

PRIEST'S ORDINATION AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, October 12/25, 2019, the ordination to Priest of Deacon George Baramki was held during the Divine Liturgy on Horrendous Golgotha by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina.

Fr. George Baramki has been ministering at St. James the Brother of God Cathedral as a Deacon of the Arab-speaking Orthodox Community of Jerusalem, while he is also working as a teacher at the Russian Orthodox Church School of Mount of Olives and Gethsemane in Bethany.

Before the ordination, the Archbishop admonished the ordained as follows, while the latter also read a speech, expressing his fear before the sacrament, but also his hope, that the Comforter will fortify him in his current high ministry.

Address of Geronda Secretary-General Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina at the ordination to Priest of Deacon Hader/George Baramki

“Reverend Deacon George,

It's been only a little while since your ordination to Deacon at the Life-giving Tomb of the Lord. Since your ordination to Deacon, you have ministered in devotion, reverence and fear of God at the parish of St. James the Brother of God Cathedral, and in all other ministries appointed to you by the Patriarchate.

The Patriarchate, the Mother of all Churches, and your mother Church, has appreciated your ecclesiastical ministry and simultaneously your educational service at the School of the Russian Church in Bethany, and today, with the blessings of H.H. Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem

Theophilos and of the Holy and Sacred Synod, you are called to receive the office of the Priesthood, to officiate as Priest the Sacraments of the Church and especially that of the Baptism and of the Holy Eucharist, to offer the bloodless sacrifice to the Lord and give His immaculate body and blood to the people of God for the remission of their sins and life everlasting.

In this ministry you will be established today and will always be guided by the Holy Spirit, Who will come down through the invocation and the touching of the hands of the Archbishop, in this place of Golgotha, the horrendous place of the sacrifice of the sinless One, the place where Christ, the Son of God and our Saviour became the propitiatory sacrifice for the remission of our sins.

It is a great blessing, a great honour, but also a great responsibility. Come forward though, and do not hesitate, Christ and the Church are calling you, and remain faithful until death, having as an example those who preceded in this ministry, Apostles, Confessors, Righteous Fathers and Teachers of the Church.

Be sure that from now on you will be accompanied by the prayers of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, the co-celebrant Priests, the commissioners and the congregation of St. James' Cathedral, of your parents, your pious wife and all those who honour you with their presence, so that you may become worthy of your ministry." His speech is below as it was read in Arabic;

السيامة الكهنوتية المقدسة لشماس رعية القدس

كاتدرائية القديس يعقوب أخو الرب

الأب الشماس جاورجيوس (خضر) برامكي

"وما من أحد يتولى بنفسه هذا المقام، بل من دعاه الله كما دعا هارون"

(بولس الرسول الإناء المختار في رسالة إلى العبرانيين 5: 4)

الجمعة 12/10/2019 شرقي 25/10/2019 غربي، تذكّار القديسين

الشهداء بروبس وطراخوس وأندرونيكوس (مظفر)

المجد لك يا رب المجد لك

باسم الآب والإبن والروح القدس الإله الواحد آمين

وَاحِدَةً سَأَلْتُ مِنَ الرَّبِّ وَإِيَّاهَا أَلْتَمَسُ: أَنْ
أَسْكُنَ فِي بَيْتِ الرَّبِّ كُلَّ أَيَّامِ حَيَاتِي، لِكَيْ
أَعَيْنَ بِهَاءِ الرَّبِّ، وَأَتَبَصَّرَ هَيْكَلَهُ. (مز 26: 4)
قال الرب: اطلبوا أوسلا ملاكوت الله وبره وكل تلك
الأشياء تزداد لكم" (لوقا 12: 31)

في مستهل كلمتي أود أن أتقدم بالشكر والتقدير لصاحب الغبطة
بطريك المدينة المقدسة أورشليم كيريوس كيريوس ثيوفيلوس الثالث
وأعضاء المجمع المقدس الموقرين على الثقة التي اوكلوها لي
للعمل في حقل الرب، ولك يا سيادة الوكيل البطريركي والسكرتير
العام رئيس أساقفة قسطنطيني أرسيترخوس الجزيل الإحترام، السادة
المطارنة الحاضرين، الآباء الكهنة الأجلء والشمامسة المحبي
المسيح، رعية القديس يعقوب أخو الرب، الشعب الواقف، إخوتي في
الرب يسوع المسيح، جميعكم وجميعكن.

اليوم يا ابي ومرشدي الحكيم والأمين أرسيترخوس على يدك سوف تحل
نعمة الالهية التي في كل حين تشفي المرضى وتكمل الناقصين.
"أنا أشكركم أوسيسوع ربنا الذي قواني،
أنا أشكركم أوسيسوع ربنا، إذ جعلتني لخدمة"
(رسالة بولس الرسول الأولى إلى تيموثاوس 1: 12). وأخترني لكي أنال
نصيب هذه الخدمة والرسالة المقدسة لأن الله وحده يعرف القلوب.
فطلبت الرب فأعطني سؤال قلبي. (مزمور 36: 4) طلبت الرب بإجتهد
فاستجاب لي ومن جميع مخاوفي نجاني. عظموا الرب معي ولنرفع اسمه
جميعنا.

أشتهيت أن أصبح خادماً للرب وكاهناً منذ الصغر كنت ارتل كلمات
الكاهن في خدمة القديس الإلهي بالبيت وأفكر كيف علي أن انذر نفسي
للرب حيث يقول الكاهن في طلبه السلامية لنودع أنفسنا وكل حياتنا
للمسيح الاله. لكن فهمت ان الأمر ليس سهلاً أن استودع حياتي للرب
لذلك نطلب معونة سيدتنا والدة الإله الدائمة البتولية مريم وجميع
القديسين. وأيضاً كانت كلمات الكاهن تدخل الى اعماق قلبي عندما
يقول القدسات للقديسين اي جسد المسيح المقدس ودمه الكريم هما
القدسات التي ينبغي منحها لمناولة القديسين. أي جميعنا مدعون إلى
القداسة لأنه مكتوب «كوزوا قديسين لأنني أنا زنا
قديس». (1 بط 1: 16) وعلي أن اجاهد في سبيل بلوغ الكمال.
وتعلمت أن ملاكوت السموات يغصب، والغاصبون
يختطفونهم». (مت 11: 12) أي علينا ان نجاهد غير متهاونين

مع انفسنا ونغصب ذواتنا على ترك الخطيئة والالتصاق بالله حتى يكون لنا ملكوت السموات.

بهذا اليوم المبارك واقف امامكم إنطلاقاً من دعوة الرب يسوع المسيح لتلاميذه بقوله "فَإَذْهَبُوا وَتَلْمِذُوا وَاجْمَعُوا جَمِيعَ الْأُمَّمِ مَعْمَدِينَ إِيَاهُمْ بِاسْمِ الْآبِ وَالْابْنِ وَالرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ، وَعَلِّمُوهُمْ أَنْ يَحْفَظُوا جَمِيعَ مَا أُوصَيْتُكُمْ بِهِ." (متى 28: 19-20)

من أجل حفظ الوصية وتكملة العمل الرسولي ومحبة الله اقدم نفسي للخدمة. هذه هي وصية الرب أن أحب الربَّ - إلهي من كلِّ قلوبِّي، ومن كلِّ نَفْسِي، ومن كلِّ قُوَّاتي (متى 22: 37) وقال الرب يسوع المسيح لسمعان بطرس: يا سمعان بن يونا، أتحنني أكثر من هؤلاء؟ قال له: نعم يا رب، أنت تعلم أنني أحبك. قال له: إرع خرافي (يوحنا 21: 15) وايضاً قال إذهبوا إلى العالم أجمع وبشِّروا بالإنجيل للخليقة كلِّها" (مرقس 16: 15). فَوَيْلٌ لِي إِنْ كُنْتُ لَا أُبَشِّرُ. " (1 كو 9: 16) أَنْتَ يَا رَبَّ الطَّرِيقُ وَالْحَقُّ وَالْحَيَاةُ. لَيْسَ أَحَدٌ يَأْتِي إِلَيَّ إِلَّا بِكَ (يوحنا 14: 6) يا رب إلى من نذهب؟ وكلام الحياة الأبدية هو عندك" (يوحنا 6: 68) أنت يا رب تنير سراجي أنت يا إلهي تضيء ظلمتي (مزمو 17: 28)

امام هذا الفرح الكبير بقبول سر الكهنوت أقف ملتصقاً صلواتكم الحارة يا شعب المسيح، لكي أكون عبداً مستحقاً لسماع صوت الرب القائل "نَعِمَّ - أَيُّهَا الْعَبِيدُ الصَّالِحُ وَالْأَمِينُ! كُنْتُ أَمِينًا فِي النُّقْلِ فَأَقِيمُكَ عَلَى الْكَثِيرِ. ادْخُلْ إِلَيَّ فَرِحْ سَيِّدِكَ" (متى 25: 21) قد حفظت الوديعة أيها الوكيل الأمين التي أوكلتها إليك، فصلوا معي ولأجلي. ذوقوا وأنظروا ما أطيب الرب. فطوبى للرجل المتوكل عليه (مزمو 33: 8) الأغنياء افتقروا وجاعوا أما الذين يتقون الرب فلا يعوزهم أي شيء من الخير.

(إنجيل متى 5: 19) ،وتعلمت منذ الضغر انه مَنْ عَمِلَ وَعَلَّمَ، فَهَذَا يُدْعَى عَظِيمًا فِي مَلَائِكَةِ السَّمَاوَاتِ. ومن أراد أن يكون عظيماً فيكم فليكن لكم خادماً (متى 20: 26)

كهنتك يا رب يلبسون البر وأبرارك يتهللون. رحم الله جميع الكهنة الأرثوذكسين ونخص بالذكر من عائلتي الأب ميخالاكي برامكي الذي تمت سيامته عام 1826 والاب يعقوب برامكي الذي قام بالخدمة 50 عاماً والاب قسطندي برامكي الذي انتقل الى السماوات عام 1918 وايضا الاب الياس يغنم الذي ادخلني الى الهيكل في عمر 40 يوماً والاب جبرا بدور والاب عيسى توما.

قال الرب مَنَ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَتَّيْعَنِي، فَلَا يَكْفُرْ
بِنَفْسِهِ وَيَحْمِلْ صَلَابَتَهُ وَيَتَّيْعَنِي وفي سيامتي
للموسية كان عيد زياح الصليب 14/8/2018 واليوم إرادة الرب ان
تكون السيامة الكهنوتية في مكان صلب يسوع المسيح (الجلجثة
المقدسة). فَإِنَّ كَلِمَةَ الصَّالِبِ عِنْدَ الْهَالِكِينَ
جَهَالَةٌ، وَأَمَّا عِنْدَنَا نَحْنُ الْمُخَلَّصِينَ فَهِيَ
قُوَّةُ اللَّهِ" (الرسالة الاولى الى أهل كورنتس 1/18)

واشكر الله على محبته وأشكرك يا سيادة المطران على النعمة التي
ستنسكب بواسطتك على هامتي أنا الخاطئ، ولكم أيها الآباء مشاركيي
في الخدمة، ولكل من حضر ليشاركني هذه الفرحة من قريب ومن بعيد كل
منكم باسمه. كما واتوجه بشكري الجزيل الى جمعية حاملات الطيب
الأرثوذكسية والملجأ الارثوذكسي ونادي الإتحاد الأرثوذكسي العربي
ووكلاء كاتدرائية القديس يعقوب اخو الرب وجميع اللجان وافراد
الطائفة الكرام بالقدس والى زوجتي الحبيبة الخورية الجديدة
(ماتوشكا ماريا)، أي "الأم الصغيرة" على وقوفها بجانبى ولن أنسى
أبني نيقولاوس سامي المشارك معنا بصلاة وأبني الثاني سابا الذي هو
حاضرٌ داخل أحشاء امه هذه السيامة المقدسة. وأمي وأبي لهم مني
أسمى آيات العرفان بالجميل.

اشكر كافة الآباء الكهنة الذين كابدوا مشقة الطريق لكي يفرحوا
معي بهذا اليوم المبارك، كما اخص بالذكر ابي قدس الأرشمندريت
ميلاتيوس الذي كان لي السند القويم، والأب قدس الايكونومس فرح بدور،
وابي قدس الأب ميخائيل من دير القديس سابا المتقدس الذي يصلي
لعائلي دائماً، والمرشد الحكيم لعائلي الأرشمندريت رومان
كروسوفكي رئيس البعثة الأرثوذكسية الروسية في أورشليم واشكرالأم
اليزابيث رئيسة دير القديسة مريم المجدلية الروسي في القدس والام
ماريا وال المديره الأعلى للمدرسة الأرثوذكسية الروسية في العيزرية
على ثقتهم ومحبتهم.

فأعدك أيها الرب يسوع المسيح على الجلجثة في مكان صلبك المقدس
ستفرح بإبنك لأنني سوف احمل الصليب واشهد لك في حياتي ومستعدٌ
للإستشهاد حتى شهادة الدم من اجل كلمة الحق والإيمان المستقيم
الأرثوذكسي وفي سبيل محبة يسوع المسيح. "لأنَّ لِي الْحَيَاةَ
هِيَ الْمَسِيحُ وَالْمَوْتُ هُوَ رَبِّحٌ." (فيلبي 1: 21). هذا
هو اكليل الشهداء .

أيها الشهداء القديسون الذين جاهدتم حسناً وتكللتم تشفعوا الى
الرب ان ترحم نفوسنا.
المجد لك أيها المسيح الاله فخر الرسل وبهجة الشهداء.
"اذكرني يا رب متى أتيت في ملكوتك"

قال الرب ولن يندم «أزنت كاهن إلی الأبد علی رتبة»
«ملاکي صادق».

The ordained was honoured with the presence of co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Fathers and Arab-speaking Priests, friends of his and his wife, and members of the parish of St. James the Brother of God, where he is called to minister as a Priest; all present prayed for him and cried out the “Axios” along with the Archbishop when the newly ordained was being dressed with the priestly vestments.

After the end of the celebration of this Divine Liturgy, the ordained, along with the Episcopal entourage, went to the Patriarchate Reception Hall, and paid his respect and thanksgiving to His Beatitude, while the latter blessed him with the following words and offered him an icon of the Theotokos and of St. Philoumenos;

“Dear Father Hader/George,

The grace of the Holy Spirit has made you today a Steward and minister of the Divine and unspeakable Sacraments of the Church, namely of the mystical body of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Your ministry as a ministering Priest at the Holy Cathedral of St. James the Brother of God is quite honourable, but also quite responsible. And this is so because St. James’ Priests undertake the pastoral care of the precious Community of Jerusalem, especially at a time when the Christian presence is being tested in both the Holy Land and in Jerusalem.

The Holy Church of Jerusalem has called you to work in its Spiritual and geographical vineyard. The harvest is great, and the workers only a few, but what is impossible for the people is made possible by God. The grace and the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit established the uneducated fishermen as great enlighteners of the world, making them apostles and teachers.

Your obedience to your Spiritual Authority, namely the Patriarchate, and your humility, should become the armor of your new Priestly ministry. And your love with all your soul, heart and mind toward God and His Church should be the manner and way of your communication with the flock.

The study of the Holy Bible and the teachings of the Holy Apostles and Evangelists should be the source of your inspiration for the preaching of the Divine Word of the Gospel of Christ. And the study of the writings of the Holy and God-bearing Fathers of the Church should be the safe key for the interpretation and explanation of the Holy Scriptures.

With these Fatherly and Patriarchal words, we wish that the strengthening Grace of the Holy Spirit may establish you a worthy worker of the vineyard of the Lord and of His Church, through the intercessions of the Most Blessed and Ever-Virgin Mary. May you be Axios and secured at all times!"

From Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE D. LITURGY AT THE CHURCH OF ST. MOSES THE ETHIOPIAN IN SAMARIA

On Sunday, October 7/20, 2019, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos led the Divine Liturgy at

the old Church of St. Moses the Ethiopian, at the Community of Rafidia in Nablus of Samaria, not far from Jacob's well, where the Lord spoke with the Samaritan woman.

St. Moses the Ethiopian is witnessed by the Synaxarion of the Church as having lived in Ethiopia in the 4th century A.D., a former chief robber, who became contrite by an unknown event, repented and was baptized, and received the monastic schema. He founded a Monastery and led many – some of whom used to be former fellow robbers of his – to life in Christ and in salvation. St. Moses died at the age of seventy.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the renovation of this Church, by the funding of the Palestinian Autonomy, that is why representatives of the State were present, among whom Mr. Ramzi Chury, President of the Palestinian Church Committee of Christian Affairs, his Secretary Mrs. Hananiye Amire, representatives of the Mayor of the district, the Ambassador of the Palestinian Autonomy in the Vatican Mr. Issa Kassiye, and other Municipal and Governmental officials.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Hegoumen of Rafidia, Archimandrite Leontios, the Hegoumen of Jacob's well, Archimandrite Ioustinos, Archimandrite Porfyrios, the representative of the Patriarchate in the Arab M.M. Fr. Issa Mousleh, other Priests and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by the Byzantine singer of the left choir of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Vasilios Gotsopoulos in Greek, and the Rafidia Community choir in Arabic, while the Community members participated in the service. His Beatitude offered an icon of the Theotokos for the Church and a Cross to Archimandrite Leontios.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation;

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9), St. Peter preaches.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians

Blessed is the Lord our God, who has brought us in your beautiful town of Rafidia, in order to celebrate the commemoration of our Holy Father among the Saints Moses of Ethiopia, in the old Church dedicated to him and has been recently renovated.

This blessed Moses came from Ethiopia and lived in the 4th century. Being a slave, he was banished by his lord for his infamous works and brutal personality. Ever since, he led a sinful and illegal life, became the leader of a gang of thieves and he was renowned for being a robber.

One day he repented unexpectedly and retreated to a Monastery in a deserted area of Arabia, as Bishop Palladios of Elenoupolis mentions in his history saying; “This robber, having become contrite by some reason, gave himself in a monastery and was thus brought to the state of repentance.” In the monastery he was tested by harsh temptations, which he fought by multiplying fasting and prayer, vigils and the like manners of repentance. Many spiritual students of his, who used to be his companions in sin, followed him in the ascetic life of the desert. Saint Moses was killed by barbarians and slept in the Lord at the age of 75 in the end of the 4th century, in 400 A.D. And this was so in order to fulfil the word of our Master Christ; “all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matt. 26:52).

Our Holy Church honours his commemoration especially, because he hearkened to Christ’s words; “and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). And “I am not come to

call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:13). These words of the Lord in the Gospel denote that so great is the power of repentance that it can lead the penitent man to the light and the truth of our Lord, as the psalmist says: "send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God" (Psalm 43:3-4). Interpreting these words, Theodoritos Kyrou says: "He called the Church of God tabernacles of the Lord, Jerusalem a holy hill, and the redeeming epiphany of our Saviour Jesus Christ the light and the truth".

Indeed, my dear brothers and sisters, our Holy Father among the Saints Moses, did not only repent and was led to the light and the truth of Christ, but he also became a Priest, ministering in the Holy Altar of God. This fact reveals the depth and width of repentance, which stems from the outmost philanthropy of God "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Behold therefore why St. Paul says: "God granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

In other words, in His ineffable philanthropy, God does not only accept repentance, but He also makes it work within the repenting one through the workings of His grace. God transforms the hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. He awakens the sleeping consciousness, crying out and saying: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14). And it is God who stimulates the will of the sinner in order to seek His mercy. Repentance is a gift from God, which man should accept with his free will as St. John of the Ladder states in short; "Repentance is a treaty with God for a second life", namely an agreement with God for a new life.

And this is what Saint Moses did, as St. Zosimas mentions in his notes: "Was Aba Moses not a chief robber initially, did he not do a million bad things? So that he was rejected by his

Lord because of his recalcitrance? But because he entered [Christianity] bravely and with such fervent accord, we are all aware of the stature he reached so that he is counted among the chosen servants of God”.

Truly, the heart of our Father among the Saints Moses became a pure habitat of the Holy Spirit, as his hymn writer says: “Thy heart, made to shine by visions and labours, was shown to be a pure dwelling-place of the Spirit, O all-blessed Father”. Our Father Moses accomplished this with the Divine grace, and with his good accord, namely his free choice and decision.

Relatively, let us hear what the Great Father of the Church St. Gregory of Nyssa says regarding the meaning of “accord”; “accord is this, the non-enslaved and self-dominant property of something, which is placed in the freedom of the intellect”. This means that God cannot be held responsible for any malicious thing happening in any case, and therefore not of the personal sin of man. God does not tempt us, on the contrary He is the source of every good and perfect gift, as St. James the Brother of God teaches by saying: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:13-14).

Our Holy Father Moses is projected by the Church not only as an example of repentance but also as an example of the power of the accord, namely of the will for the overcoming of sins and the abstinence of our passions, through the weapons of fasting and prayer, as well as through the transposition of the intellect to things favourable for both mind (nous) and speech (logos).

Let us entreat our Father who is counted among the chorea of the saints, so that along with our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, they may intercede to Christ our God to grant us the great mercy and the renewal of our souls and

bodies. Amen.

And from the Holy Altar, we would like to express our warm wholehearted thanks to all those who worked for the renovation of the historic parish Church of St. Moses the Ethiopian, especially to the President of the Supreme Committee of Religious Affairs Mr. Ramzi Khury, who represents His Excellency the President of the Palestinian State Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, wishing him health and longevity and every governmental power through God. Many Happy Returns!"

During the meal offered at lunch time, by the Hegoumen and the Community Council, His Beatitude also said the following;

"I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Hebrews 2:12 / Psalm 22:23).

Your Excellency Mr. Ramzi Khoury, representative of His Excellency the President of the Palestinian State Mr. Mahmoud Abbas,

Honorable Members of the Church Council of the Rafidia Community,

Dear Fathers and Brothers, Noble Christians

Let us praise our Lord God, Who has deemed us worthy in this Eucharistic gathering to bless the recently renovated small, but historic Church of our Holy Father Moses the Ethiopian.

The renovation of this humble Church does not refer so much to its architectural value, as it does to the irrefutable witness of the centuries-old Christian and Apostolic legacy, and the ab-Antiquo presence of the primary Church of Christ, namely the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The most beautiful and developing town of Rafidia has especial importance and this is so because it is incorporated within the historic and cultural frame of the wider district of the

Biblical town of Nablus, with Jacob's well as a reference point, which is the birth town of St. Foteini, the Samaritan woman.

The indicated interest of the Palestinian Government in favour of the renovation and preservation of monuments and houses of worship without any distinction among the religious communities and the Christian Doctrines is a solid proof of the love and the good co-existence and co-habitation of the religious communities and of their equal treatment.

The Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, remaining stable and faithful in its God-sent mission, continues its ministry, namely the ministry of the safe-guarding of the All-holy shrines, of the care of its flock, and especially of the protection of the religious and cultural Status Quo of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

We take this opportunity in order to again express from the depths of our hearts our thanks to the President of the Church Committee and its respected members, the Hegoumen of Jacob's well, Reverend Archimandrite Ioustinos and your Spiritual Father, Reverend Archimandrite Leontios, and especially the representative of the President Mahmoud Abbas Dr. Ramzi Khoury, whose contribution is undoubtedly recognized above all.

We wish health and the success in God to the ongoing God-pleasing work of your community. Amen."

His Beatitude offered Mr. Ramzi Chury an icon of the Theotokos and a painting of Jerusalem to the other Palestinian representatives. Finally, the President of the Community Mr. Psiara Chury spoke, expressing his thanksgiving.

From Secretariat-General

THE CONSECRATION OF THE HOLY CHURCH OF SAINT SAVVAS IN YAFFAAN NASIRAH OF NAZARETH

On Saturday, September 29/ October 12, 2019, the Consecration of the Holy Church of Saint Savvas the Sanctified was held, at the Greek Orthodox Arab-Speaking Community of town Yaffaan Nasirah, near the city of Nazareth, where our Lord Jesus Christ lived and because of which, He was called Nazarene.

This Holy Church, initially built in the 12th century, and now renovated and dedicated to Saint Savvas, reminds us through its presence and name of the fact that the pastoral activity of St. Savvas, which began in the 5th century from his great Monastery-Lavra in Judea, had also reached Galilee, where he constructed Churches and Monasteries, according to his biographer Cyril of Skythopolis.

According to the typikon order of our Orthodox Church, the service of the Consecration was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of the local Metropolitan His Eminence Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom Archimandrite Artemios, the Supervisor of this Community Steward Fr. Gabriel Nadaf, and from afar, the Spiritual Father of the Lavra of St. Savvas Archimandrite Eudokimos, who brought the relics of the slaughtered Fathers of St. Savvas' Monastery, for the Holy Altar, the Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Eulogios. The chanting was

delivered by the Novice Monk Constantine in Greek and the Nazareth Community choir in Arabic, with the participation in prayer of the Community members and faithful from many parishes of Nazareth and Galilee.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon before the Holy Communion;

“By means of His coming, Christ hath filled all things with His light; our souls are now consecrated and by His Holy Spirit He hath renewed the world; for a house is founded to the Lord’s praise and glory, wherein Christ our God, for the salvation of mortals, doth consecrate and hallow the hearts of all His faithful flock” the hymnographer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all in the neighbouring to Nazareth town of Yaffea, in order to consecrate the newly built Church of St. Savvas the Sanctified for the glory and honour of the Holy Trinitarian God.

On Mount Sinai, this very Lord, our God, showed Moses a tabernacle made of no human hands, outlining the Church of Christ, which according to St. Paul is the mount of Spiritual Zion, and the city of the Living God (Hebrews 12:2). And according to the witness of Evangelist Mark, Jesus Christ told His Disciple Peter: “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). And this is so because the Church is the mystical body of Christ, and Christ is the head of this body as St. Paul preaches; “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23).

The hymnographer of the consecration of the Church accurately states the meaning of this event, calling upon the gospel words of St. John the Theologian who says; "When the Word dwelt among us in the flesh, the Son of Thunder spake thus in his writings: we have radiantly beheld the glory which the Son hath from the Father in the grace of truth. And as many of us as have received Him with faith, to all hath He given the power to become children of God; and we, who were born again not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but have received the increase by the Holy Spirit, have raised up this house of prayer, and cry out: Do Thy Thyself now establish this house O Lord".

In other words, today, we that have been reborn through the Holy Baptism and have put on Christ, have made a house, a Church of prayer, where the heavens rejoice and the earthly things are made glad; the creation is being blessed and the Creator is being worshiped, and where lies the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

Nevertheless, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). And the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of Christ is the One who holds together the whole constitution of the Church as the hymn writer says; "The Holy Spirit provideth all things; He gusheth forth prophecy; He perfecteth the priesthood; he hath taught wisdom to the illiterate. He hath shown forth the fishermen as theologians. He holdeth together the whole constitution of the Church. Moreover, the Lord confirms this through the mouth of Prophet Ezekiel saying: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

These prophetic words show that the service of the

consecration refers to the consecration of our souls and bodies in the Holy Spirit. And we say this, hearkening to the preaching of St. Paul saying; "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17), and elsewhere, "ye are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor. 6:16).

The consecration in the Holy Spirit, namely the "new heart" and the "new spirit" of Christ did our Holy Father among the Saint Savvas the Sanctified acquire, thus becoming a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, of "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Hebrews 12:23). Behold therefore why the consecrated Churches are dedicated in honour of the holy and righteous people of God, and especially in honour of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and Mother of God. "God is wondrous in His saints" (Psalm 67:36) the psalmist proclaims.

Indeed, God was made wondrous in His Saint Savvas the Sanctified, making him "a temple of the Living God" and an incorrupt relic fragrant of the "holiness in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 1:4) of the resurrection from the dead of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Today's consecrated Church of St. Savvas the Sanctified in the district of Nazareth, the town of the Annunciation of Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, is an irrefutable witness of the revealed mystery of old, for the love and philanthropy of God in the incarnate God the Word Jesus Christ, through the pure blood of the Full of Grace Virgin Mary.

Therefore, we cry out loud; "Great art Thou O Lord, and wondrous are Thy works, and no word sufficeth to praise Thy wonders". And along with Saint Sophronius the Patriarch of Jerusalem we say; "Today Paradise is opened unto men, and the Sun of Righteousness shineth upon us. Today things on high

celebrate together with things below, and things below converse with things on high. Today the sacred and grandiloquent festival of the (Rum) Orthodox is glad". And together with St. John Damascene we praise; "Hail thou O Holy Zion, mother of Churches, God's abode, for thou wast the first to obtain remission of sins through the resurrection".

In this house of God, the dwelling place of God, we are also invited my dear ones, by God Himself, our Saviour Jesus Christ Who says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

We pray and beseech Thee o Lord, just as You has sent down Your glory to Your Disciples after Your resurrection from the dead and Your Ascension in heavens, renew a right Spirit within us, and uphold us with Thy free Spirit, and accept our prayers of repentance. Moreover, accept every bloodless and thanksgiving sacrifice offered to Thee in faith by all who love the decorum of Your house. Amen."

During the offered meal, His Beatitude addressed all present as follows;

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

Your Excellence Mr. President of the Community,

Your Excellences, Representatives of the Government,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We rend glory and thanksgiving to the Holy Trinitarian God who has deemed us worthy for the consecration of the newly built Church, dedicated to Saint Savvas the Sanctified, in your town today.

Our joy in Christ is commendable day is indeed great. And this is so, because a good work is being offered to your town, and

for the Christian community a house of worship and prayer. A house of God is being offered, where all those who labour and are heavy laden may find rest, as the Lord says; "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

And our joy in Christ is greater because the Church of the Living God (2 Cor. 6:16), namely of the reverend flock of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, gives its active witness, both through its participation in the liturgic life and practice of the church, and through the accomplished social and pastoral ministry under the spiritual guidance of Reverend Priest Fr. Gabriel (Nadaf) and his associates; and especially of the ministry of the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth who is the shepherd of your community.

The good cooperation between the spiritual shepherd and his flock, not only brought forth the good fruit, but also brought the completion of the construction and function of the presently consecrated Holy Church of St. Savvas the Sanctified.

Needless to say, that as a house of worship and prayer to the God of love and mercy, the Church is a guarantee of the identity of the members of the Community, especially of the youth.

And we say this, because the contemporary era of the rapid development of the electronic technology creates a confusion to the whole world and especially to the youth, and questions the great spiritual and moral values of the Holy Scriptures, which consist the inexhaustible source of the healthy faith in the God of love and philanthropy, as well as of endless mercy. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

On this blessed opportunity, we would like to assure you, my

dear brothers and sisters, that the Venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem remains faithful and dedicated to its holy mission of the safeguarding of the All-holy Shrines, as well as of its pastoral care for its Christian flock.

Finally, we express our warmest thanks to all here present, in this great feast of the consecration, and especially to the women's associations, of the youth, the scouts, who made every effort for this event.

May the Lord God, strengthen and guide their actions to the working of His commandments, through the intercession of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and of our Holy Father among the Saints, Savvas the Sanctified. Amen. Many Happy Returns!"

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAC IN DOHA

For the holy feast of Saint Isaac the Syriac at the Holy Archdiocese of Qatar in Doha, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios informs us:

"With special ecclesiastical brilliance we celebrated for the first time the feast of Saint Isaac the Syriac at the Cathedral in Doha, after the consecration by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, in February this year, with the participation of clergy of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, who came to honour the feast.

On Thursday, October 10, 2019, Great Vespers with the Blessing

of Bread was held with the participation in prayer of the Most Reverend Archbishop Nectarios of Athedona. The chanting was delivered by the Church choir in Greek and Arabic.

Vespers was followed by a festal reception at the reception hall of the Holy Church, in the presence of the clergy, the Consul of Greece in Doha Mr. Ioannis Zelomosidis and members of the flock.

Dressed in Greek traditional costumes, the members of the Dance Club of the Greeks in Qatar danced traditional dances and members of the Arab-speaking flock presented a program of traditional Arabic music.

On Friday, October 11, 2019, Matins and the Episcopal Divine Liturgy were celebrated, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Nectarios of Anthedona, with the co-celebration of the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, Archimandrite Ieronymos and the Priests Demetrios and Stylianos. The services were attended by many faithful Christians, the Ambassador of Greece in Doha Mr. Constantine Orphanides, and the Defense Attache, Colonel Mr. Panayiotis Krikis.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a procession of the Holy Icon of Saint Isaac the Syriac and a reception at the reception hall of the Holy Cathedral”.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ST. THECLA AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, September 24/ October 7, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Holy First Martyr Thecla the Equal to the Apostles, at her chapel in the Central Monastery of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

According to the Synaxarist of the Church, St. Thecla followed Apostle Paul as his disciple, preached Christ and having lived in holiness and virtue she slept in the Lord at an old age in Ikonion of Asia Minor.

At this chapel, Vespers with the blessing of bread was held in the evening and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning of the feast day by the ministering Priest of the Holy Church of Saints Constantine and Helen Archimandrite Sergios, with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons, with the participation in prayer of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, as well as of the Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Priests and Monks.

After both Vespers and the Divine Liturgy, boiled wheat with wine and blessed bread were offered at the courtyard of the Holy Monastery and at the Epitropikon by the care of the Typikon Keeper Archimandrite Alexios.

From Secretariat-General

THE SUNDAY AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE H. CROSS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, September 16/29, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Sunday after the Exaltation of the H. Cross at the Holy Monastery of the Sacred Cross, which is in West Jerusalem, near the Hebrew Knesset. The Church holds the belief that the three-composed wood of cedar, cypress and pine which was used to make the Cross of our Lord's crucifixion was planted in the place of this Monastery.

Between the years 1845 to 1909, the Patriarchate used to keep in this H. Monastery an Undergraduate School of Theology with prominent Theologian graduates, both laity and Hagiotaphite clergymen, such as the former Patriarch of Jerusalem Timotheos Themelis and Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, former Archbishop of Athens.

On this day the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Monastery, officiated by the Most Reverend Metropolitan and Exarch of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Cyprus Timotheos of Bostra, with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Archimandrite Ignatios, Archimandrite Mattheos, and Archimandrite Kallistos, Arab-speaking Priests and the Deacons Eulogios and Demetrios. The chanting was delivered by the Novice Monk Constantine Spyropoulos, Monk Raphael and the Patriarchal School of Zion students in Greek, and Mr. Lawrence Samour in Arabic. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and members of the Greek Consulate and Arab-speaking Orthodox faithful from the occupied territories and from Jerusalem.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception at the

Hegoumeneion and a meal in honour of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, the Episcopal Entourage, the Consul General Mr. Sophianopoulos and others, by the Hegoumen Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE SACRED CROSS

On Friday, September 14/27, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Sacred Cross.

On this feast the Church commemorates that fact that after the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by Saint Helen, on the day of the Consecration in the year 336, the Sacred Cross of Christ that was found on Golgotha was “exalted” so that the crowds of all faithful would see it from afar.

This feast was celebrated by the Patriarchate as “Parresia”, with Vespers in the evening and the Divine Liturgy on the Feast day, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Both Vespers and the Divine Liturgy were officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

Vespers began with the welcoming reception and veneration of the Holy Deposition and the All-holy Tomb, with the bells

tolling, the incense offering procedure and the Blessing of Bread at the Catholicon.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Catholicon, where co-celebrants to His Beatitude were the Archbishops of the Throne, Most Reverend Metropolitans; Isychios of Kapitolias, and Timotheos of Bostra, the Most Reverend Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Philoumenos of Pella and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, visiting Archbishops from the Patriarchate of Moscow, the Patriarchate of Serbia and from the Church of Greece. Likewise, co-celebrants were the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archdeacon Mark, 5 more Deacons and many Priests from Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, and Serbia. The Services were attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the full congregation of a great multitude of pilgrims, despite the unacceptable hindrance of the Armenians.

After the Divine Liturgy the Procession marched toward the area of the Cave of the Finding of the Sacred Cross where the Exaltation of the Sacred Cross took place according to the Typikon order.

The Procession then marched three times around the Sacred Edicule and then up to the Horrendous Golgotha where there was again the Exaltation, by His Beatitude. Starting from the Holy Altar of Golgotha the Cross was exalted and turned to the four points of the horizon with a special prayer in each of the four exaltations. Many pilgrims venerated the Sacred Cross with the piece of the Sacred Wood in great joy and reverence and received basil leaves as a blessing from the disc where the Sacred Cross was placed.

After the Divine Liturgy the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate in joy and gleefulness, bells tolling.

There the pilgrims paid their respects to His Beatitude, and received His blessing, hearing the following address of His;

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14) St. Paul says.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

Our Holy Orthodox Church celebrates today the universal Exaltation of the Honoured and Life-giving Cross, which took place by Saint Makarios, Archbishop of Jerusalem at the presence of Saint Helen the mother of the Byzantine Emperor, Saint Constantine the Great.

We celebrated today this great event of salvation at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where the Horrendous Golgotha lies, where the Sacred Cross was placed and later found by Saint Helen the Equal to the Apostles.

The one who “was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Cor. 12:4), says; “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14).

Interpreting these words of St. Paul, St. Chrysostom says; “and what is the boasting in the Cross? That Christ received for my sake the form of a servant and suffered all His sufferings for me, the slave, the enemy and ingratitude, but He loved me that much, so that He delivered Himself for me.”

In other words, all our hopes are based on the Cross. The Cross fortifies and encourages us, because our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ received our infirmities and through His

blood on the Cross restored our human nature from the corruption of sin. Through the Cross, the whole creation was restored, and the humankind was restored as well. "For this Wood (the Cross) is our salvation, the weapon of peace, the trophy invincible" the hymnographer says.

"Indeed, the Cross, which our Church exalts in all boldness today, is a weapon of strength and victory but also a symbol of glory and an instrument for the abolition of the rejoicing in the boasting, as St. James the Brother of God says: "But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil" (James 4:16).

Our Lord Jesus Christ became the model man of self-denial and outmost humility on the Cross, and through the Cross, because "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philip. 2:8).

The sacred feast of the Exaltation of the Sacred Cross calls us today in this cause, to the exaltation of the earthly toward the spiritual and redeeming works of the soul, to the exaltation of the corrupt to the incorrupt and eternal goods.

Moreover, this is what the Life-giving Cross of Christ advices us through the Lord's words; "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:12).

As for us, let us say along with the hymn writer: "Thou Who was raised up on the Cross of Thine own will, and through the Cross Thou hast also raised us up, grant us the heavenly joy and have mercy on us for Thou art good and loving-kind". Amen. Many Happy Returns!"

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, September 13/26, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Consecration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. On this Feast the Church commemorates the fact that after the completion of the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by St. Helen in 336 A.D. around the Horrendous Golgotha and the Life-giving Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ, the magnificent ceremony of the Consecration of the Church took place, according to the command of St. Constantine the Great. The service was officiated by the Archbishop Makarios of Jerusalem with the co-celebration of many Archbishops from across the Empire.

In honour of this event, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, led by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, with co-celebrants the Hagitoaphite Archimandrites; Sergios, Meletios, Porphyrios and Kallistos, and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader Mr. Vasilios Gotsopoulos with the help of Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the Patriarchal School of Zion students, as the service was attended by many pilgrims who are visiting for the feast of the Elevation of the Sacred Cross.

After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy the Episcopal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters where they paid their respect to H.H. Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THEOTOKOS AT THE TOWN OF BEIT JALA

On Sunday, September 9/22, 2019, the feast of the Nativity was celebrated with one-day transference at the beautiful and magnificent Church of the Nativity of Theotokos in the Greek-Orthodox Arab-speaking community of Beit Jala

On this feast, most reverently honouring the Mother of God, the Greek-Orthodox Community of Beit Jala thanked festively God for His present to humanity, namely of Mary, who was given to her parents Joachim and Anna, in order for her to become the Mother of God and bear in the flesh our Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, by the Holy Spirit.

The full congregation of this feast was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Secretary-General, Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, and the Patriarchal Representative in Bethlehem Most Reverend Archbishop Theophylaktos of Jordan, the Hegoumen Archimandrite Ignatios, Archimandrite Ieronymos, the ministering Priests of the Church Fathers George, Yusef, Paul and Elias, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Beit Jala choir in Arabic and Greek, as the service was attended by the Consul Mrs. Katherine Tzima and a large congregation which had filled the Church.

His Beatitude delivered the following sermon to this congregation;

“Adam is set free and Eve danceth with joy, and I spirit they cry unto thee, the Theotokos. For through thee, we were delivered from the curse of our first father, when Christ appeared” St. Andrew of Crete the hymnographer proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The grace of the Holy Spirit and the divine power of the Most High that overshadowed the blessed Virgin Mary has gathered us in this Holy Church in order to celebrate and faithfully venerate her Holy Nativity according to God’s promise; through whom we have been saved from the ancient curse, with the epiphany of Christ the new Adam.

The Nativity of the Ever-Virgin Mary was foretold by the Holy Prophets and especially by Prophet Isaiah saying; “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

This son of the Virgin is no other than the “Sun of righteousness” namely the new Adam, Christ the Saviour of the world and redeemer from the corruption and death, as very clearly the hymnographer states; ““Thy Nativity, O Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to the whole world; for from thee hath dawned the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, annulling the curse and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting”.

From the curse of corruption and death, namely of the Law of the Old Testament did Christ redeem us, as St. Paul says: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). Interpreting these words, the

Great Father of the Church Athanasios says: "Christ became a curse...by accepting the cursed death".

For this reason, the Nativity of Theotokos, according to the hymn writer; "Hath proclaimed joy to the whole world". And we wonder; what is this joy? It is the universal and historic event that the Nativity of Theotokos by her righteous parents Joachim and Anna proclaimed three things; firstly, that Christ is the fulfilment of the Law of Moses and of the Prophets, secondly, the union of the human nature with the divine in Christ through the pure blood of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, and thirdly the revealing of the truth in Christ.

Let us hear in that case St. Sergius the Hagiopolitis saying; "She is born, the Mother of our God, and with her the world is made new. She is brought forth, and the Church is arrayed with her proper majesty. She is the holy Temple, the vessel of the God-head, the virginal instrument, the royal bridechamber wherein was accomplished the wondrous mystery".

The Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is the only person in the world who has been blessed by all people according to her own confession witnessed by Evangelist Luke: " And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke 1:46, 48). And this is so, because Mary the Mother of God has become "higher than all creation for she conceiveth the Creator in the flesh" and "a treasury of our life and the gateway of the unapproachable light" according to the hymn writer of the church.

Indeed my dear brothers and sisters, God's bride and Ever-Virgin Mary became the "gateway of the unapproachable light" because she received in her womb the fire of the God-head as the hymn writer states; "The bush on the mount unburnt by fire, and the Chaldean furnace cool with dew, prefigured thee plainly, O Bride of God; for thou didst receive in thy material womb the Immaterial God, and wast not consumed.

Wherefore, we cry unto Him that was born of thee; Blessed is the God of our Fathers”.

Today’s feast of the Nativity of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is not only a feast of joy but also a feast of the redemption of the humankind “from the guilt of the offences” as we read in the kontakion of the feast; “Joachim and Anna were freed from the reproach of childlessness, and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death, O immaculate One, by thy holy Nativity, which thy people, redeemed from the guilt of offences, celebrate by crying to thee: The barren woman giveth birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our life”.

On His Sermon on the Mount, our Lord Jesus Christ commemorates especially the guilt on the last judgment, saying; “Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matt. 5:21). And St. Paul, referring to the results of the Passion and death of Christ says; “He (Christ) also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:14-15).

In other words, Satan is the one who incited the first-created couple to sin that led to death. Since therefore the devil incites people to sin, he is characterized as the one who has the power of death. This however, the power of death and sin and the one who possesses the power of death, the devil, were abolished by Christ’s death.

By saying death, we mean the spiritual death, namely the apostasy of man against God, but also the natural death, which follows. These two kinds of death create fear and cause guilt which paralyzes man psychologically, since he is being threatened by this cruel death.

The incarnation of Christ God the Word, which was made manifest by the undertaking of the human nature from the pure blood of Theotokos, abolished the guilt and the fear of the bondage of death. Man does no longer feel guilty, because God shows from the depths His love toward us, because when we still were full of sin, Christ died for us, as St. Paul says: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Behold therefore, why today the Church of Christ rejoices and is glad and behold why we unceasingly bless the Mother of God. Let us then my dear brothers and sisters say along with the hymnographer; "Virginity is alien to mothers, and childbirth is foreign to virgins; in thee, O Theotokos, both were granted. Wherefore, all we the tribes of the earth call thee blest unceasingly". Most Holy Mother of God pray to your Son and God for all of us. Amen. Many happy returns!"

Many people came for their sanctification at the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, while the congregation assisted the choir in the chanting.

After the Divine Liturgy a reception was offered, and a meal at noon, by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Ignatios, and the Priests of the Community Council of the town; His Beatitude addressed all present at the meal as follows;

"Your Excellency Mr. President and respected members of the Church Committee,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1)

The grace of the Most Blessed Theotokos and Mother of God has deemed us worthy, both clergy and the people to co-celebrate,

festively and in Eucharist today, this joyful day of the regeneration of the world on the one hand; and the “decorum of the Church” on the other, namely the Nativity of the Mother of God.

Our Holy Church is rejoicing in gleefulness today, because, as the hymnographer also says, “the Mother of Life is born today, dispersing the darkness. She is the restoration of Adam and the recalling of Eve, the fountain of incorruption and the release from corruption, through whom we have been deified and delivered from death”.

In these God-inspired words of St. Sergius the Hagiopolitis (of Jerusalem) we have the description of “what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height” (Eph. 3:18), as St. Paul says on the mystery of the Divine Providence, namely of our Holy Church, the mystical body of Christ; “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph. 5:30) according to St. Paul.

This means that the Church of Jerusalem, the Patriarchate which is known as Roum Orthodox along with the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, are the premium of the eternal presence of its Christian congregation on the one hand, and of the guarantee of its origin and ancestry on the other.

And we say this, because our Christian youth is facing many and various difficulties today, with prominent among them the identity and origin crisis. This is a phenomenon experienced by all Christian Communities, that is why an alert-campaign has been launched.

Our Roum Orthodox Patriarchate has never ceased to care for its flock, especially for the education of the youth. The dialogue of Christ’s love solves all problems and not the public politicized conflicts. Regardless of their social status, people come and go because they are subjected to the laws of corruption and death. However, the institution of the

Patriarchate and of the Church is not subjected to these laws of corruption because it is founded on the redeeming blood of the crucified Righteous One, Christ.

This very event, the universal celebration is held by our Orthodox Church, in the Most Blessed and Ever-Virgin Mary the Mother of God. Our Church celebrates the Nativity of Theotokos, namely the reproach of death and corruption on the one hand; and the divine gift of eternal life in Christ on the other, as very clearly the hymn writer says; "Thy Nativity, O Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to the whole world; for from thee hath dawned the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, annulling the curse and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting".

Many happy and peaceful returns!"

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS OF GOD AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, September 9/22, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated especially the commemoration of Saints Joachim and Anna, whose prayer was answered by God and granted them Maria as their child, and made them Ancestors of God, and their daughter the Mother of God, because she was predestined to bear in the flesh His Only Begotten Son the Saviour and Redeemer of the world, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This feast was celebrated by the Patriarchate at their ancient

Holy Monastery, which is adjacent to the interior wall of the city of Jerusalem by St. Stephen's Gate, or Lion's Gate.

Vespers in the evening and the Divine Liturgy in the morning were officiated by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, with co-celebrants Archimandrite Kallistos and Deacon Hader, at the chanting of monk Raphael with the help of Archimandrite Eusevios, as the service was attended by many faithful Christians and monks from Jerusalem.

The Officiator of the D. Liturgy and the Congregation were offered a hospitable reception at the Hegoumeneion after the D. Liturgy by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Meletios.

From Secretariat-General