28 April 2021, the Sacrament of the Holy Unction was officiated at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the co-celebration of seven Archbishops according to the order of the Church. The Service was attended by Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Monks and local faithful but not any pilgrims who are still unable to travel due to the continuing covid-19 pandemic.

At the end of the Service, His Beatitude anointed the Archbishops and they anointed Him in return, and then the Archbishops anointed the attending Priests, Monks and faithful, among whom the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

From Secretariat-General

THE LAST PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Holy Wednesday 15/28 April 2021, the last Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts was officiated at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the participation in prayer of the Hagiotaphite Fathers.

The Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts was also officiated at the Horrendous Golgotha by Geronda Sacristan His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, with the attendance of local Rum Orthodox, Arab-and-Russian-speaking faithful Christians.

From Secretariat-General

THE FIRST SERVICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Palm Sunday evening 12/25 April 2021, the 1st Service of the Bridegroom was held at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

On this Service of Holy Monday, as well as on Holy Tuesday and Holy Wednesday, the Church projects the Lord to the faithful as the Bridegroom of our souls, with Whom we are called in a mystical union so that with cleansed minds and mortified

passions, experience the redeeming Passion of the Cross and the luminous and glorious Resurrection.

This contrite Service was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-prayer of the Hagiotaphite Fathers. The Service was attended by some local faithful Christians, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras but not any pilgrims due to the continuing covid-19 restrictions.

At the end of the Service His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Behold the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching, but unworthy is he whom He shall find in slothfulness. Beware then, O my soul, and be not overcome by sleep, lest thou be given over to death and shut out from the Kingdom. But return to soberness and cry aloud: Holy, holy, holy art Thou, O God: through the Theotokos have mercy upon us” (Matins of Holy Monday, Troparion 1).

Beloved brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The Holy and Great Week of the Passions of our Lord Jesus Christ begins with the commemoration of the blessed Joseph and of the fig tree which was cursed by the Lord and withered.

And this is so because Joseph depicts Christ. Joseph was Patriarch Jacob’s eleventh son; his brothers were jealous of him, threw him in a pit and sold him to foreign merchants, he was sold again to others in Egypt, where he was slandered for his chastity, sent to prison, to be finally released from prison and receive great glory and honour by the King. Joseph became the Lord of all Egypt, distributing grain to all the people, and throughout his life course, he had imprinted in him the Passions and later on the glory of our Lord Jesus

Christ, according to his Synaxarist.

As for the fig tree which was cursed by the Lord and withered, it depicts the synagogue, which did not have the appropriate fruits of virtue and reverence, and became bereft from every spiritual grace through Christ's curse.

And having Joseph in mind, who is according to the type of Jesus, the hymnographer blesses the vigilant for the salvation of his soul servant. On the contrary, he considers unworthy the lazy servant, who neglects the care of his soul. This negligent servant resembles the fruitless fig tree, therefore, he is condemned to lose his soul.

Our Holy Church, my dear ones, calls us through the hymnographer by saying, "return to soberness, O my soul, crying aloud: Holy, holy, holy art Thou, O God". Return to soberness, means to recover from the intoxication of the silly and harmful desires and actions, as well as from the darkness of the mind from the fallacy of the wrong teachings, according to Zigavinos and Ecumenios (Ref. 2 Tim. 2:26).

The calling of the Church to return to soberness and of course to be vigilant is in effect until the last hour, however, the Lord is nigh, Saint Paul warns us (Phil. 4:5) and advises us: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil.4:8).

Let us hear, my dear ones the voice of Paul and of the Holy Fathers; "the Lord is nigh", "Christ in His love hastens to His sufferings, He consents to be hung upon the Tree, that He may save mankind" (Matins, Troparion 2).

Let us say along with the hymnographer: "let us fear the punishment of the fig tree, withered because it was unfruitful; and let us bring worthy fruits of repentance unto

Christ, who grants us His great mercy” (Aposticha idiomelo 3).

Have a blessed week of the Passions of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and a Happy Easter. Amen.”

From Secretariat-General

PALM SUNDAY (2021)

On Palm Sunday, 12/25 April 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the triumphant entry of the Lord in Jerusalem after the Resurrection of Lazarus, when the children of the Jews were crying out loud, “Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord” and had their garments lain on the streets along with palm tree branches to welcome Him.

In honour and commemoration of this event, and for the glory of God, Great Vespers was held at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as “Paressia” on Saturday afternoon, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. The Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning was officiated by His Beatitude with the co-celebration of their Eminences: Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, as well as Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and the Patriarchal School Students, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and more faithful this year, after the lifting of the strict covid-19 restrictions. However, there were no pilgrims.

After the Divine Liturgy there was a litany three times around the Sacred Edicule and then around the shrines.

At the end of the Service, the whole congregation returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters where His Beatitude wished everybody a Happy Easter.

From Secretariat-General

PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION FROM BETHPHAGE TO THE LIONS' GATE

On Saturday afternoon, 11/24 April 2021, the procession of Palm Sunday was held in commemoration of the triumphant entry of the Lord in Jerusalem, when the children of the Hebrews welcomed Him crying out loud: "Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord".

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem blessed the palm tree branches at the Holy Monastery of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives and appointed His Eminence Philoumenos of Pella to lead the Procession. Approximately 200 people participated in the procession due to covid-19 restrictions, and followed the route from Bethphage to the Monastery of the Ascension and downhill to Gethsemane, at the changing of the Apollytikion of Lazarus. The procession concluded at the Monastery of Saint Anna by the Lion's Gate.

From Secretariat-General

LAZARUS' SATURDAY IN BETHANY

On Saturday 11/24 April 2021, which is Lazarus' Saturday according to the Triodion, the commemoration of the resurrection of the Lord's friend Lazarus, who was dead for four days, was celebrated by the Patriarchate at the Holy Monastery of Martha and Mary.

On this day the Church as a whole and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates the narrative according to Saint John the Evangelist; the Lord came from the desert in Bethany and was welcomed by Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary, we went to his tomb and resurrected him saying "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11: 43).

This event, which "signifies the common resurrection" was celebrated on Friday afternoon with Vespers, by the ministering Archimandrite Epiphanius, and on Saturday morning with the Divine Liturgy which was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences; Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, and Arab-speaking Priests, at the chanting of Archimandrite Eusevios and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and a few faithful. There were no pilgrims due to the continuing covid-19 restrictions.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John 11:25-27).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

Having completed the forty days that profit to our soul, we are gathered today by the Grace of the Holy Spirit to the historic biblical town of Bethany, Lazarus' hometown, in order to celebrate his rising from the dead by his friend and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

This event, Lazarus' rising from the dead, was written in detail by Saint John the Evangelist. And this was done so that it would be believed that Jesus is the Son of God and God and that He was risen, and also that there will be a resurrection of the dead. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25-26) the Lord says.

Interpreting the Lord's words, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "Fruit and honour of the faith in Christ is the eternal life, and there is no other way for a man's soul to acquire this. For if we are all risen through Christ, but this life is true, to live eternally in beatitude". And in more detail, eternal life is the fruit and the reward of faith in Christ, and there is no other way for a man's soul to acquire this fruit. Even if we are risen because of Christ. This is the true life, to live in eternal beatitude.

And when Jesus heard that Lazarus was gravely ill, He said to his sisters, Martha and Mary that this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby (ref. John 11:1-4). "Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it" (John 11:38). "Jesus cried with a loud

voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes" (John 11:43-44).

Jesus did these things in front of the Disciples to introduce them to the faith of the resurrection from the dead and prepare them for that, as the hymnographer says: "O Lord, Thy voice destroyed the dominion of hell, and the word of Thy power raised from the tomb him that had been four days dead; and Lazarus became the saving first-fruits of the regeneration of the world". And elsewhere, "Lord, wishing to give to Thy Disciples the assurance of Thy Resurrection from the dead, Thou hast come to the tomb of Lazarus and called him by name. Then was hell despoiled, and it released the one that had been four days dead, as he called upon Thee: O blessed Lord, glory to Thee" (Lazarus Vespers, stichera 5,6).

It is a true fact that Christ worked marvels during His life on earth (Acts 6:8), namely miracles, such as the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, (Mark 5:22-43), and the resurrection of the woman's only son in the town Nain (Luke 7:11-17), in order to reveal the glory of Jesus Christ and the long-ago hidden mystery of the divine providence which was enacted in Him.

Lazarus' resurrection in this biblical town of Bethany a little while before Christ's Passion on the Cross was not only a "wondrous sign" revealing the glory of the Son and Word of God, but also "the salvation preface of the regeneration", namely the common resurrection of all people in the human body of Jesus Christ, as well as the assurance and reply to His disciples' question: "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:27-28).

According to Zigavinos, "Christ calls regeneration the raising

from the dead as a new life", meaning a second birth and reshaping and regeneration of the creation. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20-21) Saint Paul preaches.

Behold, therefore, my dear brethren, why the raising from the dead of the four-days-dead Lazarus is the salvation preface of the common resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And the common resurrection of Christ does not only refer to the victory over death and corruption of sin, but also to the day and time of judgement according to the witness of Saint John the Evangelist, "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).

We, my dear brethren, having completed the forty days that profit to our soul, and drawing nigh to the Holy Week of the Passions and the three-day burial of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us say along with the hymnographer: "by the intercessions of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, deem us worthy to become viewers of Your Cross and Passion, O Lord, and of the luminous queen of days, the day of Your Resurrection, O friend of man".

Many happy returns and Happy Easter!"

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a Procession to Lazarus' tomb under the lead of His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, where the Gospel narrative of Lazarus' resurrection according to Saint John was read.

Finally, the Episcopal Entourage visited the Bethany Council and then the Elder Abbess Eupraxia hosted a meal for the Patriarchal Entourage at the Hegoumeneion.

LAZARUS' SATURDAY ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

On Saturday 11/24 April 2021, Lazarus' rising from the dead was celebrated by the Patriarchate on the Mount of Olives, at the place of the Lord's Ascension into the heavens, which is located opposite the town of Bethany.

On this feast, the Church commemorates the fact that "signifying the common resurrection", the Lord resurrected His friend Lazarus.

For this feast, Vespers was held on Friday afternoon after the sanctification of the Holy Altar at the outdoor area of the Ascension, officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and the Priests of Saint James Cathedral. The Service of the Small Compline was read after Vespers and there was a procession to the Monastery of the Men of Galilee (Galili Viri) where the Episcopal entourage was welcomed by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and the Hegoumen Archimandrite Anthimos. There the 1st Matins Gospel was read.

Shortly after the Gospel reading the procession returned to the Shrine to complete the reading of the Small Compline and at the end of the service, all congregation was offered a reception at the Holy Monastery of the Ascension by Monk Achilios.

On the morning of the feast, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Shrine led again by His Eminence Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Arab-speaking Priests, at the presence of Nuns and local faithful, without any pilgrims due to the covid-19 restrictions.

After the Divine Liturgy, the congregation was offered a reception by the Caretaker of the Monastery opposite the Shrine, Monk Achilios.

From Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY IN EIN KAREM

On Sunday morning, 5/18 April 2021, of the 5th Sunday of Lent, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Monastery of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist in Ein Karem, which is now adjacent to West Jerusalem, near the Jewish Hospital Hadassa.

This Monastery of Saint John the Baptist was built a long time ago, while the Church in it was built during the Office of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Cyril, around AD 1864. This area is known from the Gospel as “a Judean town in the hill country” where the Mother of God went “in haste and greeted Elizabeth” (Luke 1:39-50), and where “the greatest man born of a woman”, Saint John the Forerunner, was born.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences;

Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Fathers, the Head of the Russian Community of the Patriarchate Fr Nikolaos Koulinisky, and Archdeacon Mark. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, members of the Greek-speaking and Russian-speaking Communities of Jerusalem.

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

“But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be a servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

Today, the fifth Sunday of Lent, our Holy Church commemorates Saint Mary of Egypt, who became an example of humility and repentance for those who wish to be free from the bondage of the passions and sin, and especially from the carnal passions. “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mark 2:17) the Lord says.

These words of the Lord refer to the man who was created according to the image and likeness of God, and he is the grandeur of the logical creation, of the creation of the world.

As a gift of God, repentance gives the sinner the opportunity to come “to the knowledge of the truth” (2Tim. 2:24), namely

to be guided to the full and correct knowledge of the truth, by which his salvation in Christ is achieved. According to Saint John of the Ladder, "repentance means the renewal of baptism. Repentance means an agreement with God for a new life. And the repentant is a buyer of humility".

In other words, repentance predisposes humility, of which Christ became an example, as Saint Paul preaches by saying: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name" (Philip. 2:8-9).

Moreover, Christ Himself orders us: "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be a servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Commenting on this phrase of the Lord, Saint Theophylaktos says: "The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many, which is greater than to minister; for when one does not only minister but also dies for the one he serves, what is greater than that or more marvellous? However, this ministry and condensation [of Christ] became glory and elevation for Him and for all". And Saint Chrysostom says: "Because [Christ] humbled Himself, all creation was able to know Him".

Sin, namely the sickness of both soul and body, accompanies man throughout his life on earth, as King-Prophet David confesses: "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 51:3). And this, because again according to David: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5).

Likewise, the infinite compassion and mercy of God "from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him" (Psalm 103:17) according to the psalmist. "And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation" (Luke 1:50) according to the testimony of Saint Luke the Evangelist. In

other words, my dear brethren, God looks in favour and mercy upon those who turn to Him in fear and reverence, and with a repentant and humble heart.

Precisely this favour and mercy of God did Saint Mary receive when she came to herself and decided to change her life and invoke God's mercy through her repentance. Therefore, the hymnographer says: "The power of Thy Cross, O Christ, has worked wonders, for even the woman who was once a harlot chose to follow the ascetic way. Casting aside her weakness, bravely she opposed the devil; and having gained the prize of victory, she intercedes for our souls" (Vespers Sticheron).

Indeed, through repentance and of course, the power of the Sacred Cross, Saint Mary achieved the cleansing of her heart and the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in that heart, according to the words of David: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). "Right spirit in us, is not the one that gives us life, but the Spirit of God. This is 'within', namely in the very heart of the soul and wills to renew us" Isychios of Jerusalem interprets. According to Origen, "at first the clean heart is formed, then immediately the Spirit is renewed within it".

Behold, therefore, why repentance is the renewal of baptism and an agreement with God for a new life. Let us hear Saint Paul saying: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:27-28). And in more detail, Christ will appear a second time, without carrying the sins of others. And He will appear then to those who are waiting for Him in hope and pain, in order to save them.

It is made clear that the source of repentance is humility, and the source of humility is the Life-giving Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. This path which leads to the source of

humility, repentance and the power of the Life-giving Cross was followed and trod, both in words and actions, by today's honoured Saint Mary of Egypt, who became an example of the redeeming repentance. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24), Saint Paul preaches.

As for us, my dear Brethren, let us entreat the Mother of God along with the hymnographer and say: "All-pure Lady, who drivest off the assaults of the harsh calamity, give us help through thine intercessions" (Matins, Ode 3, Theotokion). And you, all-lauded Mary, as you stand in boldness before Christ, intercede for the salvation of our souls".

Many happy returns and blessed the remaining of Great Lent!"

After the Divine Liturgy, the good keeper of the Monastery Monk Hariton hosted a reception for His Beatitude, His Entourage and the congregation.

From Secretariat-General

THE SERVICE OF THE AKATHIST HYMN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday afternoon, 3/16 April 2021 the Service of the Akathist with the four parts of the Salutations to our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Hymn was recited during the Service of the Small Compline with the Canon of the Akathist.

The 1st stasis was recited by the officiating the Service, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, the 2nd by His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, the 3rd by Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos and the 4th by Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon on the right and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the left with the assistance of the Patriarchal School Students.

The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, members of the Consulate and quite a few Monks, Nuns and laity.

From Secretariat-General