

THE 15-YEAR ENTHRONEMENT ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS III

On Sunday morning, 9/22 November 2020, a Doxology was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the fifteen-year election and Enthronement anniversary of the Holy Primate of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

The Doxology was led by His Beatitude, and along with Him, the Archbishops of the Patriarchate, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Patriarchal Representatives and Hegoumens of the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate and Managers of its parishes, that were able to attend due to covid-19 restrictive measures.

The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras with his wife and child and members of the community in Jerusalem.

After the Doxology the Patriarchal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters, where Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Consantina was the first to address His Beatitude with the following address:

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

The Church of Jerusalem and the inextricably linked to it Hagiotaphite Brotherhood celebrate today a quite important and remarkable event, a joyful and exuberant event. This is the anniversary of the unanimous voting of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the representatives of the flock, for the election of Your Beatitude as the Shepherd of the Church of the Holy Land and Hegoumen of the Order of the Studios, and

the consequent ceremony of Your Enthronement and its recognition by all the Orthodox Churches and countries, where our Venerable Patriarchate holds its pastoral mission. This happened in A.D. 2005, after a painful ordeal that shook the foundations of the Church; it shook but did not destroy it, because the One Who founded it in the Holy Land led the Patriarchate back into refreshment.

This event secures the continuation of the unceasing Apostolic succession of the Church of Jerusalem, and the unity of its members for the smooth operation and fulfilment of its divine mission; for this reason, it was festively celebrated – in compromise of course with the covid-19 restrictive measures – at the most precious heirloom of our faith, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was celebrated with a Doxology to God, as a thanksgiving, because He led us back to refreshment and granted the Church Your Beatitude as its Patriarch and Shepherd. Having thanked God for this, and having prayed for Your health, stability and longevity, we returned to this historic hall of our holy “little house” as the memorable Patriarch Dositheos used to say, in order to wish and congratulate You up close, for all the good works You have accomplished through hardship and toil for our Patriarchate over these last fifteen years.

First of all, we recall that guided by the Ecclesiastical Tradition of the Fathers, You have guided the Hagiotaphite Fathers, Hegoumens of the Shrines and the Holy Monasteries, the clergy and the people to co-operate with the responsible Health Authorities of the governing state for the effective dealing with the fatal epidemic of covid-19 since the beginning of the year. Under this spirit, with the keeping of our Status Quo rights, the Liturgical Services were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. From the Holy Week Services, the Epitaph Service and the All-night Vigil of the Resurrection were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The others,

i.e. Palm Sunday, the Washing of the feet and the Service of Love were held at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, with the participation of the designated Priests and only a few faithful, but without any pilgrims, as no pilgrims have arrived in Israel since the beginning of the pandemic. The former full of pilgrims Holy City has been empty from pilgrims in its streets and pathways ever since. It is worth remembering that despite the pandemic, the Service of the Holy Light was held exactly according to the Status Quo. By special providence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Police Force of Israel, the Holy Light was transferred to Jaffa Gate by an Archbishop, from where it was received by the representatives of all Orthodox countries. The representatives of the Churches received the Holy Light at Ben Gurion airport, where they were secluded inside the landed planes of their countries. With the Patriarchate's actions, the Holy Light was transferred in the same day to its Communities in Jordan, the Palestinian areas and in Gaza.

For the relief of the financially weak people, due to the restrictive measures against the pandemic, Your Beatitude has ordered the distribution of packages of food by the Patriarchate to the neediest families in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem and in Ramallah and exempted from one year's rent the tenants of houses and shops that belong to the Patriarchate. The Fatherly and Pastoral support of Your Beatitude during the pandemic was shown to the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate with Your visits and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in them, along with Your Sermons, which were broadcast through the internet in the Greek, Arabic, English, Russian and Romanian languages.

Your Beatitude's attitude was unwavering in the case of claiming and safeguarding the Pilgrimage rights of our Patriarchate. This was made manifest over last year's Epiphany Feast in Bethlehem, when the Armenian Priests, continuing their decades-long provocative behaviour, prevented us from

the procedure of taking the Orthodox Icon of Epiphany down to the Holy Cave. Thanks to the persistence and guidance of Your Beatitude, the Hagiographite ministers of Bethlehem and those who came to their aid from Jerusalem, despite the physical violence they endured by the Armenians, managed to put the icon in the Cave, having first received the relevant order by President Abu Mazen. We still need to secure our right for this occasion with a special Presidential decree as well, so that it will not be disputed again in the future. A similar event happened over the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross on 14 September 2020, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Armenians tried to prevent us from our right to offer incense in the Altar of Saint Helen's chapel, as they have also done other times in the past. Finally, we performed our right, due to the persistence of Your Beatitude, who stood for more than one hour at the chapel with the Holy Cross placed on Your head, urging the Armenians to withdraw. This happened in the end, of fear of the Israeli Police force who was present video-filming the episode, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Vlioras. These rights of the Orthodox Patriarchate are supported by testimonies written in the pilgrimage codes that we keep, but also in the codes kept by the Custody of the Holy Land of the Franciscans, who supported us in this regard.

Along with the pilgrimage rights, Your Beatitude prioritized also the fortification of the land and building property rights of the Patriarchate, as many times they had been violated, either materially, or by court orders of greedy opportunists. These rights are supported efficiently by the property titles, firmania, veratia, e.t.c., kept in the Patriarchate Archives, for whose better arrangement, Your Beatitude has provided for a new building which is still under construction. For the Archive titles, by Your order and guidance, the Financial Committee and the Legal Advisors of the Patriarchate tirelessly fought in the courtrooms and willingly paid the necessary amounts and the court fees. A

recent example of this is the 2 million Shekels that were paid as a tax by the Patriarchate since the tenant of Petra Hotel by Jaffa Gate had not paid this amount. This was done to save the Patriarchate's property from its seizure by opaque and corrupt multi-year contracts, which were denounced by the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in the year 2005.

For the more effective operation of the pastoral mission of the Patriarchate, Your Beatitude has especially provided for the Theological or other studies of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, or young people of our flock, granting the relevant scholarships for them, especially in Greece and in Cyprus. By the appointing of new members of the Holy Synod, Your Beatitude has strengthened the Synodical ordinance of the Patriarchate. And by Your care, the renovation project of the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Sacristy is being promoted, with the funding of a reverend source.

All these encourage and strengthen us, Your Beatitude, both the old and the new Hagiotaphite Fathers, in order to stand by Your side and follow You, and also to fight in the good Hagiotaphite cause, for a dynamic Christian Rum-Orthodox testimony in the Holy Land, which will benefit many people.

Raising my glass to a toast, Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and of the whole Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, I wish You many happy returns, in health, stability, peace and joy, in governmental power and wisdom from on high, for the praise of our Venerable Patriarchate, of our blessed nation and for the Glory of our Trinitarian God."

This was followed by the addresses of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, His Excellency Mr Evangelos Vlioras, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, the Dean Priest of Saint James Cathedral Fr Charalambos Bandour and others.

His Beatitude thanked all with the following address:

“Your Excellency Consul General of Greece, Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Christians,

Noble pilgrims

“My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever” (Psalm 145:21).

The Holy Church of Christ in Jerusalem, which was sprouted from the rood of Jesse, and which was chosen by the Lord; “He hath desired it for His habitation” (Psalm 132:13), celebrates today the completion of fifteen years of the governing ministry of Our mediocrity, since Our establishment on the God-founded throne of Hieromartyr James the Brother of God and first ordained Hierarch of Jerusalem.

This sacred event has a special significance for the testimony of Christ’s truth all over the world by the Church, and for the pastoral accountability of its spiritual shepherds, as Saint Paul notes: “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:27-28).

According to the Canon of our Hagiotaphite tradition, we went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, accompanied by the reverend members of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, where we rendered a thanksgiving Doxology to our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; “to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:6).

Our fifteen-year enthronement anniversary, celebrated amidst the covid-19 pandemic, should be considered an anniversary of

renovation and guarantee of the apostolic succession throughout the centuries, which is followed by every Head of the Church of Jerusalem, having its beginning in the Only-Begotten Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, as Saint John, the Evangelist says: "In the beginning was the Word. The same was at the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

And according to the "Teachings of the Apostles", "the bishop who is the Head, as honoured by God, leads the clergy and rules over all people" (Teachings of the Apostles, B XXVII).

Hearkening to Saint Paul saying: "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1) and following the footsteps of Our Predecessors, We make every effort to the best of Our abilities, to safeguard Our unadulterated Apostolic tradition and healthy faith, as well as to accommodate the spiritual and material needs of the Christian flock which has been entrusted to Us. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1 Peter 5:2) Saint Peter orders. Moreover, we strive for the keeping of the biblical testimonies of our faith, namely the All-holy Shrines, which preach the incarnation of God the Word, His Passion on the Cross and His Resurrection.

Needless, again, to say, that the safeguarding of the indelible privileges and sovereign rights of the noble and royal nation of the 'Rum Orthodox' on the All-holy Shrines is a sacred duty of Our ab antique mission in the Holy Land. Therefore, we never cease raising our voice towards every direction, political and diplomatic, local and international organizations and governments, in order to make the established by international treaties multi-cultural and multi-religious Status Quo respectable, for both the Biblical Shrines and for the Holy City of Jerusalem, which is an

international Shrine in itself, as Prophet Isaiah says: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isaiah 62:1).

Being rooted and grounded in the love and faith of Christ, "my spirit is overwhelmed within me" (Psalm 143:4), working in clear consciousness (2 Tim. 1:3) for the prevention of the nesting schism in the bosom of Christ's body, which is the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. This, after all, was the mission of the Holy Apostles, who were established in the Church of Jerusalem, the preaching of reconciliation, as this is stated by Saint Paul: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

Through this enthronement celebration, We are called not to boast, but rather examine the work of our Patriarchal Office, according to Saint Paul's order: "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:4).

In this ministry, the mission of the martyr's throne of Saint James the Brother of God, we have as accomplices and companions the reverend and dearest Fathers and brothers Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Hieromonks, Priests, Hierodeacons and Monks, who are distinguished for their fervent zeal and God-pleasing self-sacrifice.

Let us pray to God and Father of lights and truth along with the psalmist: "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psalm 17:5), by the intercessions of our Most-Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and by the prayers of our Father among the Saints Nectarios of Pentapolis. May the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen all of us who

serve in the All-holy Shrines and shepherd our pious Christian flock.

For all these, we wish for all who prayed with Us and honoured Us with their presence in this Enthronement Anniversary, strength from on high, the grace of the Holy Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing from God, expressing also our gratitude for those who addressed Us; Geronda Secretary General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Russia, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Representative of the Holy Church of Romania, Reverend Archimandrite Ioannis, who conveyed the wishes of the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Charalambos Bandour, who spoke on behalf of Saint James Cathedral, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the Russian-speaking Community of Ber Sheva, Father Romanos, who conveyed the wishes and love of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, Mr Athanasios Abu Aeta, Mr Ode Issa and Nibel Baramsi, and all who participated in this celebration of the Enthronement Anniversary.”

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This event secures the continuation of the unceasing Apostolic succession of the Church of Jerusalem, and the unity of its members for the smooth operation and fulfilment of its divine mission; for this reason, it was festively celebrated – in compromise of course with the covid-19 restrictive measures – at the most precious heirloom of our faith, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was celebrated with a Doxology to God, as a thanksgiving, because He led us back to refreshment and granted the Church Your Beatitude as its Patriarch and Shepherd. Having thanked God for this, and having prayed for Your health, stability and longevity, we returned to this historic hall of our holy “little house” as the memorable Patriarch Dositheos used to say, in order to wish and congratulate You up close, for all the good works You have accomplished through hardship and toil for our Patriarchate over these last fifteen years.

First of all, we recall that guided by the Ecclesiastical

Tradition of the Fathers, You have guided the Hagiotaphite Fathers, Hegoumens of the Shrines and the Holy Monasteries, the clergy and the people to co-operate with the responsible Health Authorities of the governing state for the effective dealing with the fatal epidemic of covid-19 since the beginning of the year. Under this spirit, with the keeping of our Status Quo rights, the Liturgical Services were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. From the Holy Week Services, the Epitaph Service and the All-night Vigil of the Resurrection were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The others, i.e. Palm Sunday, the Washing of the feet and the Service of Love were held at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, with the participation of the designated Priests and only a few faithful, but without any pilgrims, as no pilgrims have arrived in Israel since the beginning of the pandemic. The former full of pilgrims Holy City has been empty from pilgrims in its streets and pathways ever since. It is worth remembering that despite the pandemic, the Service of the Holy Light was held exactly according to the Status Quo. By special providence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Police Force of Israel, the Holy Light was transferred to Jaffa Gate by an Archbishop, from where it was received by the representatives of all Orthodox countries. The representatives of the Churches received the Holy Light at Ben Gurion airport, where they were secluded inside the landed planes of their countries. With the Patriarchate's actions, the Holy Light was transferred in the same day to its Communities in Jordan, the Palestinian areas and in Gaza.

For the relief of the financially weak people, due to the restrictive measures against the pandemic, Your Beatitude has ordered the distribution of packages of food by the Patriarchate to the neediest families in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem and in Ramallah and exempted from one year's rent the tenants of houses and shops that belong to the Patriarchate. The Fatherly and Pastoral support of Your

Beatitude during the pandemic was shown to the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate with Your visits and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in them, along with Your Sermons, which were broadcast through the internet in the Greek, Arabic, English, Russian and Romanian languages.

Your Beatitude's attitude was unwavering in the case of claiming and safeguarding the Pilgrimage rights of our Patriarchate. This was made manifest over last year's Epiphany Feast in Bethlehem, when the Armenian Priests, continuing their decades-long provocative behaviour, prevented us from the procedure of taking the Orthodox Icon of Epiphany down to the Holy Cave. Thanks to the persistence and guidance of Your Beatitude, the Hagiotaphite ministers of Bethlehem and those who came to their aid from Jerusalem, despite the physical violence they endured by the Armenians, managed to put the icon in the Cave, having first received the relevant order by President Abu Mazen. We still need to secure our right for this occasion with a special Presidential decree as well, so that it will not be disputed again in the future. A similar event happened over the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross on 14 September 2020, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Armenians tried to prevent us from our right to offer incense in the Altar of Saint Helen's chapel, as they have also done other times in the past. Finally, we performed our right, due to the persistence of Your Beatitude, who stood for more than one hour at the chapel with the Holy Cross placed on Your head, urging the Armenians to withdraw. This happened in the end, of fear of the Israeli Police force who was present video-filming the episode, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Vlioras. These rights of the Orthodox Patriarchate are supported by testimonies written in the pilgrimage codes that we keep, but also in the codes kept by the Custody of the Holy Land of the Franciscans, who supported us in this regard.

Along with the pilgrimage rights, Your Beatitude prioritized

also the fortification of the land and building property rights of the Patriarchate, as many times they had been violated, either materially, or by court orders of greedy opportunists. These rights are supported efficiently by the property titles, firmania, veratia, e.t.c., kept in the Patriarchate Archives, for whose better arrangement, Your Beatitude has provided for a new building which is still under construction. For the Archive titles, by Your order and guidance, the Financial Committee and the Legal Advisors of the Patriarchate tirelessly fought in the courtrooms and willingly paid the necessary amounts and the court fees. A recent example of this is the 2 million Shekels that were paid as a tax by the Patriarchate since the tenant of Petra Hotel by Jaffa Gate had not paid this amount. This was done to save the Patriarchate's property from its seizure by opaque and corrupt multi-year contracts, which were denounced by the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in the year 2005.

For the more effective operation of the pastoral mission of the Patriarchate, Your Beatitude has especially provided for the Theological or other studies of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, or young people of our flock, granting the relevant scholarships for them, especially in Greece and in Cyprus. By the appointing of new members of the Holy Synod, Your Beatitude has strengthened the Synodical ordinance of the Patriarchate. And by Your care, the renovation project of the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Sacristy is being promoted, with the funding of a reverend source.

All these encourage and strengthen us, Your Beatitude, both the old and the new Hagiotaphite Fathers, in order to stand by Your side and follow You, and also to fight in the good Hagiotaphite cause, for a dynamic Christian Rum-Orthodox testimony in the Holy Land, which will benefit many people.

Raising my glass to a toast, Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and of the whole Hagiotaphite

Brotherhood, I wish You many happy returns, in health, stability, peace and joy, in governmental power and wisdom from on high, for the praise of our Venerable Patriarchate, of our blessed nation and for the Glory of our Trinitarian God.”

This was followed by the addresses of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, His Excellency Mr Evangelos Vlioras, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, the Dean Priest of Saint James Cathedral Fr Charalambos Bandour and others.

His Beatitude thanked all with the following address:

“Your Excellency Consul General of Greece, Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Christians,

Noble pilgrims

“My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever” (Psalm 145:21).

The Holy Church of Christ in Jerusalem, which was sprouted from the rood of Jesse, and which was chosen by the Lord;“ He hath desired it for His habitation” (Psalm 132:13), celebrates today the completion of fifteen years of the governing ministry of Our mediocrity, since Our establishment on the God-founded throne of Hieromartyr James the Brother of God and first ordained Hierarch of Jerusalem.

This sacred event has a special significance for the testimony of Christ’s truth all over the world by the Church, and for the pastoral accountability of its spiritual shepherds, as Saint Paul notes: “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you

overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:27-28).

According to the Canon of our Hagiotaphite tradition, we went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, accompanied by the reverend members of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, where we rendered a thanksgiving Doxology to our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; "to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:6).

Our fifteen-year enthronement anniversary, celebrated amidst the covid-19 pandemic, should be considered an anniversary of renovation and guarantee of the apostolic succession throughout the centuries, which is followed by every Head of the Church of Jerusalem, having its beginning in the Only-Begotten Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, as Saint John, the Evangelist says: "In the beginning was the Word. The same was at the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

And according to the "Teachings of the Apostles", "the bishop who is the Head, as honoured by God, leads the clergy and rules over all people" (Teachings of the Apostles, B XXVII).

Harkening to Saint Paul saying: "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1) and following the footsteps of Our Predecessors, We make every effort to the best of Our abilities, to safeguard Our unadulterated Apostolic tradition and healthy faith, as well as to accommodate the spiritual and material needs of the Christian flock which has been entrusted to Us. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1 Peter 5:2) Saint Peter orders. Moreover, we strive for the keeping of the biblical testimonies of our faith, namely the All-holy Shrines, which preach the incarnation of God the Word, His Passion on the Cross and His

Resurrection.

Needless, again, to say, that the safeguarding of the indelible privileges and sovereign rights of the noble and royal nation of the 'Rum Orthodox' on the All-holy Shrines is a sacred duty of Our ab antique mission in the Holy Land. Therefore, we never cease raising our voice towards every direction, political and diplomatic, local and international organizations and governments, in order to make the established by international treaties multi-cultural and multi-religious Status Quo respectable, for both the Biblical Shrines and for the Holy City of Jerusalem, which is an international Shrine in itself, as Prophet Isaiah says: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isaiah 62:1).

Being rooted and grounded in the love and faith of Christ, "my spirit is overwhelmed within me" (Psalm 143:4), working in clear consciousness (2 Tim. 1:3) for the prevention of the nesting schism in the bosom of Christ's body, which is the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. This, after all, was the mission of the Holy Apostles, who were established in the Church of Jerusalem, the preaching of reconciliation, as this is stated by Saint Paul: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

Through this enthronement celebration, We are called not to boast, but rather examine the work of our Patriarchal Office, according to Saint Paul's order: "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:4).

In this ministry, the mission of the martyr's throne of Saint James the Brother of God, we have as

accomplices and companions the reverend and dearest Fathers and brothers Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Hieromonks, Priests, Hierodeacons and Monks, who are distinguished for their fervent zeal and God-pleasing self-sacrifice.

Let us pray to God and Father of lights and truth along with the psalmist: "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psalm 17:5), by the intercessions of our Most-Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and by the prayers of our Father among the Saints Nectarios of Pentapolis. May the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen all of us who serve in the All-holy Shrines and shepherd our pious Christian flock.

For all these, we wish for all who prayed with Us and honoured Us with their presence in this Enthronement Anniversary, strength from on high, the grace of the Holy Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing from God, expressing also our gratitude for those who addressed Us; Geronda Secretary General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Russia, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Representative of the Holy Church of Romania, Reverend Archimandrite Ioannis, who conveyed the wishes of the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Charalambos Bandour, who spoke on behalf of Saint James Cathedral, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the Russian-speaking Community of Ber Sheva, Father Romanos, who conveyed the wishes and love of His Eminence

Metropolitan Hilarion, Mr Athanasios Abu Aeta, Mr Ode Issa and Nibel Baramsi, and all who participated in this celebration of the Enthronement Anniversary.”

At noon His Beatitude hosted a meal for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

From Secretariat-General On Sunday morning, 9/22 November 2020, a Doxology was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the fifteen-year election and Enthronement anniversary of the Holy Primate of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

The Doxology was led by His Beatitude, and along with Him, the Archbishops of the Patriarchate, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Patriarchal Representatives and Hegoumens of the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate and Managers of its parishes, that were able to attend due to covid-19 restrictive measures.

The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras with his wife and child and members of the community in Jerusalem.

After the Doxology the Patriarchal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters, where Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Consantina was the first to address His Beatitude with the following address:

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

The Church of Jerusalem and the inextricably linked to it Hagiotaphite Brotherhood celebrate today a quite important and remarkable event, a joyful and exuberant event. This is the anniversary of the unanimous voting of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the representatives of the flock, for the election of Your Beatitude as the Shepherd of the Church of the Holy Land and Hegoumen of the Order of the Studios, and the consequent ceremony of Your Enthronement and its recognition by all the Orthodox Churches and countries, where

our Venerable Patriarchate holds its pastoral mission. This happened in A.D. 2005, after a painful ordeal that shook the foundations of the Church; it shook but did not destroy it, because the One Who founded it in the Holy Land led the Patriarchate back into refreshment.

This event secures the continuation of the unceasing Apostolic succession of the Church of Jerusalem, and the unity of its members for the smooth operation and fulfilment of its divine mission; for this reason, it was festively celebrated – in compromise of course with the covid-19 restrictive measures – at the most precious heirloom of our faith, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was celebrated with a Doxology to God, as a thanksgiving, because He led us back to refreshment and granted the Church Your Beatitude as its Patriarch and Shepherd. Having thanked God for this, and having prayed for Your health, stability and longevity, we returned to this historic hall of our holy “little house” as the memorable Patriarch Dositheos used to say, in order to wish and congratulate You up close, for all the good works You have accomplished through hardship and toil for our Patriarchate over these last fifteen years.

First of all, we recall that guided by the Ecclesiastical Tradition of the Fathers, You have guided the Hagiotaphite Fathers, Hegoumens of the Shrines and the Holy Monasteries, the clergy and the people to co-operate with the responsible Health Authorities of the governing state for the effective dealing with the fatal epidemic of covid-19 since the beginning of the year. Under this spirit, with the keeping of our Status Quo rights, the Liturgical Services were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. From the Holy Week Services, the Epitaph Service and the All-night Vigil of the Resurrection were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The others, i.e. Palm Sunday, the Washing of the feet and the Service of Love were held at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine

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For the relief of the financially weak people, due to the restrictive measures against the pandemic, Your Beatitude has ordered the distribution of packages of food by the Patriarchate to the neediest families in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem and in Ramallah and exempted from one year's rent the tenants of houses and shops that belong to the Patriarchate. The Fatherly and Pastoral support of Your Beatitude during the pandemic was shown to the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate with Your visits and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in them, along with Your Sermons, which were broadcast through the internet in the Greek, Arabic, English, Russian and Romanian languages.

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Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Christians,

Noble pilgrims

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Our fifteen-year enthronement anniversary, celebrated amidst the covid-19 pandemic, should be considered an anniversary of renovation and guarantee of the apostolic succession

throughout the centuries, which is followed by every Head of the Church of Jerusalem, having its beginning in the Only-Begotten Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, as Saint John, the Evangelist says: "In the beginning was the Word. The same was at the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

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Hearkening to Saint Paul saying: "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1) and following the footsteps of Our Predecessors, We make every effort to the best of Our abilities, to safeguard Our unadulterated Apostolic tradition and healthy faith, as well as to accommodate the spiritual and material needs of the Christian flock which has been entrusted to Us. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1 Peter 5:2) Saint Peter orders. Moreover, we strive for the keeping of the biblical testimonies of our faith, namely the All-holy Shrines, which preach the incarnation of God the Word, His Passion on the Cross and His Resurrection.

Needless, again, to say, that the safeguarding of the indelible privileges and sovereign rights of the noble and royal nation of the 'Rum Orthodox' on the All-holy Shrines is a sacred duty of Our ab antique mission in the Holy Land. Therefore, we never cease raising our voice towards every direction, political and diplomatic, local and international organizations and governments, in order to make the established by international treaties multi-cultural and multi-religious Status Quo respectable, for both the Biblical Shrines and for the Holy City of Jerusalem, which is an international Shrine in itself, as Prophet Isaiah says: "For

Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isaiah 62:1).

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Through this enthronement celebration, We are called not to boast, but rather examine the work of our Patriarchal Office, according to Saint Paul's order: "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:4).

In this ministry, the mission of the martyr's throne of Saint James the Brother of God, we have as accomplices and companions the reverend and dearest Fathers and brothers Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Hieromonks, Priests, Hierodeacons and Monks, who are distinguished for their fervent zeal and God-pleasing self-sacrifice.

Let us pray to God and Father of lights and truth along with the psalmist: "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psalm 17:5), by the intercessions of our Most-Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and by the prayers of our Father among the Saints Nectarios of Pentapolis. May the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen all of us who serve in the All-holy Shrines and shepherd our pious Christian

flock.

For all these, we wish for all who prayed with Us and honoured Us with their presence in this Enthronement Anniversary, strength from on high, the grace of the Holy Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing from God, expressing also our gratitude for those who addressed Us; Geronda Secretary General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Russia, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Representative of the Holy Church of Romania, Reverend Archimandrite Ioannis, who conveyed the wishes of the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Charalambos Bandour, who spoke on behalf of Saint James Cathedral, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the Russian-speaking Community of Ber Sheva, Father Romanos, who conveyed the wishes and love of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, Mr Athanasios Abu Aeta, Mr Ode Issa and Nibel Baramsi, and all who participated in this celebration of the Enthronement Anniversary.”

At noon His Beatitude hosted a meal for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THE ARCHANGELS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, November 9/21, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel at the Holy Monastery dedicated to Archangel Michael which is located near the sea in the ancient town of Joppa /Yaffo.

On this feast, the Church gathers for the Synaxis of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and commemorates the event that these Bodiless Hosts, the Chiefs of the Angels, fought against Lucifer when the latter opposed God, and prevented with God's help the other Angels' fall, by saying "Stand firm". The Church holds the belief of the testimony in the Holy Bible, both in the Old and in the New Testament, by which the Archangels and all the Angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:14).

According to the New Testament, Archangel Gabriel announced to Virgin Mary the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit. Angels sang on the Nativity of the Divine Infant "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace...", Angels informed Joseph in his sleep to flee to Egypt to escape Herod's fury, and Angels summoned him back from Egypt to Nazareth so that the Lord would be called "Nazarene".

This feast was celebrated in this Holy Monastery with the Divine Liturgy which was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants their Eminences; Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Archbishops; Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Archimandrite Elder Kamarasis Nectarios,

the Archimandrites; Niphon and Artemios, the ministering Priests of the Church from the Arab-speaking Community, Priest Konstanti and the ministering Priests of the Russian-speaking and Romanian-speaking Community, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Community choir in Arabic, as the Service was attended by faithful Christians of the Arab-speaking Community, as well as Russians and Romanians, along with the Ambassador of Greece in Tel Aviv Mr Panayiotis Sarris and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

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

“But to which of the angels said he at any time, sit on my right hand, until I make Thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Hebrews 1:13-14) Saint Paul preaches.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us in this Church of the Chiefs of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, in the historic and Biblical town of Joppa (Yaffo), in order to praise in Eucharist and Doxology the bodiless Angelic forces, who surround God's immaculate throne, and cry out unceasingly to Him 'Holy, Holy, Holy art Thou God Almighty', as Prophet Isaiah says: “I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain, he covered his face, and with twain, he covered his feet, and with twain, he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isaiah 6:1-3).

And according to the Evangelist John's testimony; “Jesus

answered and said unto Nathanael, verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John 1:51). "As the genuine Son of God, the Angels were ascending and descending upon Him, ministering Him," Zigavinos says. Quite important is also the interpretation of Saint Cyril of Alexandria regarding the Angels' liturgical ministry: "Upon the Son of man, serving and ministering Christ's orders for the salvation of His future believers. For while He is Son of God, it is then [in the future] that He should be recognized as Son of God by nature".

Very clear is also the Holy Evangelist Luke's testimony regarding the Angels: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke 2-8-14).

Moreover, the Angels have as their mission the protection and help of the people, for the sake of their salvation, as Saint Paul preaches: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14). Interpreting these words, Saint John Damascene says: "see the boldness of the Angels, that the Lord sits high above and the Angels minister Him from down below". And Saint John Chrysostom says: "The Angels' ministry is to serve God for our (the people's) salvation...They are servants of God and are sent to many places for our sake". In other words, the

Angels care for the salvation of each one of us.

In today's Apostolic reading, Saint Paul underlines the diligence we faithful should display, in order to achieve our salvation: "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him"(Hebrews 2:2-3). In more detail, if every disobedience of the Law, which God announced to Moses through the Angels was justly punished, how are we going to escape the punishment if we neglect such a great and significant salvation? This salvation was not spoken through the Angels like it was done in the case of the Law, but once it started being preached by the Lord, it was handed over to us, a certain and reliable testimony by the Apostles who had heard everything directly from Christ's mouth.

And the temporary Bishop Joel of Pella is wondering: "what do we mean by the word 'salvation'? We mean man's rescue; the man who is made according to the likeness of God was tarnished, for this reason, it was necessary for Christ to come to earth, to wash clean the likeness and guide man towards his perfection. Salvation is the rescuing of man and his union with God. "Nothing is more sought after and more studied by God than the salvation of our souls", Saint Chrysostom writes. Saint Peter also says this: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:9).

Underlining man's value and of course that of his soul, Saint Paul borrows the Psalmist's words: "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands" (Hebrews 2:7/ Psalm 9:6).

Needless to say, that the Angels are superior to the humans, because they are not mortals, and they are not described as

having a bodily form, Saint John Damascene says. "Because they are not mortals. They are noetic beings and are found in noetic places, they are not described as having a bodily form, but being and acting in a noetic manner...just as they have been ordained by the Creator, and in that form, they protect and help us; they are around God, working the Divine will and orders for our sake in all manners".

Behold, therefore, why the Holy Church of Christ especially honours and venerates the Synaxis of the Angels, which is led by Michael, the Chief Brigadier of the bodiless hosts. Let us then say along with the hymnographer: "Angels and Archangels, Thrones, Authorities, and Dominions, Principalities and Powers, Cherubim and Seraphim, together with the Theotokos, make entreaty in the world's behalf" (Minaion, Matins, 1st Canon of Ode 9, Troparion 2). Amen. Many happy returns!"

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception and then a meal, hosted by the renovator of the Monastery Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who also re-constructed the Holy Church of Archangel Michael after its destruction by fire in 1956.

The feast of the Archangels was also celebrated at their Holy Monastery, opposite the Patriarchate, on the south side.

Vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning were officiated by the renovator of the Holy Church Most Reverend Archbishop Demetrios of Lydda, with co-celebrants; Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, Archimandrite Demetrios and Hierodeacon Simeon. The chanting was delivered by Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos and the Patriarchal School of Zion Students, with the help of the Choir Leader of the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen Archimandrite Eusevios.

After the Divine Liturgy, His Eminence offered a reception at the courtyard of the Church.

From Secretariat-General

SERVICE OF THE BLESSING OF THE WATER AT THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF SAINT STEPHEN IN RAMALLAH

On Tuesday, November 4/17, 2020, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Service of the Blessing of the water for the restart of the Liturgical life of the ancient Church dedicated to Saint Stephen the First Martyr in Ramallah. This Church, with the surrounding monastery olive-pressing mill, bakery and monastic cells, are preserved in the form of ruins which were brought to light after excavations. It is believed that this is the burial place of the First Martyr Stephen (Acts 8:2) in a field which belonged to the Sanhedrin Gamaliel.

This ecclesiastical and monastic area, which is a property of the Patriarchate, has been preserved and recently renovated by the Hegoumen of Ramallah Archimandrite Galaktion, with the donations from the local flock and those of the expatriate faithful Christians. Archimandrite Galaktion has also built a small chapel, which after today's blessing of the water by His Beatitude, will be used for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy for the faithful Christians of the Rum-Orthodox Arab-speaking Community of Ramallah.

For the Service of the Blessing of the water, His Beatitude was accompanied by His Eminence Archbishop and Secretary-General Aristarchos of Constantina, the Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew and Archdeacon Mark. From Ramallah, the service was attended by the initiator of this project Archimandrite Galaktion, the Steward Fr. James, the Mayor of the town of Ramallah, the Caretakers of the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Lord in Ramallah and its Byzantine choir members, along with others who supported this God-pleasing and arduous project, which is the result of those who love the beauty of the house of God.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR GEORGE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, November 3/16, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the translation of the relics of the Great Martyr George the Trophy-bearer, at the Church dedicated to him in Lydda.

On this feast, the Church commemorates the translation of the sacred relics of Saint George, and its return from Rome, where he suffered a martyr's death, to Lydda, his mother's hometown.

On this day the Church also celebrates the inauguration of the Holy Church dedicated to Saint George in Lydda, which was built by Saint Helen during the decade of A.D. 326-336.

The Divine Liturgy at this Church was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants; Their Eminences Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis and Damascene of Joppa, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom the Archimandrites Nectarios and Niphon, Arab-speaking Priests, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Byzantine music singers of the Community and the service was attended by quite a few faithful, despite the Covid-19 measures.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to the congregation:

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”(Romans 8:38-39); “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”(Phil. 1:21), Saint Paul preaches.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of the mystery of reverence, namely of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, has gathered us all in this holy place of the sensible worship, in order to celebrate the commemoration of the great martyr George the trophy-bearer and imitator of the Lord's passion.

The faithful friend of the Lord, George, has a prominent place among the chorea of the martyrs of the Church, and this is because, according to Saint Andrew of Crete, he became a fruitful vine of the true vineyard, whose farmer is the heavenly Father, cultivating for us through Him the spiritual bliss, for the healing of our passions and the regeneration of our souls and bodies.

And which is the true vineyard? It is Christ who said: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman" (John 15:1). Interpreting this verse, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "You may precisely understand that the Father feeds us to reverence through the Son in the Holy Spirit; He farms us again, namely He watches over and visits us and looks after our improvement making us worthy for it, through the Son in the Holy Spirit...so that no one may think that we only have the care of the Son, for He has God the Father as a co-worker, calling Himself the vineyard whose vines give life and the ability to bear fruit, while He calls God the Father a farmer". And he adds: "Christ does not say that His flesh is the vineyard, but rather His divinity...neither does He say that the fruit of the holy ones is carnal, rather, it is spiritual".

Indeed, the martyr George became a vine of Christ from Whom he received "life and the ability to bear fruit". Since his early childhood, George paid heed to Saint Paul's words: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). For this reason, Saint Theodore of the Studion says in his hymn: "Let us spiritually acclaim, O Brethren, the noetic adamant of patient endurance, the celebrated Martyr George, who was assayed by the fire for the sake of Christ, perils forged him, torments tempered him, and diverse tortures destroyed his body, which was corruptible by nature. For longing conquered nature, persuading the lover to pass through death to the Beloved, even Christ God, the Saviour of our souls" (Minaion April 23, Glory of Vespers Aposticha).

The son of a rich and noble family in Cappadocia, George served in the Roman army as a grand commander during Diocletian's reign (A.D. 284-305). In the year 303 an imperial decree was issued and mercilessly executed by Diocletian and his colleague Caesar Galerius against the Christians. Many of the greatest martyrs of our Church were crowned during this last relentless persecution.

Saint George did not only boldly proclaim himself a Christian

but also exposed the vanity of the idols and ridiculed the emperor and those who believed in the instruments of the demons, namely the idols.

The martyr of the love of Christ did this, paying heed on the one hand to the words of wise Solomon: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee" (Proverbs 4:25), and on the other hand, to the words of Christ: "But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony" (Luke 21: 12-13).

The above words of the Lord refer to the Apostolic preaching of the Gospel, but also to those who suffered a martyr's death shedding their blood for the sake of the Christian truth. According to the established interpreter Zigavinos, the phrase "for a testimony" means "for a way of testing, so that they may not say afterwards that they have not heard the preaching". "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin" (John 15:22), the Lord says.

The blessed George, my dear brethren, belongs to the chora of the great martyrs of the Church. And this is because with his martyr's blood, the great Athlete George confirmed the resurrection of Christ and sealed the truth of the Christian faith. In other words, blessed George sacrificed himself preaching "the Son of Man" (Matt. 8:20), who inaugurated the Kingdom of heaven with His Passion on the Cross. This is precisely the contribution of Saint George, that he testified the testimony of Him, who "for this cause came into the world, that He should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37).

George's testimony through his blood for the sake of the truth in Christ made him a communicant of the passion and death of Christ, and for this reason, the Holy Great Martyr received

the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8) and the completion of his sanctification (Hebrews 1:14). He became, according to Saint Paul, "planted together in the likeness of his [Christ's] death" (Romans 6:3-5). "This man as a brave soldier bravely defied the tyrants and put them to shame, becoming an imitator of Christ the Saviour's passion. Unto his own clay vessel, he showed no mercy, but cast it naked into the forge, transforming it by means of torments. Let us cry out to him: O prize-winner George, make entreaty that our souls be saved" (Minaion April 23, Glory of praises).

The Saints, and especially the Martyrs of Christ are given a great honour and relevant worship, because they managed the dwelling of the Holy Spirit in their mortal bodies, as Saint Paul teaches very clearly: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11). The Great Martyr George was also a vessel of the Holy Spirit and therefore he enjoys the "crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:4) and intercedes to God for all those who pray to him.

Behold, therefore, once more, let us say along with the hymnographer: Great Athlete George, beseech God the Father to save our souls, and You, Mother of God, Most Blessed Theotokos, intercede to your Son and God for all of us. Amen. Many happy and blessed returns, free from COVID-19."

After the Divine Liturgy, the good keeper of the Monastery Hegoumen Archimandrite Nicodemos hosted a reception and a meal for the Patriarchal Entourage, the caretakers of the Church and the choir members.

The commemoration of Saint George was also celebrated at the Holy Monastery of Saint George of the Hospital with the Divine Liturgy which was led by the Hegoumen of Saint George in Acre, Archimandrite Philotheos, under the hospitality of the good

keeper of the Monastery, Nun Pansemni.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR DEMETRIUS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, October 26 / November 8, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrius the Myrrh-streamer at the Patriarchate.

On this feast the Church commemorates Saint Demetrius, who came from Thessalonica and suffered a martyr's death in this city for the faith in Christ, during the reign of Maximian in A.D. 303, having first urged his disciple Nestor to enter into combat with Lyaeus in the stadium and defeat him; "Thou didst humble Lyaeus' arrogance and gavest boldness to Nestor" (Apolytikion).

This feast was celebrated by the Patriarchate at the old chapel dedicated to the Saint, which is located between the School of Saint Demetrius and the Central Monastery, with Vespers in the afternoon, led by His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis. The Divine Liturgy in the morning of the feast was officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, with co-celebrants the Archimandrites Makarios, Dionysios and Isidoros, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Simeon, at the chanting of Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos and the Patriarchal school students. The services were attended by the Monks and

Nuns of Jerusalem.

During the Divine Liturgy, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem visited the chapel for veneration, accompanied by Hagiotaphite Fathers.

This feast was also celebrated at the Old City of Rafidia, near Jacob's well, in Samaria, at the Church dedicated to the Saint, with the Divine Liturgy which was led by the Hegoumen of the Holy Church of the Annunciation in Rafidia, Archimandrite Leontios, with the participation of the Arab-speaking Community members.

From Secretariat-General

THE MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE PATRIARCHS OF JERUSALEM AT THE FORTY MARTYRS' CHAPEL

On Friday, October 24, 2020, one day after the Feast of the Throne of Jerusalem on the commemoration of Saint James the Brother of God, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated along with the Memorial Service for the Patriarchs who are buried at the Forty Martyrs' chapel, which is located between the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Divine Liturgy and the Memorial Service were held at the presence of His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, as Archimandrite Meletios and the ministering Priests of Saint James Cathedral, Fr. Farah Badour and Fr. Hader Baramki held the services. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon in Greek on the right and Mr James Bejali

in Arabic on the left.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited the chapel during the Divine Liturgy to venerate and pray for the repose of the souls of the memorable Patriarchs.

After the Services, boiled wheat was offered at the reception held at the adjacent hall.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINT JAMES THE BROTHER OF GOD AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, October 23 / November 5, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy Apostle James the Brother of God.

On this Feast, the whole Church, and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates Saint James, son of Joseph the Betrothed, and brother of the Lord according to the law (according to Matthew 13:55; "His brothers were James and Joses and Simeon and Jude"). Saint James was ordained by the Lord as the First Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem, as his Troparion also states, "The Word of God, the Father's Only-begotten, came down and dwelt here in our midst in these last days. He then appointed thee as the first shepherd of all-holy Jerusalem, and He made thee her teacher and a faithful steward of lofty spiritual mysteries. (Kontakion of the Saint, Menaion).

The Church also commemorates him as the writer of the Epistle bearing his name in the New Testament, and as the Chairman of the First Apostolic Synod in Jerusalem in A.D. 49, with a significant role in its outcome, which was that the gentiles were henceforth accepted in the Church without circumcision, with no need to keep the Law of Moses, but their abstinence "from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood"(Acts 15:20).

According to Josephus' witness, Saint James was thrown down from the pinnacle of the Temple of Solomon by the Jews, because he confessed that Jesus is the Christ.

Saint James' commemoration was celebrated by the Patriarchate at his Holy Church which is located between the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with Vespers in the afternoon at the presence of His Beatitude. The Divine Liturgy in the morning of the Feast was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants their Eminences; Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina and Secretary-General, and Theodosios of Sebastia, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, as well as Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, the representative of the Russian MISSIA Archimandrite Dometianos, Archdeacon Mark, and the Cathedral ministering Priests, Fr. Farah/Charalambos Bandour and Fr. Hader/ George Baramki, and Priest Simeon from Nazareth.

The chanting was delivered by the Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos in Greek on the right and Mr Rimon Kamar in Arabic on the left. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your

hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded... Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:8-10) Saint James the Brother of God preaches.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all in this Cathedral of Saint James, in order to glorify in Eucharist, the festive commemoration of the First Hierarch on the throne of Jerusalem, the Holy preacher of the Church who is called Just and Brother of God.

According to Apostle Paul's witness, Saint James was considered "the pillar of the Church" (Gal. 2:9), and also a "Master" of great status, as revealed by his Epistle: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (James 3:1).

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8), James advises us, obviously following the Lord's words: "look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28); Take courage, for your salvation and full redemption from the suffering of the current life, is close.

Indeed, my dear Brethren, we live in times that demand the urgent exercise of the good works and actions in Christ, as Saint Paul says: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Romans 13:11-12).

Interpreting these words, Saint Chrysostom says: "cast off" means to renounce the phantasies, to set ourselves free from the dream-like state of the current life, cast off the deep state of sleep". In other words, the works of sin are works of

the darkness, because they come from the darkened state of ignorance and fallacy. And Zigavinos says: "Let us put on the works of light, those of the day, armouring ourselves with every virtue here on earth..., which will make us glad and luminous there". In other words, Christ's friends are soldiers among various and dangerous visible and invisible enemies. The Christians' life is a life of struggle and fighting and for this reason, they should not be considered defenceless and naked, because they bear the armour of Christ's light.

"Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:9). According to the interpreters, the heart is the seat of the motives and the predispositions. For this reason, our hearts should become straightforward and sincere, free from every hypocrisy, having as their only concern to be pleasing to God.

Interpreting the words: "purify your hearts, ye double minded", Ecumenius writes: "[The Apostle] calls "double-minded" those who do not live according to a specific manner, but are influenced and led astray by the deceit of the people. They do not follow one way living in the house of the Lord". And Saint Theophylaktos says: "But they are always led and influenced by the violence of the people".

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:10). Humble yourselves before God and He will lift you up in this present life through virtue and moral perfection, while in the future life, through His eternal glory and beatitude, Saint James teaches: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). This was said by Solomon, according to Saint Chrysostom, not to state that God is in need of engaging into a battle with the proud person, but "in order to show the intensity of His revulsion toward the proud".

Indeed, God detests the proud because, according to Saint John of the Ladder, "pride is God's denial, the forerunner of

insanity and God's rival". And he adds: "I heard a respectable man saying: 'Suppose the passions of dishonesty are twelve. If one of them, pride, is the one you will love with all your heart, it will replenish the place of the remaining eleven".

This teaching of Saint James applies not only to the Christians but to all those who love God, "Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4), according to Saint Paul. Behold therefore why the hymnographer praises Saint James by saying: "The Word of God, the Father's Only-begotten, came down and dwelt here in our midst in these last days. He then appointed thee as the first shepherd of all-holy Jerusalem, and He made thee her teacher and a faithful steward of lofty spiritual mysteries. For this cause, as is meet, O wondrous James, O blest Apostle, we all praise and honour thee" (Kontakion of the Saint, Menaion).

The Church of Jerusalem rejoices and is glad on this festive commemoration of James the Brother of God, it's First Hierarch and Patron Saint, because, having received the Apostolic ordination by the Lord Himself, he became the founder of the synodical and institutional character in the Holy Spirit of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. And he sealed the apostolic ministry, which was appointed to him in "Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2), with the blood of his martyr's death.

Being a true, faithful and living witness of this sacred consignment of Saint James the Brother of God, the Christian flock in the Holy Land stands firm, along with its spiritual and ecclesiastical Authority, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, which resolutely follows the advice of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32), and you "should not depart from Jerusalem"(Acts 1:4), as well as Saint James' prompt: "Be patient, therefore, brethren... stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James

5:7-8). And let us say along with the hymnographer: "Thou wast the Lord's blessed brother when He came in the flesh, and His divine disciple and the faithful eyewitness of His divine mysteries; and fleeing with Him into Egypt, thou ever wast with Jesus' Mother and Joseph. Therefore, with them intercede thou that our souls be saved". Amen. Many happy returns, free from the coronavirus plague!"

The Divine Liturgy was followed by the return to the Patriarchate Reception Hall, and the distribution of the small loaves of bread by the responsible for the Bakery, Abbess Seraphima. At the Hall, His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

"Thee the son of Joseph and first Hierarch of Jerusalem, James, seer of God and brother of the Lord, we praise and bless" the hymnographer of the Church proclaims.

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

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Christ's Church and especially the Church of Jerusalem rejoices today on the commemoration of the Holy glorious Apostle and Martyr James the Brother of God, the first to honour the Episcopal Throne, namely its Seat of the Liturgical and Divine Eucharistic gathering.

Saint James, who was also called James the Just, was ordained a Bishop by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, thus becoming the first shepherd, Hierarch of Jerusalem, teacher and faithful servant of the spiritual sacraments. That is why he also received the Apostolic office.

Saint Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 104), praising the institutional significance of the episcopal office for the

Church, speaks about “a primate bishop in the place of God” and a point of unity. “Learn to do everything by the primate bishop who stands in the place of God...let there be nothing in you able to divide you; but be united in the bishop, obeying God through him in Christ” (to Magn. 6).

Moreover, David chants, “God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness” (Psalm 47:8). The Only-begotten Son and Word of God sits upon this holy throne in His Church, with the Holy Apostles sitting along with Him, who, together with the angelic forces unceasingly offer doxology to God, which is a prototype of the earthly doxology; that is why there is a specific order which composes everything in both the heavenly and the earthly Church.

James the Brother of God became a great minister of the ecclesiastical throne of the city of King Christ, and through his martyr’s blood, he sealed the apostolic succession throughout the ages for each one of the Primates of the Bishops and Patriarchs of the throne, at the place of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ, Who is the Head of the body of the Church (Col. 1:18).

Our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, following Saint Paul’s advice: “keep that which is committed to thy trust” (1 Tim. 6:20), went down to Saint James Cathedral, where we celebrated the Patriarchal Liturgy, for the glory of the Holy Trinitarian God and in honour of our Father among the Saints James the Brother of God, with the participation in prayer of the pious Christians and pilgrims in Jerusalem.

Let us then say along with the psalmist: “His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven” (Psalm 89: 36-37).

Saint James, Brother of God, the pillar of the Church, intercede to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls,

for the peace of our region and preserve this Patriarchal throne of Jerusalem unto the ages. Amen. Many happy returns!”

Concluding the reception, His Beatitude returned the keys of Saint James Cathedral to its Caretakers, according to the tradition.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY OF OCTOBER 28, 1940 AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, October 15 / 28, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the National Anniversary of October 28, 1940.

On this Feast the whole Church and that of Jerusalem commemorate our nation’s sufferings; persecutions, exile, group executions and starvation, caused by the German and Italian atrocities, during their occupation in our country, in World War II (1940-1944). The Church prays for the repose of the souls of the fighters who devoted their lives in the defence of their country, and thanks God and the Most Holy Theotokos for their help in our regaining the precious gift of freedom.

This event was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with a Doxology led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants their Eminences the Archbishops of the Throne and Hagiotaphite

Hieromonks. The chanting was delivered by the Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos, as the Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evaggelos Vlioras and members of the Greek Community.

The Service of Doxology was followed by the return at the Patriarchate Headquarters where His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evaggelos Vlioras,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Brethren in Christ

The great epic of 1940 is portrayed on today’s anniversary of the “No” of 28th October, which was the answer to the provoking arrogance of the Fascist and Nazi forces of the German-Italian axis.

The 1940 “No” of Greece is a landmark of self-sacrifice for the defence of moral values, and love for the country, to safeguard the national independence and our territorial integrity. And this is so, because, undeniably, the heroic resistance against Hitler’s armed forces was the victory of the spirit over material things, of freedom over slavery, of right against the unrighteousness of the modern civilization, of the barbarity, and finally, of Christ’s light over the darkness of the devil, as Saint Paul wisely phrases: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

World War II and its consequences showed that the contemporary technologically advanced man “did not want to come to reason”, meaning that he did not try to set himself free from his

primitive beastly behaviour. "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Romans 1:25).

And we say this because the super-human fighting spirit of the Greeks against the axis was inspired by the faith in the Crucified and Resurrected Christ. Rightly it was then said that the 28th October epic was the miracle of the faith in God.

Our venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, honouring, as it should, this historic event of "1940 No" and wholeheartedly participating in this victorious commemoration of freedom and of the steadfast resistance against the obnoxious occupational forces of Nazism, went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and rendered a thanksgiving Doxology to the Trinitarian God, despite the restrictive measures of the Corona Virus plague.

Moreover, we prayed for the eternal repose of the souls of all our fathers and brothers who fought gloriously and suffered a martyr's death for their faith and country and for freedom.

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem, replying to the various challenges of the world and of our tested region of the Middle East, projects October 28 as an example of inspiration and hope, as Saint Paul's advice says: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"(Galatians 5:1).

For all these, let us raise our glasses to a toast and exclaim:

Long live the 28th October 1940!

Long live the "NO"!

Long live Greece!

Long live the noble nation of the Rum Orthodox!

Long live our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!”

His Beatitude’s address was followed by that of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evaggelos Vlioras, as per below:

“Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend Archbishops,

Reverend Fathers,

Dear Children,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

National anniversaries are milestones, occasions for reflection, which in the course of time bring back to our minds the events that have forged the collective historical memory of Greeks everywhere.

In every historical period, there is a pole, a historical event that marks it, and it becomes a point of reference for all of us later. The struggle of 1940 is this landmark for the modern history of Hellenism, a central point of reference and a symbol for the whole Nation.

Therefore, at that time, as in any difficult time, there were many who surpassed themselves, “Or who came out of their skin”, to use the phrase of Iakovos Kampanellis, and showed heroism, beyond what we call “duty”. Ordinary, everyday people, who suddenly found themselves in the forefront of history, without asking to become heroes and yet received a “glorifying myrtle” responding, every single one of them, to the call, without fear, without hesitation, marking history and life in Greece and in Hellenism in general.

If life is measured more by the burning heart than by the

duration, if the candle that shines brighter lasts the least, then we can all be proud of the mature life of those who sacrificed themselves in the icy mountains of Epirus, in the Fortresses of Macedonia, in the waters of the Aegean, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, in the Middle East and throughout the resistance to the triple occupation of our country by the forces of darkness.

The Battle of Greece, which lasted a total of 216 days from the NO on October 28 until the fall of Crete on June 1, 1941, caused worldwide sensation and admiration, spreading hope and making the hearts of the peoples of occupied Europe, who lived the night of the occupation, to take courage. The magnitude of the sacrifice of the Greeks during World War II is easily understood if we consider that Greece lost almost 10% of its population of 7.5 million.

It is, therefore, a special honour for the Consul General of Greece to address the Hellenism of the Holy Land and especially the young people on this special day of remembrance and pride.

Eighty years after this historic day we remember and pay tribute to the heroic heirs of the Homeland, to all those who fought the relentless beast of fascism and Nazism, to all those who made the supreme sacrifice, on the battlefields or in front of the firing squad, so that we can live free today.

To all those who with feelings of patriotism and self-denial, according to the play writer, "pushed the time for good towards peace and freedom. A freedom that seemed so wide to them".

We pay tribute to both the mothers and wives who endured while waiting, to the children who were orphaned or lost due to hunger and misery.

The Greek NO clearly and unequivocally demonstrated the deep historical conscience of the Greeks that dictated their

refusal to forget their history and to live in compromise and submission.

In this national ordeal, the Sun of Righteousness did not forget Greece.

In this historical moment, as in any other nationally difficult circumstance, the dynamic participation of Hellenism anywhere in the world was valuable, for which Greece is proud and grateful.

The impact of the 1940 Struggle was shocking on Holy Land as well. More than 40 Greeks from Jerusalem voluntarily joined the Greek Armed Forces while two of them gave their lives for Greece.

The Sailor Electrician Anestis Zografos was lost in the sinking of the Katsoni Submarine in Skiathos on September 14, 1943, while the Sailor Engineer Emmanuel Mykonos was killed during the impact of a missile of the Adria Destroyer in Kalymnos on October 22, 1943. The bones of the latter as well as 20 of his other comrades-in-arms, which were buried in a makeshift grave in Turkey, were transported to Greece in 1947 and deposited in the ossuary of the Monument to the Fallen of our Navy.

Today, as then, the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, with their long and multifaceted contribution to the Holy Land and the highest pastoral work, remain, as a key point of reference, guardian of the moral and spiritual values of our Orthodox faith.

Our Patriarchate of Jerusalem testifies to the timelessness of the dynamic presence of the Greek and Orthodox tradition in the Middle East. Its high mind and struggles, under adverse conditions, until today, are for all of us an invaluable national capital but also a source of inspiration and encouragement.

For all of us, the national anniversary messages are only useful if they guide our steps today.

Especially nowadays, Greece is called upon to face a series of challenges to our national integrity, sovereignty and sovereign rights from Evros to the ends of the Aegean, to our land and sea borders and to our sea zones. The Armed Forces give every day the answer that befits modern arrogance, on land, sea and air.

Let me assure you that the common meaning we all derive from the NO of October 28, 1940, strengthens the strong will of the Greeks to maintain the freedom, independence and integrity of the homeland, 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 this price.

With these thoughts I call on all of us to exclaim:

Long live the 28th of October 1940!

Long live the Nation of the Greeks!"

This was followed by the Arabic translation of His Beatitude's address, by the Patriarchate's Representative in the Arabic M.M. Father Issa Mousleh, and finally, of the address of the Managing Director of the Patriarchal School of Zion, Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, as per below:

"Today we celebrate and recall in our memory one of the most beautiful, most brilliant, and most glorious moments of the Greek Nation. The thought of all of us today turns with sacred emotion, justified pride and infinite admiration to the great day of October 28, 1940. On that day, 80 years ago, the cannon sounded in the mountains of Northern Epirus and the whole of Greece paid its duty to the Homeland, a debt that is not transferable and everyone repays it by himself alone.

The Greek nation did not kneel in fear at that time. But like

every time in history, it stood upright on its saddle and proved in the best way its love for the Homeland, a love without limits, since it puts the universality of its existence in the service of the Homeland. A love that reaches the contempt of death and the emergence of heroism that the modern world had not seen until then. And for this reason, the world looked closely and expressed its admiration in amazement, watching the triumphs of a small nation against a great power. And this is because everyone knew and knows that war, wants courage, it wants chests and arms, hearts that can bear the pain and endure the calamity. War wants strong people, who can rebuild from the beginning, everything that it [war] tore down and ruined in front of them. War wants determination, on the part of the fighters, in order to turn it into a holocaust, so that they can sustain the liberty of all things they consider sacred and holy.

For as the poet says:

Here no one fears death but everyone longs to hear his name, riding on a horse, leaving on foot, here there is no place, neither for death nor for the fear of entering the tomb (Free translation, Poem by C. Palamas: The country that does not die).

October 28, 1940, is a new milestone in the history of our long-suffering Homeland, our thrice-glorious Greece. On that day, a new period of heroism and sacrifice of the Greek race began, for the preservation of its freedom and independence. With the protection of our Most Gracious Theotokos, the Greeks climbed like the eagles on the snow-covered, steep and inaccessible mountain peaks of northern Epirus, leaving friends and enemies open-mouthed.

Brilliant glory then crowned our Homeland, which despite the difficulties, continues to cover Greece with laurels.

Today, "the times are not waiting; we must take action".

Clouds are gathering over our Homeland and some, just like the beasts of the Book of Revelation, have opened their mouths and gnash their teeth, wanting to frighten this small country by showing their great power; but they forgot or did not understand, that the Greeks, with their wonderful achievements, proved that in the fight for freedom, for the defence of altars and hearths, it is not the irons and the numbers that win, but the heart and the courage.

And as the poet says about the indestructible sprout of the Greeks:

I shall not be lost in the depths of the earth, I only stop for a while, I come back to life and make the nations rise!
(Free translation, Poem by C. Palamas, Digenis and Charon).

Let us turn our thoughts at this time to all those who fought then, and sacrificed their lives for the freedom and the benefit of the Homeland, and offer them, as a minimum tribute, our admiration and gratitude, and assure them, that in the difficult times of our Homeland, their example will guide us and strengthen our will, so that we may become worthy successors of the bright and glorious struggles of the children of 1940 “.

The celebration was sealed with patriotic songs and our National Anthem by the Patriarchal School of Zion Students.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE RETURN OF

THE RELICS OF SAINT SAVVAS THE SANCTIFIED AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, October 13/26, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the return of the sacred relics of our Holy Father Savvas the Sanctified.

On this Feast the Church of Jerusalem commemorates the event of October 13/26, 1965, when it received the relics of Saint Savvas the Sanctified back from Venice, where the Crusaders had taken it.

The church of Jerusalem asked for the return of the Saint one year after the lifting of the 'anathemas' of 1050, in the year 1964, and after the visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras and of Pope John Paul VI in the Holy Land. In order to escort the relics, a Delegation from the Patriarchate of Jerusalem went to Venice, members of which were the memorable Metropolitans Vasilios of Caesarea, and Germanos of Petra, the memorable Spiritual Father of the Monastery of Saint Savvas Archimandrite Seraphim, the memorable Hegoumen of the Monastery of Martha and Mary in Bethany, Archimandrite Theodosios, and the then Deacon – and at present – Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth.

The welcoming reception of the sacred relics was held at Jaffa Gate in much joy, gladness and thanksgiving, and from there, it was taken to the Catholicon of the All-Holy Church of the Resurrection for a week-long veneration, to conclude to his Holy Monastery founded by Saint Savvas himself, and where it is kept ever since, as a treasure of a fountain of power, and every kind of help.

For the commemoration of this event on the aforementioned date, an All-night Vigil was celebrated at the Saint's

Monastery, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants their Eminences; Geronda Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Patriarchal Representative in Bethlehem, Theophylactos of Jordan, Aristovoulos of Madaba (as the Archbishop in turn for this year), Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom were the Archimandrites Ignatios, Mattheos and Niphon, Arab-speaking Priests from Bethlehem, Beit Sahour and Beit Jala, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod Hierodeacon Simeon in Greek, with the help of His Eminence Aristovoulos, and by the Acre choir under the lead of Archimandrite Philotheos in Arabic. The service was attended by members of our Arab-speaking flock from the neighbouring Bethlehem District.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to the Fathers and the congregation:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30), the Lord says.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem honours and venerates today the return to the sacred incorrupt relics of Saint Savvas the Sanctified back to his famous Lavra (on October 26, 1965), from Venice, paying heed to the Biblical words: “The memory of the just is blessed”(Proverbs 10:7), or in other words, the remembrance of the just is pleasant and eternal even after death.

Savvas from Cappadocia longed for the rest of his soul and like another deer retreated to the ascetic and spiritual fountains of the Judea desert in Palestine, where he was

schooled by the desert Teachers, Theoctistos and Euthymius the Great.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29). Interpreting these words of the Lord, Saint Gregory of Nyssa says: “by the word: ‘yoke’ [Christ] means the working of the commandments, let us then obey the commander, let us become the beast of burden, clothing ourselves with the yoke of love”. And commentator Zigavinos says: “He didn’t say only the word ‘humble’ (lowly), but ‘lowly in heart’, meaning humble in ones’ soul, by one’s free will”.

The approved Church Father, Gregory of Nyssa correctly interprets that we are called to clothe ourselves with the yoke of Christ’s love. And this is so, because according to Saint John of the Ladder, love, in its essence, is the source of faith. And according to Saint John Damascene, “Faith is to agree without much examining. Faith is to believe that everything was created by God from non-being into being; and every single thing, both divine and human, can be accomplished by faith”.

The fundamental importance of faith is phrased clearly by Saint Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians: “For this, cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..., that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Eph. 3:14-17). Moreover, Saint John the Theologian preaches: “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

Our Holy Father Savvas accomplished this very thing; meaning the dwelling of Christ in his heart through faith. For this reason, he would say along with the psalmist: “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Psalm 17:15). And to make it

clearer; I will work Your righteousness and with it, I shall behold Your Face [Lord], while my soul will be satisfied when I see the glory, the brightness of Your Face. Moreover, Saint Savvas followed Saint Paul's order: "Put on the whole armour of God...having on the breastplate of righteousness" (Ephesians 6: 11, 14). For this reason, he lives eternally in the fragrant and incorrupt relics that we have before our eyes, as the Wisdom of Solomon says: "But the righteous live for ever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most-High takes care of them. Therefore, they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm, he will shield them" (Wisdom of Solomon 5:15-16). And in more detail, the righteous live eternally, and their reward is in the hands of the Lord. For this reason, they will receive the glorious Kingdom of Heaven by the Lord.

Let us hear Saint Paul preaching in his Epistle to the Romans: "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Romans 6:19). In other words, just as you offered your body parts as servants to sin, which makes a man unclean and an offender, so as to commit the iniquity, likewise, you should now offer your bodies as servants to the virtuous manner of living, in order to advance in holiness. "[Paul means] as righteousness the virtuous manner of living...*leading* to sanctification, instead of being sanctified" Zigavinos explains.

According to Saint Basil the Great, "sanctification is to devote ones' life to God completely". And according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa: "For Christ is God's righteousness, which is revealed by the Gospel, as the Apostle says (Romans 1:17) ... and because the Son is the Father's power, all the works of the Son are the Father's works".

It is made clear that the sanctification for us who confess

Christ crucified and resurrected, presupposes God's righteousness according to the Lord's advice: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). In addition, this holds a prominent place in the Lord's prayer: "After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:9-10).

Let us, therefore, hear Saint Paul's advice, which refers to all Christians, and especially to us who minister at the Life-giving sacraments of Christ, and to the Monks who live in spiritual asceticism in the desert and dry land: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:1-4).

Commenting on these words, Saint Gregory of Nyssa says: "Do not gaze upon the earthly things, but upon the heavenly ones, where Christ is ... live also, in order to see God, not for the purpose of prolonging your life on earth, nor in order to have a beastly pleasure, but in order to accomplish the heavenly citizenship".

To this cause we are also called, my dear Brethren, to bring to perfection our life in Christ, thus become citizens of the "ever-lasting" city of heaven and fellow citizens of the Saints of God and our Saviour Christ in heaven, because, as Saint Paul preaches: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14). Amen. Many happy returns."

After the All-night Vigil, there was a reception with boiled wheat, bread and sweet wine, followed by a common meal which His Beatitude blessed.

Blessing the Fathers, His Beatitude departed via the Holy Monastery of Saint Theodosios the Cenobiarch for veneration, according to the customary tradition.

From Secretariat-General

HIS HOLINESS THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW VISITS THE METOCHION OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN NEOCHORION

On Friday, October 10/23, 2020, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated for the Feast of the Holy Apostle James the Brother of God and first Hierarch of Jerusalem, according to the custom of the Church of Jerusalem, at the Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre in Neochorion of Bosphorus. The Liturgy was attended by His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Who addressed our Representative in Constantinople Most Reverend Archbishop Nectarios of Anthedona and the congregation as follows:

Your Eminence, Archbishop Nectarios of Anthedona, Representative of the Holy Sepulchre in the City of Constantine,

Most Reverend Brethren,

Your Excellencies Archons,

Beloved Children in Christ,

We are gathered in this historic Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre in joy and contrition, in order to celebrate with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs the commemoration of Apostle James the Brother of God, one of the primary persons of the ancient Church, the genuine bearer and exponent of the sacred consignment of the Lord, the First Hierarch of the Church of Jerusalem and its patron Saint. Along with our reverent entourage, We came to the Church of the Metochion of Jerusalem in Neochorio, which is dedicated to the Holy Great Martyr George the Trophy Bearer, just like two other Churches-Metochia of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Halki and in Phanar, so that we may proclaim "the bond of love" between the Holy Great Church of Christ and the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which holds this celebration of the Throne today, and to express our feelings of love and honour to its Holy Primate, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The Patriarchates of Constantinople and Jerusalem have a long-term tradition of coexistence, cooperation and solidarity, which have produced good fruit for the whole of Orthodoxy and for the protection of the Status Quo in the Holy Land. The All-holy shrines and the holy places where the redeeming news of salvation was heard, and God the Word was made incarnate, the places where the immaculate feet of our Lord Jesus Christ walked, and His words were heard, where He worked the miracles of faith, where the glory of the Lord was revealed in Transfiguration, the Passion and the Resurrection were witnessed, along with the miraculous appearances, the Ascension of the Saviour and the crown of festivities, Pentecost, happened, all these, and "many other things Jesus did" which, as Saint John the Evangelist writes "if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25), are always in our mind and heart.

We ceaselessly pray to the Founder of the Church, to strengthen His Beatitude our Brother Theophilos and the blessed Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, in the struggle for the protection of the All-holy monuments and shrines. We were expecting the visit of His Beatitude at the centre of Orthodoxy which was scheduled for the beginning of the Church Year, on September 1, 2020, and was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We wait for the visit of the Holy Brother, in a face-to-face meeting, to co-celebrate the Divine Liturgy and discuss the matters of Orthodoxy related to its unity and witness in the contemporary world.

The Church is "God's answer to the expectation of the world". It is "the new world and the new paradise". Being alive "in the world" it bears witness for the truth "that is not of this world", carrying the Cross of Christ, experiencing and preaching His Resurrection which is the joy of the world. It also foretells and depicts "the common resurrection", "the unwaning, heirless and eternal day", in the course toward the eternal Kingdom of God, "the new world" (2 Cor. 5:17), where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away"(Revelation 21:4), but there will be a joy that is complete, unspeakable and glorified. To this Church, the place and the way of the salvation of man and of the world, we owe everything, in it we minister its Founder and Head, the Giver of every good thing, being ministered in all things by the unspeakable Divine Philanthropy.

Most Reverend brother, Archbishop of Anthedona,

We praise the good-fruit-bearing ministry for the full duration of your ecclesiastical ministry here, the many toils, your tireless and productive work for the preservation of your Metochia, your sacrificial witness and wise care for the ecclesiastical matters at all times. Thanking you for the kind invitation of Our Mediocrity to participate in the Service in this Metochion of Bosphorus, We wish you health and strength to

continue your good works. We also congratulate all those who support this holy foundation, with their leader, the Cross-bearer of the Holy Sepulchre and Our dearest Officion-bearer, Mr Panteleimon Vigan.

With these thoughts, and in a festive frame of mind, we express the wishes of Our Mediocrity to His Beatitude, the Head of the Church of Jerusalem, and to all the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood for this Feast of the Throne, praying to the Almighty, Omniscient and Most Generous God, that by the intercessions of the Holy Apostle James the Brother of God and of the Holy Glorious Great Martyr George the Trophy Bearer, He may protect and strengthen the brotherly Church of Jerusalem and grant to its pious clergy and people every kind of heavenly blessing.

Many happy returns to all of you!"

From Secretariat-General