

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY AT THE RUSSIAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY OF NAZARETH DISTRICT

On Saturday, May 26/June 8, 2019, the eve of the Sunday of the Holy Fathers, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Russian-speaking parish of the Church of St. Nikolaos, which belongs to the Patriarchate and was built by Patriarch Damianos in 1911. The Church had been at the disposal of the Arab-speaking members of the Patriarchate until the year 1948, when due to the Arab-Israeli conflict the members of the parish abandoned it and twenty years ago, during the Patriarchal Office of memorable Patriarch Diodoros the Church was returned to the Patriarchate, damaged in time, and since then, it has been used for the Services of the incoming Russian Orthodox faithful, who are under the care of the Patriarchate.

The Divine Liturgy on the commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Synod in Nice in 325 A.D. was officiated by His Beatitude, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophylactos of Jordan, the Hegoumen of the H. Monastery of St. Charalambos in Jerusalem, Archimandrite Kallistos, the Hegoumen of the H. Shrine in Cana, Archimandrite Chrysostom, the Russian-speaking Priest of the parish Hieromonk Sergios, Priest Simeon and other Priests and Archdeacon Mark. The parish choir chanted in Russian and the service was attended by a large number of faithful from this

town of Midgal Ha-emek.

His Beatitude spoke to this congregation as follows;

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:1-3).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all in this Holy Church of St. Nickolaos in town Moundejel, in order to celebrate in Eucharist and thanksgiving the annual commemoration of the 318 God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Synod in Nice (in 325 A.D.), with you, the Russian-Speaking and inseparable member of the body of the Church of Jerusalem.

Our Holy Orthodox Church especially honours the commemoration of the 318 Holy Fathers, because they were not only established as genuine vessels of the Holy Spirit, but also as true teachers and shepherds of the world, hearkening to St. Paul’s wise advice; “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:28-29).

The grievous wolves are no others than the known leaders of the heresies of Arianism, Nestorianism, Monothelitism and many other similar distorted teachings, as St. Paul foresaw by

saying; "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).

The Holy God-bearing Fathers of the Church are those who kept the consignment, namely the truth of the Gospel, exactly as they received it from the Holy Apostles, "avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6:20).

The truth of the Gospel refers to eternal life; it is the knowledge of the true God, the Son of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, as He Himself says; "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Explaining the phrase "eternal life", Christ defines what it means, and which is the way or the means to accomplish it. Interpreting these words of the Lord, St. Cyril of Alexandria says; "He defined faith through the power of the true knowledge of God as mother of the eternal life... And life is the knowledge, as the completion of the power of the mystery and the one which brings forth the mystical blessing of the communication between the human world and the supernatural one, through which, we are united with the living and life-giving Word."

In other words, by dear brothers and sisters, the knowledge of the true God means that we should have a personal knowledge of God the Father and His Son the Christ, just as we personally know people with whom we live together or are in close communication.

This very personal knowledge did the Holy Apostles gain, by becoming disciples and friends of Christ, hearkening to His advice; "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14).

This consignment of the knowledge of the true God is being

preached, evangelized and witnessed throughout the centuries by the Holy Church of Jerusalem, to every man "whosoever will save his life" (Matt. 16:25).

As in the past, "By faith Noah, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world" (Hebrews 11:7), likewise Christ, prepared His Church for our salvation, founding it on the redeeming blood of His crucifixion on the Horrendous Golgotha. For this reason the Church of Jerusalem does not have national borders. The "national" borders of the Church of Jerusalem are; the place of the incarnation of God the Word, namely of the Nativity of Christ from the pure blood of the Ever-Virgin Mary in Bethlehem, of His baptism in the river Jordan, of His Crucifixion on the place of skull, the Golgotha, and of His three-day burial and Resurrection in Jerusalem.

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem was made by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself the inexhaustible fountain, namely the place of the Holy Pentecost, during which the Holy Spirit came down to the Apostles as "tongues of fire" while they "were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1-2). "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5) as St. Luke the Apostle and Evangelist says.

This reality "out of every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5) of the existing Orthodox Christians is being ministered liturgically by the Church of Jerusalem, which is in essence the "good olive tree" to which "the natural branches", namely our brothers of the same doctrine "are grafted into their own olive tree" (Romans 11:24) as St. Paul preaches.

Today my dear brothers and sisters, we have come as the good shepherd to the courtyard of our own flock, in order to declare the unity of our faith and the community of the Holy Spirit.

Behold why then, our Holy Church of Jerusalem is the Church of the Passion on the Cross, of the Resurrection and of Pentecost, and behold why the Church of Jerusalem is called the Mother of all Churches, while its Head is the successor of St. James the Brother of God, the First Hierarch of the Church in general.

Let us entreat today's honoured Saints and God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Synod in Nice, so that along with the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary they may intercede our God and Saviour for the salvation of our souls.

And let us say along with St. Paul: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32) and in more detail; and now, I entrust you, my brothers, into God and into the Word which His grace has revealed to us, and Which Word will protect you from every fallacy and distortion of faith. I entrust you in God, Who is able to continue your progress in development and give you as an inheritance among all those who progressed towards their sanctification which they received through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Many Happy Returns."

After the Divine Liturgy the Community offered a reception to the Patriarchal Entourage at the courtyard of the Church.

From Secretariat-General

<https://youtu.be/k4vfEPi3EXM>

THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD AT THE PATRIARCHATE

The Feast of the Ascension of the Lord was celebrated one day after the feast of the Apodosis of Pascha, on Thursday May 24/ June 6, 2019.

On this feast the Church celebrates the fact that the Lord was ascended in heaven in glory, while His disciples were watching Him, and sat at the right side of the Father, having the human nature He had received with His incarnation and deified it. This event was celebrated by the Patriarchate at the place where it happened, on the Mount of Olives.

The feast was celebrated in the evening with Vespers, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the Priests of St. James Cathedral, at the chanting of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos on the right in Greek and Mr. Rimon Kamar on the left in Arabic.

After Vespers the first part of the Small Compline was read, the canon of the feast was chanted and the procession towards the Shrine of the Men of Galilee started, where His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was waiting to give His blessing.

Afterward the procession returned to the Ascension Shrine, the Small Compline was concluded and followed by the Dismissal.

On the morning of the Feast the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Shrine, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and visiting Priests from other Churches. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos on the right in Greek

and Mr. Rimon Kamar on the left in Arabic, as the service was attended by a noble congregation of local faithful and pilgrims.

During the Divine Liturgy His Beatitude and members of the Holy and Sacred Synod came to venerate, and then, according to the custom, visited the Imam who lives near the Shrine, and the Holy Monastery of the Ascension which is opposite the Shrine, where the Care Taker Monk Achilios welcomed them. Their visit continued to the Holy Russian Monastery of the Ascension, where they were received by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Mark of the Russian Church, and the Holy Monastery of the Men of Galilee where they were received by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Anthimos.

The feast of the Ascension was concluded with these.

From Secretariat-General

<https://youtu.be/4LZ9R0gPwLM>

THE FEAST OF THE APODOSIS OF PASCHA AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, May 23/ June 5, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Apodosis of Pascha, which is the completion of forty days after the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On this day the Church service is exactly the same as that of the day of Pascha, without the Biblical readings.

For this feast Vespers was held in the evening and the Divine Liturgy in the day of the feast at the Monastic Church of

Saints Constantine and Helen.

After the Divine Liturgy, according to the Hagiotaphite order, His Beatitude went to venerate the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, escorted by Hagiotaphite Fathers.

At that time the Divine Liturgy was being celebrated at the Catholikon of the Church, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia, the chanting was led by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and many faithful were present at the service.

After the Divine Liturgy the Episcopal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters where His Beatitude blessed them by saying Christ is risen!

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINTS CONSTANTINE AND HELEN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday May 21/ June 3, 2019, the Patriarchate and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood celebrated the commemoration of the Holy Glorious Sovereigns and Equals to the Apostles Constantine and Helen.

Saints Constantine and Helen are celebrated by the Church as equals to the Apostles due the Mediolanon decree in 312 A.D., by Constantine the Great, which allowed the Christians to freely exercise their religious duties, it allowed the freedom to spread Christianity and construct churches. First among which was the Church of the Resurrection which was built by Saint Helen between the years 326-336 A.D. when she had visited the Holy Land.

The Hagiotaphite Brotherhood honours Saint Helen as its founder and for this reason the Monastic Church is dedicated to her and her son Saint Constantine.

In this Church, Vespers was held in the evening, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning, officiated by Him, with co-celebrants Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Archimandrite Alexios the Typikon Keeper, and ministering Priests of the Church. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church Archimandrite Eusevios on the right and the Choir Leader of the Church of the Resurrection Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos on the left, with the participation in prayer of Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Priests, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and many faithful Christians.

In the evening after Vespers, there was a reception with the boiled wheat and dried bread, while in the morning there was the official return to the Patriarchate Headquarters, the distribution of small loaves of bread as a blessing, by the supervisor of the bakery Nun Seraphima, and finally the following address of His Beatitude;

“Rejoice, O great and all-wise Constantine, thou fount of Orthodox Faith, that dost water continually all the lands beneath the sun with thy sweet and delightful streams. Rejoice, O root from which there sprouted forth the fruit that nourisheth Christ’s most holy Church. Rejoice, thou most

glorious boast and fame of all the farthest ends of earth, first of Christian kings. Rejoice, thou joy of the faithful men.”

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

Today the Holy Church of Christ and especially the Church of Jerusalem, mystically rejoicing on the holy commemoration of the Holy glorious, God-crown sovereigns and equal to the Apostles Constantine and Helen, has celebrated festively the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at the Monastic Patriarchal Church bearing their name.

We keep the commemoration of these glorious equals to the Apostles Constantine and Helen, as we should, we, the primeval Monastic order of the Studious Ones, namely the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, which was founded by St. Helen, as well as the Roum Orthodox Christian people.

Correctly and righteously the hymn writer of the Church salutes St. Constantine as “the fount of Orthodox faith that dost water continually all the lands beneath the sun with sweet and delightful streams”, namely Romiosyne, and especially the Holy Land, which has been watered and sanctified by the blood of righteousness of our God and Saviour Christ on the Cross.

And we say this, because for us who keep the feast of Saints Constantine and Helen, this is not a mere commemoration of a historic event, but rather a reminder of the divine mission of the Church of Jerusalem, which has been ministering the All-holy Shrines throughout the centuries, and has been witnessing the light of truth, the light of the crucified and resurrected Christ. And this light is no other than the light of the faith

of the noble sovereigns of Romiosyne, Constantine and his mother Helen, as the hymn writer of the church expresses very clearly; "Not from man did great Constantine with his blest mother Helen receive the royal sovereignty, but by God's grace from Heaven. For he beheld the divine Cross as a bright flashing trophy. With it was he victorious over all who opposed him, and he destroyed the deceit and error of all the idols, while making strong throughout the world Orthodox faith and practice."

Let us pray to the Only Heavenly King, so that through the intercessions of our Lady the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and those of His Saints Constantine and Helen, we may be enlightened by the light and the power of the divine trophy, the Life-giving Cross, which has become a weapon for them against their opponents, and for us, boast and peace. "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 preaches. Amen. Many Happy returns! Christ is risen!"

Finally there was a festal monastic meal at the refectory of the Patriarchate.

From Secretariat-General

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AT JACOB'S WELL

The Sunday of the Samaritan Woman was celebrated on Sunday May 13/26, 2019 at Jacob's Well in Samaria in the city of Nablus. On this feast the Church commemorates the event of the

conversation of the Samaritan Woman with our Lord Jesus by Jacob's well, in which according to St. John the Evangelist (ch. 4:42) He revealed to her that He is Christ the Messiah.

At this place of the Well, at the marvelous Church of St. Foteini, which the current Hegoumen Archimandrite Justin has constructed, the Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Archimandrite Porfyrios and Archimandrite Ignatios, and Arab-speaking Priests. The chanting was delivered by Archimandrite Leontios the Hegoumen the Community of the Annunciation in Rafidia, on the right in Greek, and the Rafidia choir on the left in Arabic, while the service was attended by a noble congregation of local faithful, Greeks, Russians, Romanians, Serbians and of other nationalities.

His Beatitude delivered the following sermon to this congregation;

"Let Heaven and earth radiantly rejoice today, for Christ hath appeared incarnate as man, that He might deliver the whole race of Adam from the curse; and when he came to Samaria, He was made marvelous with miracles. He that is compassed about by the waters of the clouds standeth nigh unto a woman and seeketh water. Wherefore, let us the faithful all worship Him, Who of His own will became poor for our sake in His compassionate counsel" the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

Christ who is the living water and also gives the living water (John 4:10), has gathered us all at Jacob's well in the city

of Samaria, in order to celebrate the feast of the Samaritan Woman in Eucharist.

The meeting and converse of our Lord Jesus Christ with the Samaritan Woman, evokes feelings of marvel with His prophetic teaching on the one hand, and on the other, He works miracles by which the people are convinced that He is the Messiah, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses: "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias 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).

These miracles, or signs, are; that Christ reveals Himself to the Samaritan Woman and simultaneously reveals two things to her; first that He is "the living water". "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (John 4:10). Secondly, that God is a Spirit; "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

At this well, Christ "being wearied with his journey" (John 4:6), and being with the Samaritan Woman, He made known to the world His divine truth, which liberates man from the aridity of ignorance as the hymn writer of the Church says; "Thou art the water of life, cried the Samaritan Woman unto Christ. Give me to drink therefore, who always thirst for Thy Divine Grace, O Word, that I may no longer be held by the drought of ignorance, by may proclaim thy mighty acts, O Lord Jesus".

It should be noted that the philanthropist God, our Lord Jesus Christ, reveals for the first time the deepest purpose of His mission in the world to the Samaritan Woman the sinner, and not to His disciples. And the Samaritan Woman was not only baptized by Christ, the "living water", but also became a preacher of the Gospel of Light, of Truth and of repentance.

It is precisely this my dear ones what is pleasing to God, Who wants all men to be saved, and receive the full knowledge of the truth through faith and repentance, as St. Paul preaches; "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

Indeed, Christ is the "fountain of life", "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6), the Lord says. Christ offers this water in abundance to those who honestly search for it. "I am the living water" (John 4:10). And this "living water" is no other than the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of our Saviour Christ as He Himself confirms by saying: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38).

Interpreting these words, St. Cyril of Alexandria says, that once the faithful man has drunk and satisfied his thirst in Christ, he also then becomes a fountain that satisfies the thirsty souls of other people, "so that he does not only fill his own mind with the river waters, but is also able to transmit the God-given good to the hearts of others and gush it out to those afar".

This is exactly what happened with the Samaritan Woman, who became a fountain, namely the initiative for many of the Samaritan people to believe in Christ, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses; "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did" (John 4:39).

Both the witness of St. John the Evangelist – "for the saying of the woman" and the words of St. Luke the Evangelist in today's narrative from the Acts of the Apostles – "and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:21), "and much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts 11:24), through the Gospel preaching in Antioch, clearly express and confirm the

historic reality, that the one who will enter the waters of the divine word of the Gospel of Christ, inevitably will have his mind illumined by the light of truth and will be liberated from the spirit of fallacy (1 John 4:6), "avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 6:20-21).

This annunciation of light and truth and righteousness is being ministered by our Holy Church of Christ throughout the world, calling all men "to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:2-3).

In other words, my dear brothers and sisters, the Church is the Divine-human body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who was crucified and resurrected for us. Outside the Church, namely, without our participation in the Divine-human body of the Church, which is the mystical body of Christ, our rebirth in Christ is simply impossible, as impossible is our progress towards the perfect knowledge of God, which the Samaritan Woman, St. Foteini, whom we honour festively today, accomplished, and became a faithful Apostle and martyr of the love of Christ.

Holy Martyr Foteini the Samaritan Woman calls us through the urging words of Apostle Barnabas to remain devoted and attached to our Lord Jesus Christ with all our soul, so that we may be worthy of our Christian name, as well as of our joining in the mystical body of Christ, the Church, inside which and through which, our deification is made possible.

So let us say along with the hymn writer; "When thy Son destroyed all the might of death, O Virgin, as the mighty God, He exalted and deified us with Himself by His Resurrection. Wherefore we sing His praise unto the ages". Amen. Christ is risen!"

After Dismissal there was a procession and a lunch meal offered by Archimandrite Justin, while at the reception, His Beatitude awarded Mr. Jiries Khouri (Abu Khaled) for his contribution to the Rafidia Community and addressed him as follows;

“Dear Mr. Jiries Khouri, (Abu Khaled),

The Holy and Sacred Synod of the Church of Jerusalem, and we personally, recognizing the work of the good workers of the vineyard of the Church, have decided to award you with the Holy Cross of the Order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, in recognition of your devotion to the Church and especially of your great contribution to our Rum Orthodox Community in Rafidia.

This honorary distinction refers not only to your contribution to the Church and the State, but mainly and primarily to your moral manner of living and the integrity of your personality.

The wise Apostle Paul expressed the importance of the honorary distinction in simplicity and precision by saying; “And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully” (2 Tim. 2:5).

We wish the One Who was resurrected from the dead and gave the “living water” to the Samaritan Woman, may establish you a communicant of St. Paul’s words who said; “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Axios! Christ is risen! Our warmest Patriarchal gongratulations!”

During the awarding Mr. Yusef Nasser spoke (see video) and during the meal His Beatitude also addressed all present as

follows;

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24) the Lord says.

Reverend Hegoumen and renovator of the Holy Monastery of Jacob’s Well, Father Justin,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers, Noble Christians and pilgrims.

We thank our Trinitarian God, Who deemed us worthy to celebrate again this year the commemoration of the meeting of the Samaritan Woman with God the Word, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Christ’s answer to the Samaritan Woman’s question “Where God should be worshiped?” – “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24) is the founding principle of our Christian faith to the God of the incarnate love. “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16) St. John the Evangelist teaches.

This Gospel preaching is being ministered throughout the centuries by the Roum Orthodox Church of Jerusalem. This Gospel truth is being witnessed by this Holy Shrine of Jacob’s well in the blessed land of Palestine.

Needless to say that the fountain of water does not only satisfy the natural thirst, but mainly and primarily the spiritual thirst, namely the thirst of the souls of those who come here from the ends of the world, from all religions, namely from the Abrahamic ones.

In other words, the preservation and the ministry of worship of this Holy Shrine by the primary Roum Orthodox Monastic Order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood on the one hand, and the assurance of the free access of the pilgrims by the competent authorities of the Palestinian State on the other, promote the

mutual respect and the peaceful co-existence of religions and civilizations.

We pray that the fountain of Wisdom and the Provider of the Holy Spirit, God the Father of all of us, may bedew, comfort and vivify the athirst souls of all children of God, while the Grace of the Holy Spirit, which has made the Samaritan Woman a martyr of the love of God, may transform, sanctify and deify those who worship God in spirit and truth.

Many Happy returns! Christ is Risen!"

Finally, Mr. Ganam spoke (see video).

From Secretariat-General

PRIEST'S ORDINATION AT THE PATRIARCHATE

The ordination of Deacon Savva Mahouli, son of the Care Taker Priest Theodosios Mahouli, to Priest, according to the Synodical decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod chaired by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, took

place during the All-night Vigil at the Holy Sepulchre, which started with Matins at 11.30 p.m. on Thursday May 10/23, 2019 and the Divine Liturgy began at 1.30 a.m. on Friday May 11/24, 2019. Fr. Savvas is going to minister as the helper of the Care Taker of the Community of Tarseha Priest Gregory, and to some extent as a helper of his father, Priest Theodosios at the Koufr Yasif Community.

Before the ordination the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina who ordained the new Priest addressed him as follows;

“Reverend Deacon Savvas,

Only a few months have gone by since you received the sacrament of the first degree of Priesthood, to be a Hierodeacon, by the hands of the Archbishop in this Holy Place, the Horrendous Golgotha and the Life-giving Tomb of the Lord.

During these few months you have proven to be worthy of the trust the Church has shown you, because in faith and diligence you have ministered as a Deacon the Orthodox people of the Tarseha Community helping Fr. Gregory, the Care Taker, and the Koufr Smea Community, helping your father in flesh Fr. Theodosios.

The Holy and Sacred Synod, chaired by our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, based on the witness of the Patriarchal Representative in Acre-Ptolemais, Archimandrite Philotheos, of Fr. Gregory and of your father, Fr. Theodosios, along with that of the Care Takers of the parishes of Tarseha and of Koufr Smea, has approved your ordination to Priest.

You are therefore called, at this hour of the Divine Liturgy and here, at the holiest place of the world to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit to perform as a Priest the sacraments of the Church, the sacrament of the Eucharist, the bloodless sacrifice of Christ, to baptize the children of the Orthodox

Christians with three submersions and emergencies in the water and give them the first Holy Communion, which for us Orthodox is straight after the baptism, and to study the Holy Bible, to understand and explain it to the faithful, just like the Church Fathers have done.

Indeed, it is a great honour, a great responsibility, great is also the joy and the gleefulness, but do not hesitate, come forth and bear in mind to always sacrifice yourself, just like the Lord sacrificed Himself for our sake. He became a sacrifice for us, and with that sacrifice, with His Cross, joy came to the whole world.

Come forth therefore, kneel before the stone that the angel moved from the Tomb and pray that the All-holy Spirit may come down and burn your sins, purify you and make you a chosen vessel of God, a trusted and worthy worker in the vineyard of the Lord.

Be sure that you are accompanied by the prayers of your parents, your wife, relatives, my own prayers, and those of all who honour you with their presence at this hour.”

After the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the placing of the Archbishop’s hands on the ordained Deacon’s head, which established him to the degree of the Priest, those who honoured him with their presence, Archimandrite Philotheos, the co-celebrant Priests and the other Priests present, along with his relatives, called out the words “Axios”, “Axios”.

The newly ordained Priest offered a reception to his guests at the Office of Geronda Sacristan Most Reverend Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis.

Finally, in the morning he visited the Patriarchate Headquarters and received His Beatitude’s council and blessing.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE SIGN OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS IN THE HEAVENS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday morning, May 7/20, 2019, the commemoration of the appearance of the sign of the Precious Cross in the Heavens was celebrated with the Divine Liturgy in Golgotha, led by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis.

Regarding this wondrous event, St. Cyril of Alexandria, Archbishop of Jerusalem has delivered the witness to the Church, according to which, during the 3rd hour, which is 9 in the morning, on 7th May 351 A.D. the Cross appeared in heavens like a star, shining more than the sun rays and was visible from Golgotha to the Mount of Olives. A large crowd of people witnessed this at the time, praising and glorifying Christ, who was crucified on the Cross for our salvation.

After the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, the congregation came down from Golgotha and a procession began from the Deposition slate to conclude after three rounds about the Holy Sepulchre, with a large participation of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

After the procession the officiating Metropolitan read the Gospel narrative of the Resurrection of the Lord and the aforementioned letter of St. Cyril.

At the end of the service the Episcopal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters and paid their respects to

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

From Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY IN REINE

On the Sunday of the Paralytic man, May 6/19, 2019, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of St. George the Great Martyr at the Greek-Orthodox Arab-speaking Community of Reine, Nazareth's suburb.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Hagiotaphite Archimandrite Kallistos, the Dean Priest of this parish Fr. Simeon and other Arab-speaking Priests, and Archdeacon Mark, while the hymns were delivered by the parish choir and the service was attended by a large crowd of faithful Christians.

His Beatitude read the following Sermon to this congregation;

“At the Sheep's Pool, a man lay in sickness; and when he saw Thee, O Lord, he cried: I have no man, that when the water is troubled, he might put me therein. But when I go, another anticipateth me and receiveth the healing, and I lie yet in mine infirmity. And straightway, taking compassion on him, the Saviour saith unto him: for thee I became man, for thee I am clothed in flesh, and sayest thou: I have no man? Take up thy bed and walk” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians

Christ who is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have slept, and the first-born of all creation, and the Creator of all things, has gathered us in this holy Church of your town Reine, in order to celebrate the day of Pascha and the Lord's miracle of the healing of the paralytic man at the Sheep's pool in Jerusalem, as St. John the Evangelist says: "and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk" (John 5, 1-2, 5-8).

Interpreting Jesus command to the paralytic man "take up thy bed, and walk", St. Cyril of Alexandria says: "The command was in a Godly manner, having the proof of a power and authority above human power. For He is not praying for the healing of the infirmity of the sick man, so that He may not be seen to some as one of the holy prophets, but as the Lord of powers, in all authority, He commands that the miracle be done".

In other words, through the sign of the miracle, or the healing of the paralytic man, Jesus reveals His divine glory on the one hand, and on the other, He proves that He is the Son and Word of God, and also the Saviour of the people, namely, the healer of our souls and bodies. Moreover, He proves that "his word was with power" (Luke 4:32). This power of Jesus was ascertained by the astonished people, when Christ commanded the impure spirits to leave the possessed woman, as

Luke the Evangelist says: "And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out" (Luke 4:36).

Christ proved this divine power most profoundly by His three-day resurrection, as the hymn writer of the church festively says: "Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm! He has trampled down death by death! He has become the first born of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world great mercy".

It is made clear, my dear ones, that through His resurrection from the dead, Christ has revealed Himself to be the sovereign Lord and conqueror of the death of corruption and sin, and the deliverer of the humankind from the voraciousness of hades. For this reason the hymn writer is not restricted in the narration of the miraculous healing of the paralytic man, but prays to the healer and our Savior Jesus Christ for the healing of our paralytic soul, by saying: "As of old Thou didst raise up the paralytic, O Lord God, by Thy Godlike care and might, raise up my soul which is palsied by diverse sins and transgressions and by unseemly deeds and acts, that, being saved, I may also cry out: O Compassionate Redeemer, O Christ God, glory to Thy dominion and might".

It is a fact that palsy, namely the illness of the soul, is owed to our sins and distance from the Law of God, but also from the sanatorium, His Church. The illness of the soul is the result of the bondage in the various passions of the soul, which exert a frivolous effect on the soul. For this reason Jesus says to the paralytic man: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14). And according to St. Paul, sin is the sting of death; "The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. 15:56).

The healing of the palsied soul is only accomplished through

the divine grace and the mercy of God. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). Behold why the hymn writer, as a representative of each one of us, expresses the fervent intercession to the Lord, so that by His divine stewardship, He may raise us, just like the paralytic man of old, from whichever sins and illegal actions we have made, and as the most merciful and almighty God grant us the healing of our souls, namely the salvation of our souls.

Christ's question to the paralytic man of today's gospel narrative "wilt thou be made whole?" (John 5:6) is directed to all of us. And the paralytic may have righteously answered by saying: "Sir, I have no man" (John 5:7); he said that because he did not know the Saviour of the world. However, we, my dear ones, have no right to say that we have no man, "when the water is troubled, to put us into the pool" (John 5:7).

And we say this, because the incarnate through Virgin Mary God the Word and our Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect man, the most merciful and friend of man, while His Church, His mystical body, is the spiritual as well as the physical pool, whose water is no other than the Holy Spirit of God the Father "Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:6). And Prophet Joel says: "And it shall come to pass in those days," – meaning the incarnation of Christ, God the Word – "saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh... And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2: 17, 21).

In other words, my dear ones, we have a man, and moreover, a man who is a doctor and a healer, who heals every kind of infirmity, both of the soul and the body, as Matthew the Evangelist says: "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the

gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Matt. 9:35). Furthermore, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who was resurrected from the dead, advises us; “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Matt. 7:7-8).

Christ is risen!”

Afterward His Beatitude offered an icon of the Theotokos to be kept in the Church.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception at the reception hall of the parish, where the Dance club of Cana of Galilee, which has been founded by the Hegoumen of Cana Archimandrite Chrysostom, danced traditional dances.

At noon, a meal was offered at the reception hall of the parish by the Community Council, where His Beatitude addressed all present as follows;

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:24).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today our Holy Church commemorates the healing of the paralytic man by our Lord Jesus Christ, at the Sheep’s pool, as St. John the Evangelist says (John 5:1-15).

The healing of the paralytic man, as well as of many other ill people by Christ during His earthly presence, confirms the fact that He Himself took upon Him our sins, namely our wounds and infirmities, and offered His body a sacrifice for them on the Cross. And He did this to liberate us from sins and enable us to live for righteousness and for virtue. Through His wounds you have been healed, St. Peter says.

It is precisely this healing that Christ granted to all humankind through His luminous Resurrection. The preaching of the Resurrection of the crucified and buried Christ is being ministered throughout the centuries by the Rum-Orthodox Church, through the safeguarding of the All-holy shrines on the one hand, which are the irrefutable witnesses of the Christian faith, and on the other, through the pastoral care of its Christian congregation in the Holy Land.

This sacred consignment, namely the precious treasure of the teaching of the Gospel of Christ are we called to preserve like the pupil of an eye, especially the Christians who inhabit the Holy Land and the wider region of the Middle East, hearkening to the council of the wise Apostle Paul to his disciple Timothy: "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. 1:14). And St. Paul continues, urging his disciple, and all of us, not to imitate those who abandoned him and turned away from their Church. "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes" (2 Titus 1:15).

We, my dear brothers and sisters, who "have been healed by the stripes of our God and Saviour Christ" (1 Peter 2:24), and through baptism partake of His death, Who has trampled down and conquered the death of corruption and sin, are once more called to hear the faithful word of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who said to the paralytic man: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14).

In other words, we are once more called not to imitate Phygellus and Hermogenes.

Christ is risen! Many happy returns!"

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA AND OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN IN REMLI

On Sunday, April 29/ May 12, 2019, the commemoration of the Myrrh-bearing Women and of St. Joseph of Arimathaea who asked from Pilate the body of the Lord to bury it was celebrated in Remli, the Ancient Arimathaea.

The Divine Liturgy for this feast at the Holy Church of St. George that belongs to the Patriarchate was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishops; Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks among whom Archimandrite Meletios, Archimandrite Ieronymos, Fr. Joseph who was visiting from the Church of Czech Republic, and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by the Byzantine singer of Remli Community Elias, and the service was attended by members of the Greek Embassy in Tel Aviv, and the faithful Christians of the Remli community.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude read the following Sermon:

“Let us arise in the deep dawn and, instead of myrrh, offer praise to the Master; and we shall see Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, Who causeth life to dawn for all” St. John Damascene says.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The sun of righteousness, the resurrected Christ who has caused life to dawn for all has gathered us today in order to honour Joseph of Arimathaea in his hometown Arimathaea (Remli), along with his fellow-disciple of Christ Nicodemus. We also commemorate the reverend Myrrh-bearing Women.

The Myrrh-bearing Women are those who went to the Tomb of Jesus Christ "in deep dawn" as St. Luke the Evangelist says: "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared" (Luke 24:1). Joseph and Nicodemus are the secret disciples of Christ who undertook the task of burying the sacred body of Christ as St. John the Evangelist says: "And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight" (John 19:38-39).

Both the Myrrh-bearing Women and the secret disciples of Christ Joseph and Nicodemus are the true witnesses of the burial and resurrection of Christ. For this reason our Holy Church honours and projects them and through them calls us to participate in the joy of the Resurrection of Christ, offering our God and Master the Paschal hymn instead of myrrh.

In other words, we are called to see Christ, Who is the sun of righteousness with the noetic eyes of our soul. We are called to participate not to the Passover, in which the Jewish people celebrated their passage through the red sea, from the Egyptian bondage to their freedom, through the Divine intervention, but instead, we are called, according to St.

Gregory the Theologian to enter the Pascha of the Divine Grace, namely of the resurrection of Christ, through which we accomplish our passage "from death to life and from earth to heaven". We accomplish our communion with the resurrected Christ, for this reason St. Gregory the Theologian says: "O Pascha the great and sacred and purifying for the whole world". Without our communion with Christ we remain in the necrosis of sin and of its bondage. "The one who does not see and hear and feel things in spirit, is dead" St. Gregory of Sinai says.

Indeed, my dear brothers and sisters, the one who accepts Christ has Christ living in him, as He said: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:56), and "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

Interpreting these words of the Lord, Zigavinos says: "The birth is not carnal but spiritual. Therefore, while the carnal birth is felt with the senses, the spiritual one is felt in thought and there is no need to examine with feelings what is felt in thought, neither to give a human dimension to the divine things".

In other words the resurrection of our God and Saviour Christ refers to our rebirth as St. Paul preaches: "according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). This very Holy Spirit of the regeneration did Christ give to those who believe in His resurrection: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (1 John 4:13) St. John the Evangelist and Apostle says. The bearers of the Spirit ascetic Fathers stress the fact that when man welcomes in him the resurrected Christ, Christ becomes his second soul; "the resurrection is a second soul to the people" St. Neilos says.

In order to become partaker of this experience, the man who is

composed of body and soul and from bodily and psychic senses, has the need of catharsis (spiritual cleansing) as St. John Damascene says in his hymn "Let us purify our senses and we shall behold Christ, radiant with the unapproachable light of the resurrection, and we shall clearly hear Him say; Rejoice! As we sing the triumphal hymn".

The unapproachable light of the resurrection, namely of the glory of Christ did the Myrrh-bearing Women along with Joseph and Nicodemus see, both with their spiritual and natural eyes. For this reason the Myrrh-bearing Women were eye-witnesses of the Resurrection, while Joseph and Nicodemus of the burial.

Behold why the Synaxarist of the Church says: "On this day, the third Sunday of Pascha, we celebrate the feast of the Holy Myrrh-bearing Women. And also we commemorate Joseph of Arimathaea, the secret disciple, and Nicodemus, the disciple by night"

The Godly-wise Myrrh-bearing Women are those who evangelized the resurrection of Christ to His disciples, as St. John Damascene says in his hymn: "The godly-wise women followed after Thee in haste with sweet-smelling myrrh. But Him whom they sought in tears as dead, they joyfully adored as the living God and announced unto Thy disciples O Christ the glad tidings of the mystical pascha".

This mystical annunciation of Pascha, namely of the Resurrection, are we also called to embrace, my dear brothers and sisters, imitating the Christian thinking, which is the big love, the devotion and also the boldness of the Myrrh-bearing Women, who "went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid" (Mark 16:8), as well as that of Joseph and Nicodemus who displayed the same love and devotion and the same courage; "Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body

of Jesus" (Mark 15:43).

The resurrection of Christ, my dear Christians is nothing else but the Kingdom of God, "who hath called us unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thes. 2:12) St. Paul preaches. Amen. Christ is Risen!

After the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, Archimandrite Niphon, the energetic Hegoumen who has renovated the Church and the Monastery, offered a reception at the Hegoumeneion, and spoke to the congregation, while His Beatitude also said the following;

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:3-4) St. Paul preaches.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem has the holy privilege to honour and venerate the commemoration of the Myrrh-bearing Women and of the secret disciples of Christ, Joseph and Nicodemus, in this very city of Arimathaea, the contemporary Remli.

Today's feast, which in essence refers to the feast of feasts and the festival of all festivals, Pascha, is not any celebration that can be seen physically, but a spiritual and internal one. The purpose of the Christian faith and life is one and only; the co-resurrection with the resurrected Christ. "He, who was initiated in the esoteric power of the resurrection has known by experience the reason why Christ created the world" St. Maximus the Confessor says.

St. Paul calls the Christians "to live a new life" (Romans 6:4). Our new life in Christ is necessary and obligatory if we want to avoid the spiritual death as St. Paul says: "For if

you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God" (Romans 8:13-14).

The purpose and mission of our Rum Orthodox Patriarchate, namely of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, has always been the safe-guarding and the ministry of the All-holy Shrines on the one hand, and the pastoral care of the Christian congregation on the other, which means the preservation of their cultural, traditional, and especially their national-religious identity, as well as the preaching of the love, righteousness and peace of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ who was resurrected from the dead. Christ is Risen!

After this address, His Beatitude offered a Priest's cross to Archimandrite Niphon in recognition of his devoted ministry as Hegoumen of Remli and to his helper for the last seventeen years Nun Fevronia, He offered a cross and an icon of the Holy Sepulchre. At noon, the Community Council offered a meal at a city restaurant.

From Secretariat-General

THE SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN IN JERUSALEM

The commemoration of the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women, and of the secret disciples of Christ Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus who took the Lord's body off the cross and buried it, was celebrated on April 29/ May 12, 2019, in the chapel of the Myrrh-bearing Women within the Cathedral of St. James the Brother of God.

The Divine Liturgy at the Holy Altar of this chapel was led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, with co-celebrants Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, the Dean Priest of the Cathedral Priest Charalambos – Farah Badour, the Deacon of the Cathedral Fr. George Hader, while the chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos in Greek and by the Cathedral Choir under Mr. Rimon Kamar in Arabic, and the service was attended by monks and pilgrims and members of the Jerusalem Community.

After the Divine Liturgy the associations of St. James Cathedral, especially the celebrating Association of the Myrrh-bearing Women, escorted the Episcopal entourage to Outzoud club.

There the Care taker of the Cathedral Mr. Ibrahim Salfiti gave an annual report of the parish activity of the Cathedral which was followed by a meal.

From Secretariat-General