

THE FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF THEOTOKOS AT INTO THE TEMPLE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, November 21/ December 4, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Entry of Theotokos into the Temple at the Central Monastery of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood with the participation in prayer of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and at the Holy Monastery of Megali Panagia which is dedicated to this feast and is adjacent and an extension of the Patriarchate Headquarters.

On this feast the Church commemorates the event that Theotokos' parents, and Ancestors of God Joachim and Anna, fulfilling their promise to God, that if He grants them a child they would dedicate it to Him, brought our Most Holy Lady at Solomon's Temple at the age of three years old, where she remained in the Holy of Holies, being fed by the Angel, until the age of fifteen years old, when they entrusted her to Joseph her Betrothed, in Nazareth. There she received the annunciation from Archangel Gabriel, the incarnation of the Son and Word and our Saviour Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

In this 4th century historic Monastery, where the Hagiotaphite Fathers lived initially in the 6th century, A.D. and where twenty Nuns live at present, Vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning of the feast were officiated by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, with co-celebrants the ministering Priest of the Holy Monastery Archimandrite Makarios and other Hagiotaphite Fathers, among whom were the Archimandrites; Ignatios, Ieronymos and Demetrios, Priest Yusef and HieroDeacon Eulogios. The chanting

was delivered by the Novice Monk Constantine Spyropoulos and Mr. Vasilios Gotsopoulos with the help of the Patriarchal School of Zion students, as the services were attended by a congregation of the Nuns of the Monastery and pilgrims from Greece, Russia and Romania.

During the Divine Liturgy in the morning, His Beatitude with His Entourage visited the Monastery for veneration.

His Eminence the Archbishop of Constantina delivered a Sermon before the Holy Communion to this noble congregation.

His Beatitude, the Episcopal Entourage and the congregation were offered a reception at the Hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Monastery by the renovator of the Holy Church Abbess Melani.

From Secretariat-General

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR PHILOUMENOS THE HAGIOTAPHITE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

The commemoration of the New Holy Hieromartyr Philoumenos was celebrated on Friday November 16/29, 2019 at Jacob's well, the place of his martyrdom. When he suffered a martyr's death he was the Hegoumen there and the current Hegoumen, Fr. Ioustinos has constructed a magnificent Church dedicated to St. Foteini the Samaritan Woman – as this is the place where she met the Lord.

St. Philoumenos' martyrdom was validated by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem with its Synodical Act in the year 2009. In this Holy Church which is built above the chapel with the well, the Divine Liturgy on the day the Saint martyred, on 16/29 November 1979, was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina and Theophylactos of Jordan, His Eminence the Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks among who were; the Hegoumen of Beit Jala Archimandrite Ignatios, the Archimandrites; Makarios and Leontios, Fr. Kyriakos and Arab-speaking Priests. The chanting was delivered by Mr. Vasilios Gotsopoulos in Greek on the right and the Rafidia Community Choir in Arabic on the left, as the service was attended by a contrite congregation of local faithful and pilgrims from Greece, Romania, and Russia.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation;

"O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles" (Psalm 43:3) the psalmist proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all in this sacred place of Patriarch Jacob's well, where our Lord Jesus Christ told the Samaritan Woman; "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), in order to honour in Eucharist the commemoration of the New Martyr of the Church of Jerusalem St. Philoumenos the Hagiotaphite.

Christ's light and His truth guided and brought young Philoumenos from the island of Cyprus "on a holy mountain and in the dwelling places of God the Word" in the Holy City of

Jerusalem, where he joined the Monastic Order of the Studious Ones, namely of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood which ministers the All-holy Shrines, which witness the martyrdom on the Cross of the “leader of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2) and “of [our] life” (Acts 3:15).

Hieromonk Philoumenos worked as a shepherd and with boldness for the gospel of Christ in all ministries appointed to him, in the Monastic centre of the Patriarchate and in the various villages and towns of its jurisdiction, hearkening to St. Paul’s advice; “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord..., who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:7-10).

And indeed, our Holy Father Philoumenos was not ashamed of the martyrdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, during his ministry in this sacred Shrine, imitating St. Foteini, the Samaritan Woman, who became a martyr and equal to the apostles in the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

The fervent love towards God filled our Father Philoumenos with a spirit of power and love but also of wisdom, therefore he did not flinch preaching the witness and the preaching of the crucified Christ, “ unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:23) according to wise Paul.

The “revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25) of the incarnation of God the Word and our Saviour Jesus Christ, my dear Brothers and Sisters, is the one which the holy calling and Christ’s grace revealed to us, and abolished the death of corruption and sin. Moreover, it brought to light the life and incorruption with the preaching of the gospel, as St. Paul preached; “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which

was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:9-10).

In other words, Christ revealed to us the death of eternal life, namely the death of incorruption, through His resurrection, as Theophylactos the interpreter says; "in His own body He [Christ] actively abolished death, making it [His body] incorrupt. For this reason His holy martyrs became communicants and participants of Christ's death, namely of His eternal Kingdom. According to St. Chrysostom; "Christ lives and works in the souls of the martyrs".

The genuine martyr of Christ's blood is distinguished for his perfect love, as Clement of Alexandria says; "we call martyrdom an accomplishment, not because the man came to the end of his life, as the rest [of the people], but because he has accomplished the perfect work of love". It is precisely this perfect work of love that today's honoured martyr St. Philoumenos accomplished. And "his perfect work of love in Christ" was sealed with his confession to God that the Messiah is Christ. This confession was done in this Jacob's well as witnessed by St. John the Evangelist; "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:25-26).

St. Philoumenos manifested again this "perfect work of love" through his martyr's death, hearkening to the Lord's words; "Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God" (Luke 12:8). This means that becoming one among the cloud of the martyrs of the Church, our Father Philoumenos did not find the confession of his Christian faith enough, but he was "planted together in the likeness of his death" (Romans 6:5), namely of Christ.

Today's commemoration of Hieromartyr Philoumenos in this very place of his martyrdom proves that the Church of Christ is not a worldly institution but the God-man mystical body of Christ who was crucified and resurrected for us and said; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24), " I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25), "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

To follow Christ, my dear ones, means to be in communion of faith, as much as in communion of life and participation in His passion, in co-suffering with Him, according to the glorious example of our Holy Hieromartyr Philoumenos the Hagiotaphite.

Let us thank our Lord God Who glorified St. Philoumenos who glorified Him, who we now entreat, along with our Most Blessed Lady and Ever-Virgin Mary to intercede to our God and Saviour Christ for our souls. And along with the hymn writer let us say; "the law of the praises is being defeated by the magnitude of your feats; the Master Christ alone glorifies you with the divine splendour; fervently entreat Him for those who praise you in faith". Amen! Many happy returns!"

After the Divine Liturgy the Hegoumen and renovator of the Monastery and founder of the new Church of St. Foteini offered a reception at the Hegoumeneion and later a meal at lunch time.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE ARCHANGELS IN JERUSALEM

On Thursday, November 8/21, 2019, the feast of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel was celebrated at their Holy Monastery on the North west side of the Patriarchate.

In the Holy Church of this Monastery the Episcopal Divine Liturgy was celebrated by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons, with the participation in prayer of faithful Christians from Jerusalem and noble pilgrims.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen and renovator of the Holy Church of the Monastery Most Reverend Archbishop Demetrios of Lydda and Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod offered a reception at the hegoumeneion.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE ARCHANGELS IN YAFFO

On Thursday, November 8/21, 2019, the feast of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel was celebrated at their Holy Monastery in the old city of Yaffo near the sea.

On this feast the Church commemorates the event that Archangel Michael opposed Lucifer who rebelled against God, and called the Angels by saying; "Let us stand up right. Let us stand in fear". The Church prays to the Archangel and all heavenly

hosts for their protection and intercession.

The Church in this Monastery of the Archangels had been burnt in the 50's but the current Hegoumen Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Yaffo fully renovated it and decorated the interior with Byzantine icon paintings.

In the Church of this Monastery the Festal Divine Liturgy was officiated by the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Yaffo, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Ioustinos of Krini and Kalamaria of the Church of Greece, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Nikolaos of the County Ahalkalaki and Kourmouto of the Patriarchate of Georgia, the Master of Ceremonies of the Patriarchate Archimandrite Bartholomew, the Hegoumen of Remla Archimandrite Nephon, Arab-speaking Priests and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The Liturgy was attended by representatives of the Greek Embassy in Tel Aviv, other diplomatic representatives and faithful Christians from the city of Yaffo and its districts, as well as pilgrims from Greece, Russia and Romania.

His Eminence Archbishop Damascene delivered a Sermon to this congregation and after the Divine Liturgy offered a reception and a meal.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ST. GEORGE THE GREAT MARTYR IN LYDDA

On Saturday, November 3/16, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of St. George the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer at

his holy Church in Lydda.

On this day the Church celebrates the translation of the relics of St. George from Rome where he suffered a martyr's death, in 4th century A.D., to his hometown Lydda, and of the consecration of the Church by St. Helen.

In this Holy Church, which the Patriarchate preserves as a shrine, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem officiated the Divine Liturgy with the preceding warm welcome by the clergy. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, the Most Reverend Archbishop and Secretary-General Aristarchos of Constantina, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Elias of Filomiliou, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by Mr. Vasilios Gotsopoulos in Greek on the right and by the Community Choir in Arabic on the left, as the service was attended by representatives of the Greek Embassy in Israel and the Ambassadors of Serbia, England, Russia and Georgia, as well as a large congregation venerating the Saint's tomb.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation;

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:2-3) Jesus Christ orders to those who believe in Him.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The Sacred commemoration of the consecration of the Church of the Holy Great Martyr George the Trophy-bearer in your historic biblical town of Lydda, namely the translation of his sacred relics, has gathered us all in order to glorify in

Eucharist our Lord God, Who has glorified the martyr of love, the true sun of righteousness, His Only Begotten Son and our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. George was established as one of the great martyrs of Christ's love, having become participant of the cruciform and redeeming blood of Christ, as well as a communicant of the cloud of martyrs of the Church (Hebrews 12:1).

We refer to the Church because the mission of the Church in the world is the perfection of man in Christ. And this perfection in Christ is the aim and the expectation of Christ's friends, and of course of His martyrs. And this is so, because Christ, God the Word, is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end (Revelation 21:6), namely the salvation of the people, as He "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

Having been the son of noble Christian parents, from a Cappadocian father and a Palestinian mother, George was brought up according to the law of divine reverence, of the faith in Christ, and on the one hand he reached for "the knowledge of truth", while on the other, he desired the heavenly and eternal city, hearkening to St. Paul's words; "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14). "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Philip. 3:20-21).

Because of this, and having cleansed his mind with the light of the glorious gospel of God (2 Cor. 4:4), George who was known for his undefeated bravery as a grand commander of the Roman army, presented himself in the Roman Parliament before the cruel persecutor of the Christians Emperor Diocletian, and boldly stated himself to be a Christian and proclaimed Christ

to be the God and the Son of God.

In other words, my dear ones, St. George denounced the fallacy of the false gods and of the idols, as well as the self-religion of the Roman Emperors who made themselves gods and sought to be worshiped by their subjects and citizens. In this case George proves himself to be a faithful witness of Christ's truth but also of the freedom of the people from the demonic religion of the idols as prophet-king David says; "For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens" (Psalm 96:4-5).

Today's honoured commemoration of St. George does not only refer to the historic place and time of his life and action, but also to our contemporary state of humanity and of the world, for which world, St. John the Evangelist says: "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:19-20) and he concludes; "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21), which means from the idolatrous notions and fallacies concerning God.

The innate and impulsive faith of St. George to the crucified and resurrected Christ as well as his Godly zeal in favour of the teaching of Christ's gospel, state that he became a witness and fighter for the divine righteousness in Christ, as St. Paul preaches; "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17).

The Trophy-bearer George gained this righteousness becoming an

imitator of Christ in both words and actions, hearkening to St. Paul's advice; "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). As it is known, St. Paul completed his apostolic preaching mission in Rome, with the martyr's blood of Christ's love.

The Holy Martyrs of the Church of Christ are the most selective and exquisite chorea of its saints. And this is so because by their confession of Christ as the real God, they have exchanged the glory of this world (1 Cor. 7:31) with the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Philip. 3:21).

Interpreting these words, St. Theodoritos says: "He said that our body has become of one accord with the body of His glory, not according to the measure of glory, but according to the quality. And this is also a luminous thing". And in more detail; the transformation of the holy martyrs' body underlines the change from the corrupt things to the incorrupt and from the lack of glory to glory itself" according to Zigavinos.

Behold therefore why the hymn writer of the Holy Great Martyr George says; "with the streams of thine own blood thou mightily didst quench the flame of delusion and error, destroying all the tyrants' pride, hereby glorifying Christ. From the right hand of the Most High hast thou therefore been given the crowns of life everlasting and of divine incorruption".

All of us who honour today the commemoration of George the brave Martyr, the preacher of truth, the defender of the poor and the healer of the sick, let us entreat him to intercede to our Lord God for the peace of our souls and the peace of our turbulent region.

Let us also beseech the Ever-Virgin Mary and Mother of God, the Most Blessed Theotokos to intercede to her Son and God and our Lord Jesus Christ, to guide our actions to a redeeming harbour and to the unwaning light which illumines the souls of the holy martyrs and of course of the Holy Great Martyr George the Trophy-bearer. Amen.”

After the Divine Liturgy, Hegoumen Archimandrite Nicodemus, who has worked on the preservation of the ikonostasion of the Church, offered a reception at the Community Club.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ST. GEORGE THE GREAT MARTYR AND TROPHY-BEARER IN JERUSALEM

On Saturday, November 3/16, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the translation of the relics of St. George the Trophy-bearer from Rome to Lydda, and of the consecration of the Holy Church bearing his name in Lydda, which was constructed by St. Helen in the 4th century A.D.

This feast was celebrated:

1. At the Holy Monastery of St. George in the Jewish Quarter, in south Old City of Jerusalem. Vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on the morning of the feast were officiated by Archimandrite Demetrios Kavathas, with the participation in prayer of a congregation which were offered a reception after the

Divine Liturgy by the responsible of the renovation and icon painting of the Holy Church Abbess Nun Marianna.

2. At St. George of the Hospital

This Monastery is called so because the Patriarch of Jerusalem Chrysanthos (1707-1731) had founded a hospital there. In this Monastery, Vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on the morning of the feast were officiated by Archimandrite Kallistos, with Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons as co-celebrants, at the chanting of the Novice Monk Constantine and the Patriarchal School of Zion students. A congregation of Monks, Nuns and laity attended the Services.

This congregation was hosted by a reception at the hegoumeneion by the Reverend Nun Pansemni who has worked on the preservation of the old icons of the Monastery.

From Secretariat-General

**THE FEAST OF ST. DEMETRIOS
THE GREAT MARTYR AND MYRRH**

BEARER AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, October 26/ November 8, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy Great Martyr Demetrios the Myrrh Bearer at his chapel in the Central Monastery next to St. Demetrios School.

According to the Church, St. Demetrios came from Thessalonica, he believed in Christ and blessed Nestora to win the combat with Lyaios, and when this was made known both Demetrios and Nestoras martyred for Christ during the reign of Diocletian. Since then St. Demetrios has remained the patron Saint of his city Thessalonica and gushes out myrrh from his grave in the city for its citizens and all who come and pray for his protection.

In honour of St. Demetrios, Vespers was held in this chapel in the afternoon, and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning of the feast, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, with co-celebrants the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks Archimandrites Porphyrios and Ieronymos, Arab-speaking Priests and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by Novice Monk Constantinos and the Patriarchal School of Zion students on the right and by the Typikon Keeper Archimandrite Alexios on the left.

The officiating Archbishop gave a Sermon to the congregation praising St. Demetrios for his courage and strength during his martyrdom.

During the Divine Liturgy, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited the chapel escorted by Hagiotaphite Fathers, while after the Liturgy there was a reception at the adjacent School for the Episcopal entourage and all who celebrated the feast, under the care of the School Principal Mr.Samir Zananiri, the teachers and the students. The synaxarist of the Saint was read and the students recited

poems and danced traditional dances of Greece and Palestine.

From Secretariat-General

THE MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JAMES THE BROTHER OF GOD

On Wednesday, October 24/ November 6, 2019, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at St. James Cathedral with a Memorial Service of the founders of this Cathedral, and of the Holy Forty Martyrs' Chapel which lies between St. James Cathedral and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The memorable Patriarchs of Jerusalem are buried there.

The Divine Liturgy and the Memorial Service were officiated by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia, with co-celebrants the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks Archimandrites Porphyrios and Meletios, Priests and Ministering Priests of the Cathedral, Fr. Farah – Charalambos and Fr. Hader – George and Fr. Nectarios, and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by Novice Monk Constantinos on the right in Greek and the Cathedral Choir on the left in Arabic as the service was attended by an Arab-speaking congregation.

From Secretariat-General

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

On Tuesday, October 23/ November 5, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of St. James the Brother of God and first Hierarch of Jerusalem as his Throne feast.

St. James the Brother of God is known to the Church as the son of Joseph the betrothed of Theotokos and brother of the Lord, according to the law, and the one to whom the Lord Himself entrusted the shepherding of the Church of Jerusalem. According to the Acts of the Apostles he was the Chairman of the First Synod of the Church of Jerusalem in 49 A.D. He is the author of the epistle with his name in the New Testament, he confessed Jesus as the Son of God and Christ and was overthrown from Solomon's Temple wing and is being honoured as a Hieromartyr.

Honouring his work, the Church of Jerusalem celebrated his commemoration at his Holy Cathedral next to the Central Monastery with Vespers in the evening and the Divine Liturgy on the morning of the Feast, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth and the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the Priests of the Cathedral; Fr. Farah/ Charalambos Bandour, and Fr.

Hader/George Baramki, other Priests, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Eulogios, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the participation in prayer of a large congregation from the Cathedral parish and pilgrims.

His Beatitude read the following Sermon to this congregation;

“The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever. The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment” (Psalm 37:29-30) the psalmist says.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The sacred commemoration of the righteous Apostle James the Brother of God has gathered us today in the Holy Cathedral dedicated to him, in order to offer a sacrifice of praise and bloodless Eucharist to the Holy Trinitarian God Who has performed great and wondrous things to His saints and righteous men.

St. James was distinguished as a tool of the working of the Holy Spirit, and this was so because he became the first Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem having been ordained by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and was the first one to write the Divine Liturgy, having been taught by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as the synaxarist of the Church witnesses.

Paul, the Apostle of the nations, calls the righteous James a “pillar” (Gal. 2:9) of the Church, while his Catholic Epistle presents him as a teacher of a great standard among his readers. He received the name “Brother of God” because along with the other so thought brothers of Jesus Christ, he was a son of Joseph the betrothed to the Ever-Virgin Mary and Mother of God. Joseph had been married before with another woman. Because of his excessive asceticism, he had “his knees hardened

just like those of a camel" because he prayed on his knees continuously, "worshiping God and praying for the remission of the sins of the people". For his excessive zeal of righteousness, namely of the faith in God and the good works, he was called "Righteous". "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" (James 2:14) he preaches in his catholic epistle, calling upon the connection between the man's body and soul and saying: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26).

In other words, faith without works is idle and dead, not only because it is empty from the manifestations that prove the existence of spiritual life to the one who believes, but because it is not able to work the salvation; it is impossible for the indifferent and idle faith to lead to the eternal life, as St. Cyril of Alexandria says: "Faith in Christ works righteousness and relieves from the stains of the previous sins. And if someone may be found to be idle and prone to fall into the passions of the world, it seems that in a way he has mortified the faith...regressing rather to the roughness and ruthlessness of his former life".

St. James was called "Righteous" not only because he believed the foretold prophecies written by the Prophets of the Law of Moses regarding the Son and Word of God, but he also became a communicant of the Passion of Christ, and of His martyr's blood, suffering a similar death to His, as St. Paul says: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss ...that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Philippians 3:8-11).

Interpreting this sacred words, St. Chrysostom says that our

Lord Jesus Christ is our righteousness. "Righteousness is God; and it is a complete gift". And St. James teaches, that God is the source of all good things given to us. "Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:16-17).

Indeed, we should be sure that God, Who called us to become participants of the righteousness of His Son and our Lord Jesus Christ, is reliable, and keeps His promises, for this reason each one of us should trust Him without hesitation, as St. Paul says; "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).

And our faith to God is being tested through our actions, as St. John Damascene says; "Faith without works is dead", likewise, works without faith are dead; for the true faith is being tested through works". For this reason, St. James recommends long-suffering and patience, calling upon the example of the hardships of the prophets and Job's patience. "Be patient therefore Brethren and grudge not one against another so that you may not be judged; behold the judge standeth before the door" (James 5:7-9). "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:10-11).

These apostolic words of St. James' preaching urge us to consider our Christian faith on the one hand, and on the other, our joining to the mystical body of Christ, namely the Church, whose one and sole and ultimate purpose is for us to become, according to St. Paul, "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), namely holy and partakers of Christ's life, having of course been relieved from the corruption of the world beforehand, which is created by the sinful desire.

“Becoming one with God with the partaking of the divine illumination and without altering the divine essence” St. John Damascene explains.

In other words, my dear brothers and sisters, the believers of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, according to St. John the Evangelist, “are born of God” (John 1:13), or “of the Spirit of God” (John 3:5, 8), and God becomes their Father (Eph. 2:18/ Rom.4; 12) and therefore they become heirs of the Kingdom of God. “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17) St. Paul says.

Honouring today the sacred commemoration of “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1) the Apostle who preaches that “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16), let us entreat along with the Mother of God and the hymn writer and say: “Distinguished among the Apostles as the brother and successor of Christ the Chief Shepherd, thou didst love death for His sake, and wast not ashamed of martyrdom, O glorious James. Entreat Him unceasingly that our souls be saved” and grant peace to our tested by war region. Amen.

After the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude, dressed in His Patriarchal vestments, and His Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Reception Hall, through the courtyard of Saint Constantine and the main gate of the Patriarchate. The Patriarchal Entourage and all faithful following them received the traditional small loaf of bread as a blessing from Abbess Seraphima.

At the Patriarchate Reception Hall, there was a special prayer by His Beatitude and His Entourage, the polychronion of His Beatitude was chanted and then a reception followed, where His Beatitude delivered the following address;

“James who was His (Jesus’) brother appears that he was not distant from Him, nor foreign to the faith to Him, but on the

contrary he was one of His most genuine disciples; so much so, that he was the first to be distinguished in the throne of the Church of Jerusalem" Eusevios of Caesarea mentions in his writings (Vol. 21, p. 380).

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem honours and venerates today the sacred commemoration of its first Hierarch, Spiritual Father, teacher and distinguished Apostle James the Brother of God. Being one of the most genuine of Christ's disciples, he was anointed by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself a minister of the spiritual sacraments, a High Priest, and was established the first Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem by the chorea of the Apostles, as his hymn writer says: "Thou has manifestly adorned the choir of the Apostles as the first high priest of Jerusalem, anointed by the very hand of the Word, as God's brother and disciple, and a sacred preacher of great mysteries".

St. James' festal commemoration refers not only to the institution of the Church which is inseparable to the Apostolic succession, that of the Bishop and Patriarch of Jerusalem, but also to the safeguarding of the religious and sacred Status Quo of the Holy City of Jerusalem, namely of its Christian demographic character.

St. James, who was called "Righteous" sealed the Throne of the Church of Jerusalem with his martyr's blood, becoming a co-martyr to Christ, Who is the mystical body and the head of the Church.

Our settlement by the mercy of God in the Bishop's Throne of St. James as his successor, bears witness to the true words of

the Lord in the Gospel: “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”, namely of the Church (Matt. 16:18).

Therefore, all of us who live in Jerusalem (Luke 24:18) and witness “the Name above all names” (Phil. 2:9), the name of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, are called to pay heed to the words of St. James the Brother of God whom we celebrate today; “Have long patience, therefore Brethren and stablish your hearts unto the coming of the Lord” (James 5: 7-8). Amen.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF ST. SAVVAS THE SANCTIFIED

On Saturday, October 13/26, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the translation of the relics of our Holy Father Savvas the Sanctified.

The translation of the relics took place on October 13/26, in the year 1965. At that time, one year after the meeting of the memorable Patriarch Athenagoras with Pope John Paul VI, after the lifting of the anathemas and the beginning of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem requested the return of the sacred relics of St. Savvas, which had been transported to Venice by the Crusaders.

The Roman Catholic Church granted this petition and the Saint's relics was returned to be welcomed by the full congregation at Jaffa Gate, offered for veneration at the

Church of the Holy Sepulchre for a week, and from there it was finally transported to the Lavra the Saint had founded, for the protection of the Fathers of the Lavra and of the pilgrims, as well as for their spiritual strengthening and sanctification.

For the celebration of this event, the All-night Vigil, with the Compline, Salutations, Matins and the Divine Liturgy were officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis and the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, and Hieromonks from other Orthodox Churches, Arab-speaking Priests, and the Hierodeacons Mark and Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Choir leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Novice Monk Constantinos and the left choir singer of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the right in Greek, and by Archimandrite Philotheos on the left in Arabic, with the participation in prayer of the Spiritual Father of the Lavra Archimandrite Eudokimos, local faithful from Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, and pilgrims from Greece, Romania and Russia.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon before the Holy Communion;

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:1-2) St. Paul preaches.

Beloved Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

Noble Christians and Pilgrims

Savvas the Sanctified “who has become a citizen of the

heavenly metropolis" has gathered all of us in his holy Lavra, to celebrate the sacred commemoration of the translation of his holy relic from the Italian city of Venice.

The keeping of the commemoration of the translation of St. Savvas' relic is a task both pleasing to God and a benevolence to us, who are subject to the corruption of death, by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Hearkening to St. Paul's advice, St. Savvas offered his body a living sacrifice, pleasing to God, offering at the same time a logical worship, namely the spiritual one, "which has nothing corporal, nothing fattening, nothing that can be felt" according to St. Chrysostom. This is confirmed by his biographer Cyril of Skythopolis by saying: "Predestined by God from his mother's womb and foreseen before his body was formed, according to Prophet Jeremias, Savvas despised the things of this worldly life all together and offered himself in a monastery...where he was trained in the monastic life in precision he learned the Psalter and along with all the remaining coenobitic rules in no time".

His desire for reverence, namely the life in Christ, led Savvas from the town Moutalaski of Cappadocia to the God-trodden places of Palestine, where he learned the monastic life by the great teachers of the desert, the Holy Fathers Theodosios the Cenobiarch and Euthymios, and became their true imitator.

Bearing in mind St. Paul's wise advice; "that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2), the citizen of this desert Savvas scouted the forms of this era, namely wealth, glory and every temporary and corruptible thing, and instead he was zealous to perform the perfect will of God. Therefore the hymn writer of the Church says; "through virtues thou didst live outside both of the world and the flesh, and through thy life and virtues, thou didst glorify on earth they very Lord of Glory, O Father

most wise, and thou rightly art glorified, O Savvas chosen of God; for in Him thou art a divine spring welling forth with cures”.

And indeed, my dear brothers, St. Savvas has become “a spring welling forth with cures”, a doctor for the sick and a healer of incurable diseases of both the soul and the body. A true witness of this is his incorrupt relic which lies before us, which gives a sacred fragrance and healing gifts, as St. Gregory Palamas says: “which word can worthily express God’s glory that is revealed by the relics of the saints, by their continuous emitted sacred fragrance, the relics which are a source of myrrh, of healing, full of workings of powers, in multiple and redeeming for us epiphanies”. [And in more detail; which words can clearly express God’s glory which is revealed by the corpses of the saints and the relics of the bones, a glory continuous throughout the ages, as well as the fragrance which is emitted from them, and the myrrh they gush out, the healing gifts and the workings of the powers and the many and redeeming healings that we experience through them?”]

Needless to say that the relics of the saints are a witness of the resurrection of the dead, “a commemoration of the righteous in praises” (Proverbs 10:7)., and “the souls of the righteous in the hand of God” (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1) according to the Holy Bible. And our Lord Jesus Christ says; “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matt. 22:32).

This true witness of the “God of the living” on the one hand and of “the resurrection of the dead” on the other, is being preached and evangelized to us by our Holy Father Savvas the Sanctified, who loved his Lord God with all his heart, with all his soul and with all his mind (Matt. 22:3) according to the Lord’s command.

We are also called to this purpose, as we honour the commemoration of our Holy and God-bearing Father Savvas, so

that we keep the commandments of our Saviour Jesus Christ and love His Church, because as St. John the Evangelist says: "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true" (1 John 5:19-20).

And we say this, because according to the psalmist, many say they love Him (God), "Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues" (Ps. 78:36).

Let us entreat the great citizen of the desert Savvas the Sanctified, who has boldness toward Christ our God, that he may intercede along with our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary for the light of our minds and peace of our souls. And along with the hymn writer let us say; "Thy very great and most honourable Lavra crieth out hymns of thanksgiving, bringing thee forward as its colonizer and founder and defender, O wise Savvas; and boasting int crieth out unto the Lord: Blessed is the God of our Fathers". Amen. Many Happy Returns!"

After the Dismissal and the boiled wheat in the Narthex, His Beatitude joined the monastic meal at the refectory and blessing everybody, departed via the Holy Monastery of St. Theodosios the Cenobiarch, according to the custom.

From Secretariat-General