

# **THE SERVICE OF THE GREAT CANON OF SAINT ANDREW AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Wednesday 1/14 April 2021, on the 5<sup>th</sup> week of Lent, at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen along with the Service of the Small compline the Great Canon of Saint Andrew Archbishop of Crete was read, led by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the co-prayer of the Brotherhood Fathers. The chanting was delivered by the Byzantine Choir Leader of the Church Archimandrite Eusevios and the Typikon Keeper Archimandrite Alexios.

The Great Canon was also chanted at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, led by His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, under the chanting of Hierodeacon Simeon, Mr Gotsopoulos and the Patriarchal School Students.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY ON MOUNT TABOR**

On Sunday 29 March/11 April 2021, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of the

Lord on Mount Tabor, with the welcoming of the Hegoumen Archimandrite Ilarion and the Nuns under his obedience.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away on the ground, and wallowed foaming...And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:17-24).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

Today, on the fourth Sunday of the Great Lent, our Holy Church commemorates Saint John, the author of the Ladder and we read the Gospel narrative regarding the healing of a son, whose father asks for help for his disbelief. Moreover, Saint Mark, the Evangelist does not omit that Christ was preaching to His disciples, telling them that the Son of man will be “delivered into the hands of irreverent men, and they shall kill him; and after that, he is killed, he shall rise the third day” (Mark 9:31).

In His infinite mercy, Christ heals the “son who hath a dumb spirit”, meaning that He liberates him from the bondage and the tormenting captivity of the devil. “ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32) the Lord says. And we wonder, “what is the truth” (John 18:38). Christ is the truth, according to His own testimony: “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). And how is the truth

known? Through faith; What faith? That Christ is the Son of God (John 1:34), Who said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:13).

It was precisely to this faith to the Son of God, the faith which calls man to repentance, and which has the power to "make all things possible to those who believe" (Mark 9:23) that the father of the possessed son was called.

To the contradictory cry of the father, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24), the interpreters of this verse, Victor of Antioch and Cyril of Jerusalem distinguish two kinds of faith. Father Victor says: "if he believed, how did he say, help me in my disbelief? Faith is different. The first introductory, the second perfect. Beginning to believe, the father entreated the Lord Who had the power to add what was missing. Likewise, the disciples were saying to the Lord, "Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5).

And Cyril of Jerusalem says; "The name of faith is one, but divided into two. For there is one kind of faith, the dogmatic, which has the consent of the soul; and it is beneficial to the soul, as the Lord says: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

The second kind of faith is that related to the grace which is granted by Christ. "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:8-9). This faith, which is granted by the grace of the Spirit, is dogmatic and active for the sake of man. And the one who has this faith "shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt. 17:20).

This faith “which is active for the sake of man” did today’s honoured Saint John of the Ladder receive. According to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, this faith, which is given by our Orthodox Church and established by the Holy Bible, is we called to acquire and keep, my dear brethren.

Our Holy Apostolic Church is guiding us to this faith, which is active and illumines the soul, through fasting, abstinence from the passions, repentance and prayer during the Great Lent, as Saint Paul says: “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Eph. 6:16).

Let us entreat the Most Holy Theotokos that by Her intercessions and the supplications of our Holy Father John of the Ladder, we may be worthy to venerate the Holy Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was transfigured on Mount Tabor, and reach His Holy Resurrection. Amen! Many happy returns!”

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE FEAST OF THE ADORATION OF  
THE SACRED AND LIFE-GIVING  
CROSS AT THE MONASTERY OF THE**

# CROSS

On Sunday 29 March /11 April 2021, the 4th Sunday of Great Lent and commemoration day of Saint John of the author of the Ladder, the Feast of the Adoration of the Sacred Cross was celebrated by transference at the Holy Monastery of the Cross in West Jerusalem, near the Jewish Knesset.

The feast was celebrated in this Monastery due to the tradition that this is the place where Lot planted the wood on which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified.

Vespers on Saturday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning were officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, with the co-celebration of the Hegoumen of the Monastery His Eminence Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, Priest Nectarios and Hierodeacon Simeon, at the presence of the Greek Consul Mrs Zaharioudaki and members of the Greek Community in Jerusalem along with members of the Arab-speaking flock.

After the Divine Liturgy the Hegoumen of the Monastery, Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella hosted a reception for the congregation and a meal at lunchtime for the Episcopal Entourage and others.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

# OF THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, 25 March/7 April 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Annunciation of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos in the city of Nazareth, at the holy shrine where this event took place.

On this feast, the whole Church and especially the Church of Jerusalem in joy and gratitude towards God, commemorates according to Saint Luke the Evangelist (Ch. 1:26-36), that Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to the Virgin Mary and announced that She was going to conceive by the Holy Spirit and bear in the flesh His Only Begotten Son. With Mariam's reply, "behold the maiden of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to Thy word", the Bodiless was made flesh, He became incarnate, for the sake of the rebirth, renovation and salvation of the humankind from the corruption of death.

This feast was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants their Eminences: Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Arab-speaking Priests, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Simeon. The chanting was delivered by the choirs of Nazareth and Acre and the service was attended by as many faithful as possible within the covid-19 restrictions, and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day" (Psalm 95:1-2), Prophet-King David

chants.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

“Today there is the true joy and gleefulness of the whole world,” Saint John Damascene says, praising the Annunciation to the Theotokos by Archangel Gabriel, in the holy place where the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all to celebrate in Eucharist the annunciation of the “salvation of God”, the joyful message of the incarnation of God the Word by the pure flesh of the Ever-Virgin Mary in the city of Nazareth.

“Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women” (Luke 1:28) the Archangel Gabriel exclaimed. The interpreters of Evangelist Luke’s testimony on this say: “because God told Eve she was going to bear children in sorrows, Eva’s sorrow is dispelled through this joy”. “Through ‘Hail’, Christ came to dispel the sorrow”. “He called her ‘full of grace’, as she was granted the grace beyond logic”. And “because the snake brought Eve the sorrow, rejoice, because the Lord is with Thee”. “One should know that at the time of the annunciation the Virgin conceived immediately paradoxically”.

This great and paradoxical mystery of the Virgin Mary’s conception is preached by Saint John the Theologian in his Gospel, saying: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1), and “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Interpreting these words, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: “The Evangelist appropriately said “and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). So, when you realise that this means two things, the dweller and the one in whom He dwells, then you will not think that He [the Word] was turned into flesh, but rather that He

dwelt in the flesh, using His own body as a temple, which He received from the Holy Virgin. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9), as Saint Paul says.

This theological truth is also testified by Saint John Damascene, referring to the Prophet Isaiah's words: "Rejoice O Thou in whom dwelt in the flesh the One who told Isaiah: "I am God at first, and after these" (Isaiah 44:6 in Septuagint). Again, Saint John Damascene says: "We preach the Holy Virgin as Theotokos especially and truly...and we call her by that name. This name encompasses the whole mystery of the providence. For if the one who bears is Theotokos (Mother of God), perfect God is the One born from her and perfect man".

The perfect God and perfect man Who was born from the Virgin is no other than the Son of God, as foretold by the Prophet Isaiah, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). "Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day" (Psalm 95:2) the psalmist proclaims. And "the salvation of God the Father" is "the joy that has been announced to us with the Nativity of Jesus Christ" by the Virgin Mary.

The annunciation of this joy which is ceaseless until the end of time, and of the world, is the Church's confession of the unspeakable mystery of the hypostatic union of the divine with the human nature through the Holy Spirit, in Virgin Mary; "In this, without alteration union, we confess the Holy Virgin to be the Mother of God [Theotokos], for the fact that God the Word was made incarnate and became man through her conception, to unite Himself with the temple He received from her [the human body]", the established Holy Church Fathers teach.

This incomprehensible mystery of God the Word's incarnation by the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary refers to the whole humankind, as Saint Luke the Evangelist says, calling upon Prophet Isaiah: "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6, Isaiah 40:5).



Interpreting this verse, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "In these, the word 'flesh' refers to a perfect man, and this should be understood by all people. In this manner, every flesh shall see the salvation of God. Not only Israel but every flesh. For the Saviour and Lord of all, neither has His kindness within limits nor did He save only one nation; rather, He included everything under the sun". This very fact is chanted by David, Saint Cyril continues, by saying: "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name" (Psalm 86:9).

Through the Annunciation of Theotokos Mary "The Lord hath made known his salvation: His righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen" (Psalm 98:2). This knowledge of the salvation of the Lord and the revealing of His righteousness, through the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, is celebrated by the Church of Christ and especially the Church of the Martyrdom of the Cross and Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Christ. Therefore, along with Saint John Damascene, it says: "Rejoice, Thou who art full of grace, for none other than you has received by God such a name, nor has any other received such a glory".

"And prolong your mercy, Most Pure Lady, to those who know you, and look favourably upon your servants and the works of your hands, and guide everybody to the path of peace, for the eyes of all people are turned in hope to you, and we have received your conciliation and intercession to your Son and God, to who belongs all glory and the might, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit of the same nature, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen."

The Liturgy was followed by a procession and concluded with a meal by Metropolitan Kyriakos. There, His Beatitude addressed all present as follows:

"Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Your Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth,

Your Excellency President of the Church Council Mr Basim,

and reverend members,

Dear Associates,

The Feast of the Annunciation of the Ever-Virgin Theotokos Mary in this holy place announces to us people the infinite love and philanthropy of God.

The Holy Church of Jerusalem which was the first to receive this Annunciation of Archangel Gabriel's joyous message: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28), is the true eye-and-ear witness of this universal and historic event which refers to the chapter of the salvation of the humankind.

This historic event of the Annunciation of the people's salvation is testified throughout the centuries by the unceasing presence of the "noble remnant" (Romans 11:5) of Christians in the Holy Land and in Nazareth.

The Apostolic and Patriarchal institution of the Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches, has become the natural and spiritual ark of the safeguarding and preservation of the Christian Rum Orthodox identity and tradition of old, for the noble remnant of Christians who live here. This is clearly depicted by the holy worship and liturgic work of our Church, where there is a strong projection of the God of love, philanthropy and infinite mercy. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another" (John 13:34). "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44). "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you" (Luke 6:22).

This redeeming word of God's love is evangelized to all of us

today by the holy feast of the Annunciation of our Most-Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, "from whom Christ God, our Salvation hath assumed our nature, restoring it to Himself" (Vespers Glory; both now, end of service). Therefore, let us exclaim to the Theotokos; Rejoice, O Thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with Thee".

Many happy returns and Happy Easter!

Finally, we warmly thank all of you, especially His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth and His Excellency, the President of the Church Council, Mr Basim, and the Council members, for the Abrahamic spiritual and material hospitality offered to Us, the hospitality of love, peace and synergy. Amen."

For this feast, the Divine Liturgy was also celebrated at the Holy Shrine of the Theotokos' Tomb in Gethsemane, by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, and at the Holy Church of the Annunciation in the town Rafeidia, near Jacob's well, led by the Hegoumen of the community, Archimandrite Leontios.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE FEAST OF THE ADORATION OF  
THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING**

# CROSS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday 22 March/4 April 2021, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Great Lent, the whole Church and especially the Patriarchate of Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of the Veneration of the Precious Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Church has instituted this feast in the middle of fasting so that with the Holy Cross's adoration, the faithful are strengthened in their struggle towards the reception of Holy Easter. Due to this fact, this Sunday is known as the Sunday of the Adoration of the Cross.

The Feast was celebrated by the Patriarchate with Great Vespers on Saturday afternoon, according to the Status Quo order of "Parresias", led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-prayer of Archbishops and the co-celebration of Hieromonks and Hierodeacons, as the chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon.

On Sunday morning the Feast was celebrated as "Parresia" according to the Status Quo, however, the time was shifted to 10.30 a.m. this year, due to the celebration of Easter by the Roman Catholic Church.

The Divine Liturgy was officiated at the Holy Sepulchre by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with their Eminences' co-celebration; Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, and Deacons. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Gotsopoulos, as the Service was attended by faithful Christians and His Excellency the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a procession, three times around the Sacred Edicule and then around the Shrines. The feast concluded with the return to the Patriarchate Reception Hall, where His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“The Cross is a trophy of Christ; It always drives away the demons. Where are the idols and the futile killings of animals? Where are the temples and the fire of irreverence? All fire was extinguished and everything collapsed due to one Holy Blood. Therefore, the Cross is a mighty power, an invisible arrow, an immaterial medicine, a source of healing any pain, an embarrassing glory”, Saint John Damascene says.

Today, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent, we celebrate the Adoration of the Precious and Life-giving Cross, therefore with the order of “Parresia”, we celebrated the bloodless sacrifice at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the very place of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Saviour Christ.

“Today the word of the Prophet is fulfilled: for seeing we worship at the place on which Thy feet have stood, O Lord: and tasting from the Tree of salvation, we have been delivered from our sinful passions at the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Thou who alone lovest mankind” (Triodion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, Matins, Ode 3, Kathisma 1).

Indeed, the Cross of Christ, as the tree of salvation, became the mighty power through which God the Father granted us the freedom in Christ. “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1), Saint Paul orders.

Through the Cross, we were liberated from “the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21). For this reason, the hymnographer says that as You were willingly hung on the Cross, Christ, for my sake, do not renounce me from adoption, but grant me forgiveness of my transgressions through Your Cross.

The Precious Cross, or the icon of the Cross, is not just a simple symbol of the Christian faith, but rather the incarnation of the Divine righteousness, namely God's conciliation with all creation on the one hand; on the other, it is the pacification through Christ's Blood on the Cross, either between the people and God, and of the people with each other, or between the people and the heavenly hosts, as Saint Paul preaches: "And, having made peace through the blood of his [Christ's] cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col. 1:20).

Behold why our Holy Church, projects today in the middle of Great Lent, the joyous adoration of the Life-giving Cross.

As for us, let us say along with the hymnographer: "We mortals who died of old, through eating from the tree, are through Thy Cross restored to life, O merciful Lord. By its power, O loving Master, give us strength to pass through the season of abstinence with compunction, obedient to Thy will, and to see the day of Thy light-giving Resurrection" (Triodion, Friday of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week, Matins, Kathisma 1).

Many happy returns and Happy Easter!"

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE NAMEDAY OF HIS BEATITUDE**

# THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS III

On Saturday 14/27 March 2021, the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III was celebrated by transference as "Parresia" (Boldness) according to the Status Quo at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

In the afternoon of the previous day, after the reading of the ninth Hour at the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, the Patriarchal Entourage marched in Procession to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where Vespers was officiated in the Catholicon by His Beatitude, with Hagiotaphite Archbishops praying inside the Altar and the co-celebration of the Service was held by Hagiotaphite Hieromonks.

On Feast Day, the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom was officiated by His Beatitude at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences; Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Archbishops; Damascene of Yaffo, Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis and Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons. The chanting was delivered by the Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod Hierodeacon Simeon, the Patriarchal Representative in Acre-Ptolemais Reverend Archimandrite Philotheos and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, Monks, Nuns and members of the Greek Community of the Patriarchate's flock.

After the Divine Liturgy, there was a Doxology for the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs and the event of the celebration of His Beatitude's Name Day.

The Doxology was followed by the return to the Patriarchate Headquarters, where Geronda Secretary-General addressed His Beatitude as follows:

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

The commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs, who confessed the Name of Christ and were brutally tortured, suffering martyrdom at the glacier of the lake Sabastia of Pontus during the reign of Licinius in AD 320, projects the 9th March as a bright station of spiritual supply of courage and hope for the faithful, in order to continue the fasting and every other virtue in their course towards the experience of the Holy Pascha.

These Martyrs, who fought well and received the crown of victory are festively honoured by the whole Church today because they considered death as nought, and through death, they exchanged the earthly life with the unending eternal one. “They lost their souls, their lives for the sake of Christ and found it again in Him” (Matt. 10:39). They are more festively celebrated by the Mother of Churches and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood because Your Beatitude bears the name of one of them. Honouring these Saints today, and as a Martyr, the Church of Jerusalem offers its deep respect to Your Beatitude, the owned honour and the monastic and Hagiotaphite obedience in Christ. Following the Status Quo, we celebrated the Divine Eucharist with a Doxology at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Body and Blood of Christ were united, and by this power, there was intercession for the unity of faith and the communion in Christ in its bosom and among the Orthodox Churches of God. We firstly prayed for the health and stability of our Father and Shepherd. We asked God that He may “grant Your Beatitude to the holy Churches in peace, sound, righteous, healthy, in long life and keep the word of truth right”.

By the dwelling in us of the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth



from the divine Eucharist, we truly address Your Beatitude in this historic hall of the Patriarchate, remembering all things of good fame, zeal and tireless Pastoral care You have accomplished for our Patriarchate.

Initially, it is mentioned that Your Beatitude has made every effort so that the holy Shrines, which suffer unprecedented consequences in their long history due to the lack of pilgrims within the covid-19 pandemic, still function as places of worship with the keeping of all Liturgical Services according to the Status Quo, with few or more Monks, Nuns or local faithful Christians, after the agreement with the Health Authorities of each area of the Patriarchate's jurisdiction.

The unavoidably influenced by the pandemic spiritual and administrative communication has been conducted through the internet with the well-known by now "zoom", either for the resumption of the dialogue to strengthen the unity between the Orthodox Churches, or for the activation of issues of participation of the Patriarchate at the World Council of Churches or the Middle East Council of Churches, or for the meetings of the Heads of the Christian Churches in Jerusalem under the care of the Patriarchate, or for the operation of the Synodical institution, enabling thus the participation of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod who live in Greece and Jordan.

As far as the financial issue is concerned, yes, there have been delays in the payment of the monthly blessing of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, the clergy and teachers' salaries, as well as of other employees of the Patriarchate, mainly due to the pandemic, resulting in difficulties of money transactions by the banks, however, there have not in any case been any pay cuts nor layoffs. Relevant to this, we should mention in gratitude that the granted financial aid to Monks and Clergy by the Greek General Consulate in Jerusalem, through a noble source a few months ago, came like the dew of Hermon in the existing financial draught.

For the needs of the Holy Churches of our Rum-Orthodox Arab-speaking flock, our Patriarchate responded through the aid of donors, as in the case of the iconostasis and the icons of the Holy Church of Saints Constantine and Helen in Kufr Smea and of the Holy Church of the Dormition in Sahnin Community of Acre-Ptolemais area in northern Israel.

The care and persistence You showed from the beginning for the securing of the real estate of the Patriarchate continued with the recent payment of City Hall tax, known as "arnona" of 2.000.000 Nis, for the securing of Petra hotel by Jaffa Gate, which has unjustly been involved in the opaque illegal and catastrophic for the finances of the Patriarchate agreement of 2003.

All these, Your Beatitude, are recalled, not for boasting and rest, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14), but in order to strengthen the mindset of hope and cooperation among us as members of the honoured venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, and our cooperation, the members, with our Spiritual Head of Yours, as our Hegoumen, so that we may find ourselves keeping the advice of Saint Basil the Great, "to have the love of one another in our nature" and "to prefer the social and united than the schismatic and peculiar"(Speech 8, EPE 4, p.328). Acting thus, behaving thus, living thus, we become worthy and continuators of our ancestors who spent their lives in fights, deprivations and sacrifices in order to sustain Orthodoxy and the inheritance of the nation of the Byzantine Romans in the Holy Land, who also contributed in the liberation of our nation from the bitter slavery of the four hundred years, of which we celebrate the 200th anniversary.

Raising my glass to toast, Your Beatitude Father and Master, I wish You on behalf of the Brotherhood and the Holy and Sacred Synod, many happy returns, in peace, joy, stability, in full governmental power of the Holy Spirit, in order to guide the

vessel of the Church of Jerusalem and of the Brotherhood enlightened by the good works of the Gospel, to harbours of fair life and of salvation, for the praise of our blessed nation and the glory of our God in one Trinity. So be it.”

After His Eminence, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras addressed His Beatitude as follows:

“Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today’s celebration has special importance for all of us, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the pious flock, among them those serving in the Consulate General of Greece, as we honour the name day of the Primate of the Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches, His Holy Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

It is a great pleasure for me to attend this celebration for the first time since taking office in Jerusalem.

Your Beatitude, on this occasion, allow me, on behalf of the Greek State, to express to you the respect, love and gratitude of Greece for Your great pastoral work, for the important and national work of preserving and promoting the Holy Shrines to the Holy Land and for the defence and promotion of the universal values of Orthodoxy in it.

Through a series of Your initiatives, You have been promoting the restoration and promotion of the Holy Shrines of Christianity, while taking care of the maintenance of the Status Quo in the Holy Land and the spiritual guidance and prosperity of a flock that is undergoing significant trials.

Your devotion to these sacred duties, Your dedication to this multidimensional work, Your tireless efforts, Your insight and integrity, with which You carry out Your high mission, are recognized by all, establishing the Patriarchate of Jerusalem as a leading factor of peace, reconciliation and moderation, in a troubled region that still faces great challenges and where many declare their desire for a peaceful future, but few work honestly and effectively to achieve it.

The sincere disposition of concert, reconciliation, and tranquillity that You display and systematically cultivate, not only in Your relations with other doctrines and other religions, in the particular environment of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, but also in the context of the wider effort of reconciliation and peace-making in this multi-tested area, steels the moral stature and prestige of our Patriarchate, making it a factor of moderation and stability, in an era of liquidity, instability and reorganization that seem to favour fanaticism, intolerance and controversy.

It is certain that the Holy Institution draws strength from the long history and tradition, from the unity, the deep faith and devotion of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and from its leadership, which with conscious knowledge and perception of the circumstances, with vigour and determination, cares for the present and its future.

Let me address to You our most sincere and heartfelt wishes for health, longevity and support from the Lord so that You can continue to carry out Your high mission.

I would also like to assure You and the members of the Brotherhood that our solidarity and support to our Patriarchate, to the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and to You personally is and remains complete and essential, and to express our recognition and admiration for the significant work performed here, as well as for the devotion of the Members of the Brotherhood for the protection, with zeal and

self-denial, of the Holy Shrines, which we encounter in all our visits here and which is particularly moving, especially when it is encountered in the aftermath of the current infectious disease. On this occasion, let me express our gratitude for the unparalleled hospitality we have received during our visits here.

Your Beatitude,

The great contribution of the Patriarchate and You personally to Orthodoxy and Hellenism, as a long-term custodian of a valuable religious and historical tradition, is widely known. Therefore, for Greece, the defence of the Institution of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, its rights and entitlements, is a very important priority, as recently emphasized by His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of our country, Mr Nikolaos Dendias.

The Greek State and the Greek faithful surround with love and devotion Your work and the work of the Holy Fathers and we pray that You may have health, strength, and longevity for the good of the Patriarchate, the Brotherhood, Your Rum Orthodox Flock, the uninterrupted Orthodox Matyria (testimony) in the Holy Land and for the peace in the area.

Many happy and blessed returns!"

His Beatitude thanked all who addressed Him with the following:

"We are not going to admire only one, not even only two...but forty men, who have shown one soul in separate bodies, in one accord and unity of faith, one endurance in the sufferings and boldness for the truth," Saint Basil says, praising the Forty Martyrs.

Your Excellency, Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

“O Lord of hosts, who is like unto Thee? Mighty art Thou, O Lord, and Thy truth is round about Thee” (Psalm 88:8) the Holy Church of Christ cries out loud through the psalmist, on the sacred commemoration of the godly chorea of the Holy Forty Martyrs, who suffered their martyrdom in the city of Sebastia.

These Forty Martyrs, as if having one soul in separate bodies, “courageously entered the water of the lake, and while being contracted by the cold, sent up a song unto the Lord: Be not wroth with us in the rivers O Lord; be not wroth with us in the rivers O Friend of man. Lighten the burden and the bitterness of the air; for with our own blood have our feet been dyed, and Thou, O God, hast led us into Thine everlasting tabernacles, that the bosom of the Patriarch Abraham may warm us” (Minaion, March 9, Matins, Praises Troparion of 2nd Tone), their hymnographer exclaims.

The Holy Forty Martyrs said to the Lord as if having one mouth, “with our own blood have our feet been dyed”, following the true witness of Saint John the Theologian: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). In this faith in Christ did the holy Martyrs see the true light, “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Phil. 4:7) and the “unspeakable joy” (1 Peter 1:8), for these, they zealously sought the cleansing of their sins through their martyrs’ blood.

Today’s celebrated commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs and especially of their co-martyr Theophilos, as Our Mediocrity bears his name, is a blessed action by God. And this, because the Martyrs who turned the earth into heaven, became luminaries of the universe, namely preachers of the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the Cross, and His

Resurrection, saying along with Saint Paul: "in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (Phil. 1:20).

This distinctive characteristic is noted by Saint Basil the Great, by saying that the Holy Forty Martyrs "have shown one accord and unity of faith, one endurance in the sufferings and boldness for the truth".

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem, as an eye-and-ear witness of the death on the Cross and the three-day burial and Resurrection of our Lord, honouring the sacred commemoration of the Holy athletes and Martyrs, and especially of their co-martyr Theophilus, held the "mystical blessing", that is the great Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, officiated by Our Mediocrity, surrounded by the members of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, Archbishops, Priests and Hierodeacons, with the participation in prayer of noble Christians of our flock, glorifying thus the One who has glorified His Saints.

Moreover, we offered a Doxology to the Holy God in one Trinity for Our name day, with the celebration of the Holy athlete and Martyr Theophilus. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20), Saint Paul orders.

The celebrated commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs and especially of their co-martyr Theophilus in the liturgic time of the Church, does not only refer to Our Mediocrity, but especially and primarily to the Apostolic Patriarchal institution, through which it is shown that Christ "is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:17-18), "which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). The Holy Forty Martyrs became communicants and shared this very blood, the blood of Christ.

Amidst the current test of humanity by the deadly Corona disease, the honoured Holy Forty Martyrs “speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (1 Cor. 14:3). And this, because according to Saint Basil, “they are common guardians of the humankind, benign, care participants, prayer accomplices, mighty strong ambassadors, stars of the universe, flowers of the Churches”. “Theirs is the voice; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place” (Psalm 66:12).

The Holy Martyrs again talk to us about “the one mind and unity of the faith”, namely the unity of the local Orthodox Churches. “There was not one homeland for the Saints”, Saint Basil says, “for each one retreated to a different place... As for their human nation, it was different for each of them, while the spiritual [nation] was one for all. For their common Father is God, and all are brethren, not born from one man and one woman, but from the adoption of the Spirit they have been interlocked in the concord of love with one another”. In other words, theirs is the voice, “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

To this calling of the testimony of unity, peace and the love of the Gospel of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ we are called, my dear brethren, especially during this blessed period of the Great Lent, having the Holy Forty Martyrs helpers, along with their co-martyr Theophilos, and the Most Blessed Mother of God, the Ever-Virgin Mary. Let us entreat them, that in peace, humility and repentance, we may be granted the luminous Resurrection of our God and Saviour of our souls.

For these, we call upon all who prayed along with Us, and honoured Us in this commemoration of the Saints, to have strength from on high, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, patience, and every blessing from God, expressing also warm thanks to all who



addressed Us; Geronda Secretary-General, Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, representative of the Brotherly Church of Russia, who read the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Yaffo, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Yaffo, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the newly-established Beersheba Community, Reverend Father Farah Bandour, who spoke on behalf of Saint James' Cathedral, Reverend Archimandrite Philotheos, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Acre-Ptolemais, Reverend Archimandrite Niphon, on behalf of the Community of Remla, and all who attended this celebration.

To the health of all of you!"

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE 2ND STASIS OF THE AKATHIST AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Friday afternoon of the second week of Lent, 13/26 March 2021, after Vespers for the Name Day of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Stasis of the Akathist was held.

The Salutations were recited by His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, as His Beatitude participated in the

prayer. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos, as the Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, Monks and Nuns of the Patriarchate and members of the Greek Community.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **DOXOLOGY FOR THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY OF 25 MARCH 1821 AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Thursday, 12/25 March 2021, the Patriarchate held a Doxology at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 25 March 1821 Revolution.

The Doxology was offered as a thanksgiving to God for His strengthening of our Nation's struggle to be liberated from the four hundred years of slavery to the Ottoman Empire.

After the Doxology, there was a supplication for the repose of the souls of those who fought and gave their lives in this sacred fight, Chieftains, Generals, simple soldiers and national martyrs.

The Doxology was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Hieromonks and Hierodeacons, and the co-prayer of Monks and laity, members of the Church and the Greek Community, along with the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and members of the Consulate.

After the Doxology, at the Great Reception Hall of the Patriarchate, His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“You must guard your faith and consolidate it because when we took the arms, we said first in favour of faith and then in favour of the Homeland!” (From the speech of the Elder of Morias Theodoros Kolokotronis in Pnika, 13 November 1988).

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,  
Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Today’s Anniversary of March 25 is of particular importance, because this year 2021, marks two hundred years since the pinnacle of modern Greek history, that is, the beginning of the Greek Revolution of 1821.

The Revolution of 1821 is undoubtedly a bright milestone not only for the Greek but also for world history. And this, because as Theodoros Kolokortonis says, “When we decided to start the Revolution, we did not think about how many we were, nor that we do not have arms ... but the desire for our freedom fell on all of us like the rain, and our clergy and the leaders ... we all agreed on this goal and made the Revolution”.

The “desire of freedom”, namely the reason for the existence of freedom which is imprinted in the hearts and minds of the Greeks, is no other than the reason for the existence of freedom in Christ. “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1), Saint Paul preaches. This freedom in Christ was impossible to be kept under the power of darkness (Col. 1:13), the barbaric conquest and tyranny of the Ottomans.

We say this because the shaking off of the Ottoman yoke of

slavery was not a simple act of heroism and self-sacrifice, but rather an act of imitation of the martyrs of the love of Christ. "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Psalm 66:12).

The revolt of the fighters of Romiosyni was an act of primary motivation, that is, of class and commonwealth. This is also confirmed by the slogan of the national uprising phrased by the Elder of Morias, Theodoros Kolokotronis: "now our fight is for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the homeland", as well as by the great contribution of the Church with both its upper and lower rank clergy. Hegoumens and simple Monks of many Monasteries became prototypes of a holocaust. They sacrificed themselves watering the tree of freedom with their sacred blood. "Freedom and Romiosyni are twin brothers", the established poet Ioannis Ritsos says.

The Revolution of 1821 demonstrated the idiosyncrasy of the Greeks, which has been forged by the moral and spiritual values of the Greek-Christian frame of mind; a frame of mind that had endured insults and humiliation due to slavery for four centuries, and finally led to the libating blare of Rigas Feraios "freedom or death". As for the Church, which is the incarnation of the Greek-Christian frame of mind, it became "the centre and constituent of national life ... not as a power over the people and organization, but as an inner force and power, enlivening the national body, uniting its members through the common faith and coordinating its actions" according to the speech of memorable Metropolitan Dionysios of Kozani, on the contribution of the Church during the 1821 Revolution.

The 200th Anniversary of the National Rebirth, celebrated this year, should not be considered merely as a remarkable genealogical of historical memory, but rather as an inexhaustible source of enlightening power that illuminates the soul and mind of all who want to come to the knowledge of

the truth, or according to Paul, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:12).

Our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and We, according to Saint Paul's words: "as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor. 6:9-10), "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep" (Romans 13:11), went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where we rendered thanksgiving praise and Doxology, as we should, to the Holy Trinitarian God, on the commemoration of the Rebirth of our Noble Nation of the Rum Orthodox. We also prayed for the eternal repose in the land of the living of the souls of those who fought and gloriously fell for the country, in the sacred fights of the noble nation of the Rum Orthodox and suffered a martyr's death.

For these, let us raise Our glass in a toast and rightfully exclaim:

Long live 25 March 1821!

Long live the noble and Royal nation of the Rum Orthodox!

Long live Hellas!

Long live the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!"

The Consul General also delivered the following address:

"Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend Archbishops,

Reverend Fathers,

Dear Colleagues,

Dear Students,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today marks the 200th anniversary of the leading historical moment in the long course of our Nation, the proclamation of the Revolution of '21, which had as its happy occasion the founding of the modern Greek State and the rebirth of democracy in its cradle.

In every historical period, there is a pole, a historical event that marks it, and becomes a point of reference for all of us later. March 25, 1821, is this milestone in the history of Hellenism, the Balkans, Europe, because the Greeks made the heroic decision to rise up, alone against many, against the Ottoman tyranny and to claim Freedom with their blood.

It is, therefore, a special honour for the Consul General of the Motherland to address the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Hellenism of the Holy Land, on the occasion of the two hundredth anniversary of the Revolution of 1821, a struggle for altars and hearths, a reference point and symbol for the Greek Nation.

It was spring even two centuries ago when Hellenism took up the sacred arms to claim its freedom. This unsurpassed grandeur of the Greeks' ideal adored as a whole, the ordinary fighters and the Sailors, the Holy Clergy, the merchants and the scribes. "We all have this homeland together, both the wise and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the politicians and the military and the smallest people," wrote the voice of our collective conscience, General Makrygiannis.

The seeds of the Revolution first took root in areas far from present-day Greece, in Russia, and in the Balkans, where free Greeks were active. The course, however, was not easy. The martyrdom of Rigas and his collaborators from all parts of Hellenism: Ioannis Karatzas (31 years old, a scholar from Nicosia), Efstatios Argentis (31 years old, a merchant from Chios), Dimitrios Nikolidis (32 years old, a doctor from Ioannina), Antonios Koronios (27 years old, a merchant from Chios), Theocharis Georgios Tourountzias (22 years old, a

merchant from Siatista), Ioannis Emmanouil (24 years old, a medical student from Kastoria) and Panagiotis Emmanouil (22 years old, Ioannis' brother), in the Neboisa Tower, a riverside fortress in Belgrade, [their martyrdom] inspired the founding of the Friendly Society in Odessa, which spread the seeds of the Revolution.

The vision and expectations of the pioneers of the Revolution, the known and unknown heroes who sacrificed their lives under conditions unimaginable to us today, inspired the enslaved Hellenism and all lovers of freedom around the world, creating the philhellenic movement which shocked Europe and America. It is worth mentioning the case of Haiti, which was the first country to officially recognize our Revolution, sending 100 volunteers and a shipment of 25 tons of coffee to Adamantios Korais to be sold in Paris and the profit to be used to buy weapons for the Revolution.

There are countless examples of heroism and sacrifice above duty during our National Uprising.

Let us consider indicatively the battle of the Hierolochites in the battle of Dragatsani, one of the most moving moments in Greek history, in February 1821, when the Hierolochites sacrificed themselves to one, always faithful to their oath. A valuable exhibit in the Historical Museum of Athens is the black uniform of a Hierolochitis of Dragatsani where the blood with which the fighter grafted the tree of our freedom has been imprinted.

So, we rightly repeat for them the lyrics of our great poet Andreas Kalvos:

*“Ας μη βρέξει ποτέ το σύννεφον*

*και ο άνεμος σκληρός,*

*ας μην σκορπίσει*

*το χώμα το μακάριον*

*που σας σκεπάζει”*

Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend Archbishops,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2021 revives our hopes for the decomposition of the current infectious disease. At the same time, for us Greeks everywhere, it is charged with an additional powerful historical symbolism.

The 200th anniversary of our National Rebirth invites us to reflect on the successes and challenges of our National life, and to arm ourselves with courage and perseverance to respond to modern challenges based on the legacy bequeathed to us by the struggle of heroic protagonists of our freedom.

Our National Anniversaries are not just an opportunity to celebrate the past, but they are key points that bring back to our minds the events that forged and shaped the collective historical memory of Greeks everywhere. The vision and values that inspired our freedom fighters can only inspire and guide our action today. Values that acquire an additional sense of timeliness for Hellenism, which is called today as then to defend its national dignity and survival.

For the Holy Land, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, as an integral part of our Orthodox faith and Hellenism, has been and remains a point of reference, guardian of the moral and spiritual values of Greek and Orthodox witness (martyria) in the Holy Land as a source of life and hope.

Today's anniversary underscores the unwavering willingness of Greeks everywhere to uphold our freedom, independence and



national pride, knowing full well that the price of freedom is always high and that our country is blessed because there are always those who will willingly pay for this price.

With these thoughts, I invite everyone to exclaim;

Long live March 25, 1821!

Long live Greece!”

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# **SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

Sunday 8/21 March 2021 was celebrated as the Sunday of Orthodoxy by the Patriarchate, the victory of the restoration of the holy icons, as established by the Triodion of the Church according to the 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synod (AD 787) with the contribution of Empress Theodora, her son Mihail and of Patriarch Methodios of Constantinople.

## **1. Vespers**

This feast was celebrated by the Patriarchate as ‘Parresia’ (boldness) according to the Status Quo, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with Great Vespers on Saturday afternoon. The ninth hour was read at the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen before the Patriarchal Entourage was welcomed at the Holy Deposition of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with the incense offering procedure. This was followed by the veneration of the All-holy Tomb and the Horrendous Golgotha by the Archbishops and the members of the Holy Synod, the incense

offering around the Shrines, the Great Entrance and the Blessing of Bread. The Service was led in prayer by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-prayer of the Archbishops in the Holy Altar, the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon on the right and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the left, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and a few Nuns due to covid-19 restrictions.

## 2. On the Feast Day

On Sunday of Orthodoxy, the Divine Liturgy was officiated at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences: Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Philoumenos of Pela and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Nectarios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon on the right and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the left, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and a few Nuns and faithful Christians.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a procession with the holy icons three times around the Sacred Edicule and then around the shrines and concluded with the reading of the Synodical memorial service in Greek and in Arabic of those who venerate the holy icons and the anathema of their opposers.

Bells tolling, the Patriarchal Entourage and the congregation returned to the Patriarchate Reception Hall, where His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“Celebrate, rejoice the people of Christ, seeing the Church shining by the form of the divine beauty; which God put upon

Himself as man, in order to save us," Saint Theodore of the Studion says. (Triodion, Sunday of Orthodoxy, Matins, Ode 7, Troparion 3).

Beloved Brethren,

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Noble Christians

Today the Holy Church of the Orthodox Christians celebrates the restoration of the holy icons by the memorable Sovereigns of Constantinople Mihail and Theodora his mother, along with the Holy Patriarch of Constantinople and Confessor Methodios.

This event of the restoration of the holy icons is a historic landmark in Church life. Because, after the passing of just over three centuries of the formation of the doctrine regarding the Divine Providence, which is the beyond nature union of the divine with the human nature in our Lord Jesus Christ, the weeds of Nestorianism sprang forth, along with their derivatives, Monophysitism and Monothelitism.

The icons depict the incarnation of God the Word in essence, as Saint Theodore of the Studion says: "The uncircumscribed Word of the Father became circumscribed, taking flesh from thee, O Theotokos, and He has restored the sullied image to its ancient glory, filling it with the divine beauty. This our salvation we confess in deed and word, and we depict in it the holy icons" (Kontakion of Sunday of Orthodoxy).

The restoration of the icons is a confession of our salvation in Christ, through Christ. The restoration, or rather the veneration of the holy icons does not refer to their material part, but to the depicted person or Biblical event; "We do not offer worship to the material thing. The honour of the icon is attributed to the prototype", Saint John Damascene teaches, referring to the words of the Great Church Father, Saint Basil.

In other words, the honour we offer to the icons is attributed to the person depicted, the prototype. This truth was proclaimed by the God-bearing Fathers of the Church in the Ecumenical Synod of Nice, where they decided that those who kiss the icon and honourably worship it receive sanctification. "Those of us who offer our worship only to God, also have the hope of receiving the sanctification from all those material things that are dedicated to Him, whether they are a divine type of the Holy Cross, the Holy Gospel, the sacred icons, or the sacred utensils, and we kiss and embrace them" (Mansi 13,269,309).

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). However, honourably, we also venerate all the created things through which God worked our salvation, as for example, the manger, the Cave, the place of the Crucifixion and of the three-day Burial and Resurrection, as well as everything that is dedicated to God. "Not for their nature, but because they are vessels of the Divine energy...and angels, and people and every material creation that has become a vessel of the Divine energy, and has served for my salvation, I respect and venerate for the Divine energy that exists in them" Saint John Damascene teaches in precision (PG. 94, 1353).

By the Divine Grace, surrounded by the reverend members of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, Archbishops, Hieromonks and Deacons, we have celebrated the great sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and held a procession with the holy icons and the Sacred Cross at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, proclaiming thus the redeeming glory of the impeccable Orthodox Faith. Moreover, we prayed before the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb for the unity of the Orthodox Churches and for the liberation of humanity from the deadly infectious covid-19 disease.

We wish you many happy returns and a blessed Easter. Amen."

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE FEAST OF SAINT THEODORE THE RECRUIT AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday of the 1<sup>st</sup> Week of Lent, 7/20 March 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the boiled wheat miracle by Saint Theodore the Recruit, at the Holy Monastery dedicated to him, which is located on the West side of the Patriarchate Headquarters towards the New Gate.

On this feast, the Church commemorates that Saint Theodore the Recruit appeared to Archbishop Eudoxios of Constantinople in a dream and advised him that the faithful Christians should eat boiled wheat, food used in his hometown Euhaita, in order to avoid being contaminated by the food that Julian the Transgressor had mixed with food offerings to idols. That way, the Christians were protected from sinning by eating contaminated food.

For this feast Vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning were officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, with co-celebrants the Hagiotaphite Archimandrites Mattheos and Kallistos, the Arab-speaking Priests Nectarios and George and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon, as the services were attended by faithful Christians of the Holy City.

During the Divine Liturgy, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited the Monastery for veneration.

His Beatitude, the Hagiotaphite Entourage and the congregation were offered a reception at the end of the Liturgy by the

Typikon Keeper and Hegoumen of the Monastery Archimandrite Alexios.

**From Secretariat-General**