

THE AKATHIST AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday evening, March 30 / April 12, 2019, the Service of the Akathist was held at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos went for the Service to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, escorted by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew and other Hagiotaphite Fathers.

On this Service, according to the Typikon order of the Church the Canon of the Akathist was chanted, and the four parts were read consequently by His Beatitude, Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop of Constantina, Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios and the Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew, under the chanting of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos on the right, and Archimandrite Demetrios on the left, with the help of the Patriarchal School students. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and members of the Greek Consulate, members of the Christian Community in Jerusalem, monks, nuns and pilgrims.

From Secretariat-General

EASTER BAZAAR IN QATAR

On Thursday, March 29/April 11, 2019, there was an Easter Bazaar at the courtyard between the Bishop's Residence, the Cathedral and the reception hall of the Holy Archdiocese of Qatar.

At the Bazaar there was a great variety of delicacies from the Arabic, Greek, Serbian, Romanian, Moldavian, Russian and Ukrainian cuisines, offered by various companies and ladies-members of the congregation.

The Bazaar was honoured by the presence of the Ambassadors of Australia and Palestine, and representatives of Greece, of the Republic of Cyprus and of Switzerland in Qatar, as well as representatives of other Christian Doctrines in Doha.

Photographs are attached.

From the Holy Archdiocese of Qatar

THE SERVICE OF THE GREAT CANON AT THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

The Service of Great contrite Canon by St. Andrew from Jerusalem and Archbishop of Crete was held at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Wednesday afternoon, March 28/April 10, 2019. The Great Canon poetically presents a great number of people and events from the Old and New Testament, lives of righteous, prophets, kings and Israeli laity, either as an example to imitate or avoid, as well as an

example of repentance.

This Canon is chanted in parts daily at the Service of the Great Compline in the 1st Week of the Holy and Great Lent to help the faithful towards contrition and repentance.

The Service was led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, under the chanting of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos with the help of Archdeacon Mark and the Patriarchal School of Zion students.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On the 4th Sunday of Great Lent, March 25/April 7, 2019, according to the mobile cycle of Triodion feasts, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Annunciation according to the stable cycle of the feasts in the book of Minaion.

This feast was celebrated at the place where the Annunciation took place, at the town of Nazareth in Galilee. In this town, according to St. Luke the Evangelist (Luke 1:26-37) the Archangel Gabriel visited Virgin Mary and addressed her with the words "Rejoice thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee" and announced that "the Holy Spirit will come down on her and the power of God will overshadow her, and she will bear in flesh the Son of God". The Angel's words became a fact

and Mary then said "behold the maiden of the Lord let it be done unto me according to thy word". Then as it is written in the Akathist, "along with the bodiless voice the Lord took a bodily form" and "the Word became flesh" and Mary became a chosen vessel of God and Theotokos [Mother of God].

This supernatural event of God's Providence for the salvation of humankind was celebrated at the place it actually happened, in Nazareth, on the aforementioned day, with the Festal Divine Liturgy that was celebrated at the historic Church of the Annunciation of the Patriarchate.

The Divine Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Methodios of Tabor, and Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Archimandrite Ieronymos, and many Arab-speaking Priests from the Galilee district and visiting Priests from other Churches, Archdeacon Mark and other deacons. The chanting was delivered by the choir of the parish of the shrine of Nazareth. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the full congregation of the local faithful of Nazareth and its outskirts and pilgrims from various Orthodox countries.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation;

"And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:26-38).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

Today the Holy Church of Christ has gathered us all in this sacred place of the Biblical town of Nazareth in order to celebrate in thanksgiving and doxology the feast of the outmost philanthropy of God, that of the Annunciation of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

This event was foretold by Propher Isaiah; "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). And the psalmist proclaims for this reason: "O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day" (Psalm 96:1-2).

The question and surprise of Virgin Mary towards Archangel Gabriel: "How shall this be for I know no man?" (Luke 1:34) is a question of every human logic mind, because the beyond word and thought mystery of God's Will is made understood only through faith to the unspeakable plan of what St. Paul says: "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:9-10).

In other words, the salvific plan of God for humankind was fulfilled by the full of grace and blessed Virgin Mary; a humankind which had been under the influence of the bondage of the corruption of death, of sin. St. Paul says; "but when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).

Interpreting these words, Ecumenios says; "He didn't say through a woman...but from a woman, showing that he had received the Lord in her and that He was a fruit of her womb". And Eusevios of Emesa says: "Because sin was created by a woman, the Saviour came from a woman". "Rejoice, thou through whom joy shall shine forth; rejoice, thou through whom the curse shall be blotted out" the writer of the hymn of the Annunciation proclaims. "Rejoice, O most blessed Maiden, who hast alone kept the seal of purity as in thy womb thou receives the Word and Lord, Who is ere eternity, that He as God might save the race of man from error and deception".

The salutation, "rejoice though who art full of glory" of the Archangel Gabriel to Virgin Mary refers to two things; firstly, to the fact that through the bodiless voice of the Angel, namely through the coming of the Holy Spirit and the overshadowing of the power of the Most High on her, Virgin Mary became a vessel of the Divine Grace. And the Divine Grace delivered her from every sin and in this manner the hypostatic God the Word, Christ, was incorporated in her and "the mortal nature withstood union with the Godhead".

Secondly, the "rejoice" of the Angel refers to the fact that the joy of salvation shone upon the world. And this is so because the curse was banished, the curse which kept the forefather Adam and the foremother Eve bound with the bondage of corruption and sin, as Joseph the hymn writer says; "rejoice [Theotokos] O vessel of rejoicing, through whom our first mother's curse utterly is dispelled" and "thou art Adam's recovery, rejoice, O All-blameless one, thou art the death-knell of Hades".

Today my dear brothers, the Holy Church of Christ evangelizes the recreation of the whole world through Theotokos Mary, namely the revelation of the true light in one hypostasis, as the Bible says: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isaiah 9:2/Matt.

4:16). This event is witnessed by the Holy Apostles and Evangelists not only with philosophical terms and metaphysic confirmations but with the uncreated enlightenment of the power of the Holy Spirit. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16) St. Peter says. While St. John the Evangelist says: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us" (1 John 1:1,3).

Behold why the hymn writer says; "Let creation be glad, let nature dance for joy; today is revealed the mystery that is from eternity, and the Son of God becometh Son of man. God becometh man that He might make Adam God".

This revealed mystery to Theotokos Mary, which is from eternity, is being witnessed and ministered liturgically and in sacrifice to the point of blood by the "dwelling place of God", the Mother of Churches Jerusalem, the first created monastic order of the Studious Ones, namely the Order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

Our contemporary challenges of lawlessness and apostasy in the world confirm the preaching of St. Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit; "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans 8:21-22).

The deliverance from the bondage of corruption to the freedom of the glory of our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is being announced to us also today, by the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. Therefore, let us

say along with the Archangel Gabriel to Virgin-Mary: "Rejoice O thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee" (Luke 1:28), intercede your Son and God for those who fervently honour thee, grant our souls and our region peace and the great mercy. Amen. Have many happy returns and a blessed Pascha."

After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy a festal meal was offered to the Patriarchal entourage and many others by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, where His Beatitude addressed all present as follows;

"Evangelize earth a great joy, heavens praise the glory of God"

Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Distinguished Members of the Community of Nazareth,

Dear Guests,

Today the Holy Church of our Fathers celebrates in great festivity the Holy Feast of the Annunciation of Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary; the people of Nazareth also co-celebrate with us.

This festal event holds a special significance for both the Christian community and the other citizens of Nazareth.

And we say this, because the feast of the Annunciation of Theotokos Mary is the annunciation of the philanthropy and the love of God towards all men, His supreme creation.

"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16). "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20).

This gospel of God's love is being ministered throughout the centuries by the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem through its monastic order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, which has never ceased to care for the safeguarding of the All-holy Shrines and for the Christian presence and witness in the Holy Land. The history of the preservation of the All-holy Shrines as well as the history of the preservation and pastoring of our Christian flock and of its identity is the most tangible and true witness of the sacred mission of the Roman Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Today we find ourselves in the pleasant position to make known to you that our common efforts and the close co-operation with the members of your community in Nazareth has given forth its fruits. And these fruits are the completion of the project of the Patriarchal School in the area of Kaser Al-Mutran. The project of the School is on its final stage.

We take the opportunity in the joy of this blessed feast to thank those who honoured with their presence the feast of the Annunciation of Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary in Nazareth.

We would also like to express our warmest thanks to our beloved brothers and sisters in the Metropolis of Nazareth and to our dear Priests as well as to all those who serve in the Holy Church of Christ. Many Happy Returns. Have a blessed period of the remaining Great Lent and a Happy Pascha! Amen."

The feast of the Annunciation was likewise celebrated at the Shrine of the Tomb of Theotokos in Gethsemane with the Divine Liturgy which was led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia, in the presence of the Hegoumen Most Reverend Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela, at the Holy Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord in Ramallah, led by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis and at the Holy Church of the Annunciation in Rafidia with the Divine Liturgy that was led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa.

THE FEAST OF THE ADORATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS AT THE H. MONASTERY OF THE CROSS

On the 4th Sunday of Great Lent, March 25/April 7, 2019, the Feast of the Adoration of the Precious and Life-giving Cross was celebrated in transference at the Holy Monastery of the Holy Cross, which is located in West Jerusalem, near the Hebrew Parliament – Knesset.

The Feast of the Adoration of the Precious and Life-giving Cross is being celebrated in this Monastery one week after the 3rd Sunday of Great Lent, because the Church keeps the tradition that in this place Lot planted the wood from which the Cross was made, and on which our Lord was crucified for our salvation.

The Divine Liturgy on this feast was led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Demetrios of Lydda, with co-celebrants Archimandrite Kallistos and Deacon Hader Baramki, under the chanting of Nun Iousini. The service was attended by Mrs. Katherine Tzima and members of the Greek Consulate, a congregation of the members of the Greek Community and members of our Arab-speaking flock in Jerusalem.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy the congregation was offered a reception at the courtyard of the Monastery by the Hegoumen Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, which was followed later on by a meal for the Episcopal entourage, other Hagiotaphite Fathers and members of the Consulate.

From Secretariat-General

THE SUNDAY OF THE ADORATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE- GIVING CROSS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On March 18/31, 2019, The Patriarchate celebrated the Sunday of the Adoration of the Precious and Life-giving Cross, for the encouragement of the faithful, so that they may continue the difficult period of the fast towards the Holy Pascha.

1. Vespers

Great Vespers of Parresia was held at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrant the Archbishops in the Holy Altar and the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and deacons, at the chanting of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos. The service was attended by a congregation of local faithful and pilgrims.

At the end of Vespers the Patriarchal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

2. On the day of the feast

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Life-giving Tomb of the Lord, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants Archbishops of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Emanuel of France, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Amphilohios of Andrianoupolis, the Archbishops of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Demetrios of Lydda, Nectarios of Anthedon, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis. Also Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, under the chanting of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and Archimandrite Demetrios. Present at the service was the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, along with a large congregation.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a litany, three times around the All-holy Tomb and around the shrines, with the veneration of the Precious Cross with the Precious Wood.

The return at the Patriarchate Headquarters followed, where His Beatitude addressed all present as follows;

“In paradise of old the tree stripped me bare; for by giving me its fruit to eat, the enemy brought in death. But now the Tree of the Cross that clothes men with the garment of life has been set up on earth, and the whole world is filled with boundless joy. Beholding it venerated, O ye people, let us with one accord raise in faith our cry to God: His house is full of glory” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Today my beloved brothers and sisters, day of the veneration of the precious cross, we came to the place of skull, in Golgotha, where our Lord Jesus Christ offered for us His salvific Passion but also His life-giving resurrection and by

the Eucharistic Divine Doxology we became participants and communicants of the joy and the power of the wood of life, of the Cross.

“The Lord said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34). Whosoever wants to become my disciple and follow me as my student, let him stop every friendship and relation with the corrupt by sin self of his and let him steadfastly decide to suffer for my sake not only sorrow and trials but also death on the cross, and then he may follow me, imitating my example.

Christ demands self-denial of those who wish to follow Him, because His birth, life and death were a continuous act of self-denial and self-kenosis, as St. Paul preaches by saying: “But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philip. 2:7-8).

In other words, Christ’s Cross is not only the symbol per se, but also the incarnation of Christ’s kenosis, namely of His self-denial and utmost humility. The preaching of the Cross is the foundation of the faith and the spring of the salvific power of the believers in Christ crucified and resurrected. Therefore St. Paul says; “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). This means that our faith should not be founded on the noetic wisdom of the people, but on the steadfast power of God; “your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” St. Paul says again (1 Cor. 2:5).

Behold why our Holy Church, by the inspiration of the Holy Fathers, placed the veneration of the Holy Cross in the middle of the fasting period of the Great Lent; “Stand therefore,

having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" (Ephes. 6:14) St. Paul orders. And the breastplate of righteousness is no other than the Sacred and Life-giving Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

This Cross of Christ's righteousness did the martyrs of Christ's love follow, as well as all the Saints. This very Precious Cross of Christ, or better say, the unexplored mystery of the Cross, are we called to study as good soldiers of Christ, to study and live according to the word of the Cross and have it as a manner of thinking and living. We should do this so that the true light may guide our footsteps to the eternal life of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And along with St. John of Damascus let us say; "this [Cross is] the resurrection of the dead, the support of those who stand, the walking stick of the ill...salvation of soul and body, it drives away all evil, creates all good things, it is the refutation of sin, the resurrection plant, the wood of eternal life. May those of us who venerate it be granted our share in the crucified [and resurrected] Christ. Amen. Have a good Easter."

From Secretariat-General

DOXOLOGY ON THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY OF MARCH 25 1821

On Monday, March 12/25, 2019, a Doxology was held on the occasion of the National anniversary of March 25 1821 at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where there was a special prayer for the repose of the souls of the Fathers of our Nation who fell heroically during the years of the Ottoman Tyranny and finally a thanksgiving prayer for the liberation of the Nation.

The Doxology was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Archbishops of the Throne, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the Ecclesiastical Byzantine Choir "St. John Koukouzelis" under the lead of Mr. Emanuel Daskalakis, while the service was attended by many Orthodox Faithful and members of the Greek Community of Jerusalem. At the end of the Service the Patriarchal entourage and all people returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters in the Reception Hall.

There, His Beatitude addressed all present as follows;

"Do not be afraid of the darkness! The freedom like the foggy star, will bring the night to dawn" says poet John Polemis.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Full of national boasting in Christ today we celebrate the historic anniversary of the liberation of our pious nation from the long-term slavery of the Ottoman sovereignty. Today we celebrate the anniversary of our National Rebirth.

The truly heroic Revolution of 1821 is a milestone in world history. And that's because a small group of determined fighters, with the blessings of the Bishop Palaion Patron Germanos, raised the honest banner of the Revolution and gave the sacred oath "Freedom or Death", "now is the struggle for all".

This nationalistic motto echoed as an ecumenical commandment in all the centres of the enslaved Romiosyne, which hearkening to the words of the psalmist: "The Lord being mindful of us, hath helped us" (Psalm 113: 20) rushed in the sacred fight with all the forces of its rebellious children, "for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the homeland", "there is no sweeter thing than homeland and religion," General Makrygiannis will write in his memoirs.

The participation of the Church in the struggle for the regeneration of the nation was decisive. Leading ecclesiastical figures such as the Metropolitan Palaion Patron Germanos, Gregory Papaflessas, Athanasius Diakos, Bishop Isaiah Salonon, members of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and many Priests named and anonymous, became not only the animators of the Ottoman barbaric yoke of slavery, but also examples of self-sacrifice, namely martyrs of blood, in favor of freedom, which God gave to man, as St. Paul preaches by saying, "and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor 3:17) and elsewhere: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage "(Galatians 5: 1).

In other words, the great and distinguished fighters of 1821 understood the notion of freedom and of the Homeland biblically and not in a worldly manner. "Faith to the

crucified and resurrected Christ" and "freedom of the homeland" constitute the cohesive force of preserving the Greek-Orthodox tradition and the identity of the pious nation of the Romans and the Christian nation of the Greeks. This, moreover, is borne out by the lyrics of our National Poet Dionysios Solomos in the "Hymn to Freedom", which he considers "to be drawn out of the sacred bones of the Greeks".

The Revolution of 1821 has clearly demonstrated that determination to self-sacrifice for the defense of sacred and moral values, such as freedom and homeland, is fully enforced. This is because the one who sacrifices his life wins it forever, and tyrannical sovereignty subsides in front of the moral splendor that manifests decisively and sacrificing.

The unparalleled heroism and admirable sacrificial to the point of blood attitude of the fighters of 1821 would be good to be a source of inspiration for all of us in the face of the impending challenges of the so-called "New Age" or "New Order" in order to preserve natural laws and moral biblical values. "When the Gentiles, who have not the law, do not have the law, they have a law to themselves" St. Paul says (Romans 2:14).

Our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, willingly and as owed, participates in this annual anniversary of the sacred commemoration of the rebirth of our Nation, and came down to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with all its members in order to offer thanksgiving praise and doxology to our God Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who was crucified and resurrected for us, for the benefit He granted to our Nation. We also offered interceding prayers for the eternal repose of the souls of those who fell heroically and gloriously in the sacred struggle of our noble nation for the nation of the Roman Orthodox people.

For all these, allow Us to raise our glass and exclaim in honour:

Long live March 25 1281!

Long live the noble and royal nation of the Roman Orthodox people!

Long live Hellas!

Long live our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!

And the Greek Consul General as follows;

“Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend Archbishops,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are glad that today we celebrate at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem the Nation’s Revolution of 1821, and remember the nation’s most glorious page of the modern history with national pride. We honor those who fought with courage, heroism and self-denial and managed, through an unequal and long struggle that demanded unspeakable sacrifices to end the four dark ages of a foreign tyrannical yoke.

On this day, we must remember the elements that made the 1821 liberation struggle distinct for both Greek and world history and which are of utmost relevance to us today. Those elements that are a lesson for all modern Greeks. Three of these elements are: The common vision of Freedom, the unity of the nation, and the courage in the face of far superior enemies and enormous objective difficulties.

The common vision was that of the free Homeland, in particular the creation of a model state, based on the principles of

democracy and justice, which takes care of all its citizens, with no discriminations. This vision, especially promoted for its time, made the struggle righteous and morally imperious, enhancing the determination and vigor of the fighters and winning the sympathy of thousands of Friends of Greece who strengthened it in a variety of ways.

National unity and unity of soul were indispensable to the outcome of the Revolution, as in every common struggle. The adversary tried to divide the fighters, instigating internal quarrels, aiming to hurt faith in the just struggle, neutralize the vigor and bend the resistance of the fighters. The unity was conquered by difficulties and after civil breaks that delayed the successful outcome of the Revolution. The lesson for all, then and now, is that without unity and unity of soul, the common purpose and national laws are in danger of losing their meaning and value.

The boldness of the fighters who defied the mighty power of the oppressor and the negative international circumstances and declared the liberation struggle, carrying it for more than eight years on land and sea, is the characteristic of the Greeks that has repeatedly pushed them to the forefront history. A prudent, computational assessment of circumstances would entail continuing national subordination and abandoning the national vision of freedom and national pride. As General Makrigiannis put it, "when the few decide to die, and when they make that decision, they lose a few times and many win."

Today we do not forget the crucial role played by the Church in achieving the national goal, while maintaining the identity of the Greeks in the long and gloomy years of the Ottoman domination. The Church was the ark of the salvation of the Nation and the guardian of our values, preserving the language, the Christian Faith and the hope of the Resurrection of the Nation. Thus, as the fighters themselves proclaimed, the struggle of the national rebirth became "for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the Homeland."

Greece does not forget the great offer of expatriate Greeks in the struggle of national rebirth and always feels grateful for it. The Friends, beginning with large urban centers in Europe, enthralled with enthusiasm and self-denial with their rebellious brothers, played a significant role in shaping the common vision of freedom and in the initial plans of the Revolution and contributed to the creation of the Philhellenic current.

March 25, 1821 remains for us all the foundation stone of our national entity and the leading station of the modern history of the Nation. The heroism, self-denial and determination of the Revolutionist fighters, and those inspired by them, to seek a free, fair and democratic Homeland, inspire us, but at the same time make us commit ourselves to being worthy of them and, like them, to rise to the height of the circumstances and to get everyone involved to overcome obstacles, however insurmountable they may seem to be.

Long live 25 March 1821!

Long live Greece!"

**THE NAME DAY OF HIS BEATITUDE
THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM**

THEOPHILOS

On Sunday March 11/24, 2019, on the second Sunday of Great Lent, on the commemoration of St. Gregory Palamas, the Patriarchate also celebrated the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, which for reasons related to the Status Quo has been transferred from its actual day of March 9/22, day of the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs who martyred at the frozen lake of Sebastia of Pontus during the reign of the persecutor Emperor Licinius in the year 320 A.D.

For this feast the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth and Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Demetrios of Lydda, Makarios of Qatar, Nectarios of Anthedon, Philoumenos of Pella, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis and the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba. There were also the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank the Elder Kamarasis Reverend Archimandrite Nectarios, Arab-speaking Priests and visiting Priests from other Churches, Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons. The chanting was held by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos in the attendance of a congregation of local faithful and pilgrims.

After the Divine Liturgy there was a Doxology and the return in procession to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

Therein the following addresses were read:

The address of Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina;

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Ascending the ladder of the Holy and Great Lent, we are fortified in our spiritual fight with the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs who boldly confessed Christ, and fought the good fight well, winning the crown of divine glory, having defied the glacier of the lake of Sebastia in Pontus in 320 A.D., during the reign of King Licinius.

On the feast of these athletes of Christ today, the commemoration of the holy martyr Theophilos is especially projected in the Church of Jerusalem, because Your Sacred Beatitude bears his name.

In the special honour of the holy martyr Theophilos and of Your Beatitude, we offered the bloodless sacrifice at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and a thanksgiving doxology with the vast participation of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, the members of our Greek-Orthodox flock and a large crowd of noble pilgrims.

Filled with the joy of this double feast and in this historic Hall of the Throne, we gratefully remember those things that Your Beatitude has worked for our Patriarchate and flock.

Initially we commemorate the fact that once again there has been a great effort for the pastoral guidance of our flock in the three areas of the Patriarchate’s jurisdiction, especially in Jordan, in gatherings of Priests for their more efficient pastoral activity. A fruit of Your Beatitude’s actions have also been the special festivities organized by the Royal Family of Jordan, which support the Christians in their peaceful co-existence with their Muslim co-citizens. In the Metropolis of the Patriarchate in Amman, members of the flock of Jordan have been honoured with the medal of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, as they have been distinguished for their charity donations and the construction of a Church. Moreover, with your characteristic sensitivity favoring the pilgrims who

have been flooding the Holy Land recently, Your Beatitude has offered much time for their welcoming in the Patriarchate, for their blessing and guidance, along with the stressing of the benefit through their pilgrimage.

Keeping good relationships with our brotherly Churches, Your Beatitude was invited to officiate the consecration ceremony of the beautiful and very large Cathedral of St. Andrew the First-called in Bucharest, in the Patriarchate of Romania, and participated in the national festivities on the occasion of the 200-year-old anniversary of liberation and unity of Romania.

Practicing the leading role of our Patriarchate among the other Christian Churches, Your Beatitude has mobilized them towards the abolition of laws undermining their properties and the raising of their voices in the protection of the continuously lessening numbers of the Christians of the Holy Land. Aiming at this, Your Beatitude has striven by visiting leaders of countries and of Churches and Presidents of international organizations in order to ensure their solidarity to the efforts of our Patriarchate to preserve the internationally and biblically established Status Quo of the Holy Land and the rights of the Christians on them.

The actions of Your Beatitude for the protection of the rights of our shrines and especially of the renovation of the God-receiving Cave in Bethlehem have been most intensive, simultaneously with the equally important preservation and renovation of the Chapel of Stocks in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the historic Monastery of St. John the Baptist by the baptism site in the River Jordan, where a few days ago Your Beatitude received the President of the State of Israel and leaders of the Christian Churches.

Last but not least, worthy to be mentioned is the project of the modest Christian presence in Qatar, which began during the Patriarchal Office of the late Patriarch Diodoros and was

recently completed with the consecration of the beautiful Church of St. Isaac the Syriac, St. George the Great Martyr and St. Makarios, Archbishop of Jerusalem, along with the Episcopal Headquarters and completed parish facilities, for the comfort, support and sanctification of the Orthodox and other Christians who live there.

From all these, Your Beatitude, we the Hagiotaphite Fathers take an example and are encouraged to co-operate with You as the members of the body with its head and among us harmoniously, in order to reflect the witness of unity to the world and that the name of our venerable Brotherhood and of the Holy Church of Jerusalem may be praised and the venerated Name of the Most High may be glorified.

Raising the glass Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the whole Brotherhood, I wish health and strength and protection from on high, so that You may guide the vessel of the Church of Jerusalem steadily and in good course, for the fulfillment of its peace-making, reconciliatory and salvific mission in the Holy Land and in the full body of the Orthodox Church. So be it.”

The address of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos;

“Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

The present day, when the memory of the Holy Forty Martyrs is celebrated, takes on special importance, since the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the pious congregation, the pilgrims and the Orthodox Community, honoured with the proper splendor the Name-Day of the Head of the Church of Jerusalem,

the Mother of Churches, His Holy Beatitude, Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

In attending this celebration with feelings of sincere joy and particular honour, I would like to express the unwavering support of Greece to the Presbyterian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and to extend to You our cordial wishes for health, strength and longevity, in order to continue Your high, national as well as religious mission, which is becoming more and more important and significant in this difficult time.

During its centuries-long journey, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem has played an extremely important historical role and, as a religious centre of the Holy Land, continues to be an inexhaustible source of hope and to point out in all directions from the Holy City, its universal message of salvation, while defending with the dedication and self-denial of the Holy Fathers, the most important holy pilgrimages of Christianity.

The Sacred Institution is a fixed reference point for all Greeks and symbolizes the long-standing presence of Hellenism in the Holy Land, while it is an indissoluble bond of friendship and cooperation with other peoples, and it is the spokesperson for Orthodox Christians in the region, preserving valuable traditions and transmitting, in every direction, the Universal message of Orthodoxy.

Your Beatitude,

In a time of instability, fluidity, and continuous redeployments that seem to favor intolerance, empathy and rivalry, Your multifaceted work, which is governed by sincere mood of mutual understanding and reconciliation, not only in relations with other doctrines and other religions, but also in the context of the wider peace effort in this much tested area, gives moral stature to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, in the context and defense of the Christian presence in the

Middle East, promoting its role as a factor of moderation and stability. With a series of initiatives, You promote the restoration and promotion of the Sacred Shrines of Christianity, while ensuring the preservation of the Status Quo in the Holy Land and the spiritual guidance and prosperity of a flock undergoing significant trials.

Because the challenges of the time and the lurking dangers are many. However, it is certain that those who are treacherous against the Patriarchate struggle in vain. Their efforts strike and will always strike in the hurdle of the power that the Sacred Institution draws from the long history and tradition, from unity, from the deep faith and devotion of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and from its leadership, Your Beatitude, who, with conscious knowledge and perception of the circumstances, with vigor and determination, take care of its present and its future.

Your Beatitude,

The load you have been given is great and the struggle that this involves is long and laborious. It is my deep conviction that with the help of God and the active support of all of us, You will continue Your work and carry on Your high mission.

Many Happy Returns.”

Addresses were also delivered by representatives of the flock of areas belonging to the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate, representatives of other Orthodox Churches and finally His Beatitude thanked them all with the following words;

“The Martyrs, O Christ God, esteemed the lake as Paradise and the cold as warmth. The threats of the tyrants did not affright their mind, nor did the noble Saints fear the assaults of torments, since they possessed the Cross as a divine weapon; for with it, as mighty men, they put the enemy to flight. Wherefore, they have also received the crown of grace” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

“Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious” (Psalm 66:1-2), the Church of Christ cries out through the mouth of Prophet David, on the sacred commemoration of the athletes of Christ and Great Forty Martyrs who martyred in the town of Sebastia. These “wondrous prizewinners with minds staunch with courage, they endured the pains of martyrdom nobly, and having as a divine weapon the Cross they defeated the enemy and gained the crown of grace”, namely the Christian calling through which they abide in the highest, according to their hymn writer.

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem, which honours the sacred memory of the holy forty martyrs, especially of their co-martyr Theophilus whose sacred name is given to our Mediocrity, we came to the place of martyrdom and the three-burial of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where we celebrated the divine and great sacrament of the Eucharist. Moreover, we offered a thanksgiving doxology to the Holy Trinitarian God on the occasion of the sacred commemoration of Martyr Theophilus, surrounded by the sacred members of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, and we prayed along with our Christian congregation, the noble Christians and the visiting pilgrims.

We did all these according to the words of St. Paul: “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20).

This annual commemoration of the holy forty martyrs and their co-martyr Theophilus, which our Holy Church of Jerusalem jubilantly celebrates, does not only refer to our mediocrity,

but especially and primarily to the institution of the Patriarchal office, through which it is made clear that the Church of Christ has been founded on the crucified and redeeming blood of Christ and of the holy ones who became co-martyrs of His sacred blood. Therefore the wise Paul says: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

The holy martyrs of the love of Christ are those who martyred with their blood for the sake of truth and faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ. For this reason St. Paul advises his disciple Timothy saying: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord; For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7-8).

Today's commemorated holy Forty Martyrs with their co-martyr Theophilus worthily gained the divine glory, having gone through water and fire and became wondrous by our Holy Trinitarian God, towards whom they have boldness and pray for us. "Likewise, the souls of those who have not in vain been chipped for the sake of the witness in Christ in the heavenly altar, minister those who pray asking for the remission of their sins" according to Origen.

The holy martyrs are projected as an example to imitate for the fight they fought in their earthly life in order to become heirs of the kingdom of God. "...we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Ecumenios says; "our present life is a fight; a fight against sins and desires and all thoughts who fight against us. For this we strive against and accomplish in the fight".

In this fight of the witness of the love of the gospel of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ are we also called, my dear brothers and sisters, especially during this blessed period of the fast of the Great Lent, having as helpers and protectors the holy forty martyrs, their co-martyr Theophilos and the Most Blessed Theotokos and Mother of God, Ever-Virgin Mary. Let us entreat them so that we may be deemed worthy to the three-day Resurrection of our God and Saviour of our souls.

For this, we pray for all who prayed along with us and honoured this feast, that they may have power from on high, the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, patience and every blessing coming from God.

We warmly thank those who addressed Us, Geronda Secretary-General, Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, Reverend Archimandrite Dometianos, Representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Russia, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Romania, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Archimandrite Raphael who spoke on behalf of the flock in North Jordan, the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, who spoke on behalf of the Holy Archdiocese of Qatar, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the newly founded Community in Beersheba, the Reverend Archimandrite Ignatios, who spoke on behalf of the Community of Beit Jalla, Reverend Farah Badur, who spoke on behalf of St. James Cathedral, the Managing Director of our Patriarchal School, Reverend Archimandrite Mattheos, the

Steward Savvas, who spoke on behalf of the Community of Beit Sahour, Mr. Abu Aeta from Beit Sahour, Mr. Michele Frez from Bethlehem and all who participated in this feast.

To the health of all of you!"

A festal fasting meal followed where the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos was the guest of honour and to which His Beatitude offered the officion of the Archimandrite to Hagiotaphite Hieromonk Martyrios who ministers in Madaba.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ST. GERASIMOS OF THE JORDAN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On the Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 4/17, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our Righteous Father Gerasimos of the Jordan his Holy Monastery at the west bank of the River

Jordan, before its estuary towards the Dead Sea.

St. Gerasimos lived in the 5th century A.D., came to the Holy Land from Lycia of Asia Minor and was a contemporary ascetic of St. Euthymius the Great and St. Kyriakos the anchorite. He denied the heresy of Monophysitism, led many monks to the monastic perfection in Christ and was deemed worthy of the gift of working miracles.

Honouring his commemoration, in the aforementioned Holy Monastery Vespers was held in the evening, an all-night Vigil, while the Divine Liturgy was also celebrated on the day of the feast, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Priests from other Churches from Greece and Cyprus. The chanting was delivered by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Chrysostom and pilgrims from Greece and Cyprus, while the service was attended by a very large congregation of local faithful and pilgrims who venerate the Saint.

His Eminence spoke to this congregation on the importance of the Sunday of Orthodoxy and of the conscious mystical life of the faithful, especially on this period of the Holy and Great Lent.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a procession of the icons and of the icon of St. Gerasimos around the Holy Monastery, and concluded with a rich fasting meal by the hospitable and hard-working Hegoumen Archimandrite Chrysostom.

From Secretariat-General

THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday March 4/17, 2019, the Sunday of Orthodoxy was celebrated by the Patriarchate at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

On this First Sunday of the Holy and Great Lent, the Church celebrates the triumph of the Restoration of the holy Icons by the Emperor Mihail and his mother St. Theodora and by the Patriarch St. Methodios the Confessor, after one and a half centuries of persecution and destruction of the icons by the iconoclasts.

On this feast the Church commemorates the defenders of the holy icons, reverend Patriarchs, Hierarchs, Kings and faithful Christians, as witnesses of the incarnate presence of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth.

1. Vespers

This event which has been identified with Orthodoxy and confirmed by the 7th Ecumenical Synod in 787 A.D. was celebrated by the Church of Jerusalem with Vespers in the evening at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection with the veneration and the incense offering at the Holy Deposition, veneration at the Holy Tomb, veneration at the Horrendous Golgotha, Great Entrance and the Blessing of Bread and incense offering, officiated by our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the participation in prayer of the Archbishops of the Throne, and the members of the Holy Synod, and with the co-celebration by the Hagiotaphite Priests and deacons. The chanting was delivered by the Choir leader

Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the service was attended by a large congregation of pilgrims.

2. On the Feast Day

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection on the day of the feast, officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Makarios of Qatar, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and Hagiotaphite Priests, with first in rank the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the service was attended by the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and a large crowd of faithful Christians and pilgrims.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by the litany of the Holy Icons three times around the Holy Tomb and around the shrines and concluded with the reading of the Synodikon of Orthodoxy and of Triodion.

Afterward the festal return to the Patriarchate Headquarters took place under the sound of bells tolling, where all present paid their respect to His Beatitude and He addressed them as follows;

“The grace of truth has shone forth upon us; the mysteries darkly prefigured in the times of old have now been openly fulfilled. For behold the Church is clothed in a beauty that surpasses all things earthly” our Father among the Saints Theodore of the Studion says.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

Today our Holy Orthodox Church commemorates the restoration of the holy icons which was done by the memorable and noble Emperor of Constantinople Mihail and his mother Theodora, during the Patriarchal office of St. Methodios the confessor.

The iconoclast heresy, namely the opposition against the veneration of the holy icons, revived the condemned heresy by the Holy Ecumenical Synods of Arianism and Nestorianism, which denied the divinity of the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ who became incarnate through the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

Behold why St. Theodore of the Studion says: "the Church is rejoicing in acceptance of the garment of her nudity". And the garment of the nudity that the Church accepted is the hypostatic unity of God the Word with our human nature which He received by the Holy Spirit, according to St. Cyril of Alexandria.

The great and unexplained mystery of the divine providence, namely the incarnation of God the Word, is the unbreakable foundation of the Christian teaching, especially of our Orthodox faith, as this is witnessed by the Apostles and Evangelists, as St. John the Theologian says; "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth' (John 1:14). And elsewhere he says; "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life" (1 John 1:1).

Truly my dear brothers, today the divine grace was shown in the universe, because Christ the Word, the new Adam, gave his own garment to the Church. "Celebrate, rejoice O Christian people of the Lord, seeing the Church once again illumined by the goodness of the divine form; in which God was clad and became human in order to save us" the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

In other words, the depicting or the description of the incarnate Divine Word refers to his human form and is in his divinity. "God the Word was made poor, and hungered, and thirsted, and these are characteristics of the human nature, by which he is being described; While He (God the Word) is simple in his divine form and indescribable" St. Theodore of the Studion says. "Who is able to imitate God the invisible and bodiless and indescribable and with no form? For it is the outmost insanity and irreverence to give form to the divine" St. John of Damascus teaches.

Giving heed to the holy ecclesiastical tradition and teaching of the holy Apostles and Fathers, we, my brothers do not venerate neither worship the matter, that is the icon *per se*, but the prototype, that is the image that is being depicted, as St. Basil the Great says: "The honour of the icon goes to the prototype". We venerate and kiss the holy icons relatively, not in worship, neither as if they are gods, but as images of the archetype. Moreover, through the holy icons the eyes of those who see them are being sanctified and through them [the icons] the mind is lifted up towards the knowledge of God.

Having confessed in thanksgiving this faith at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, let us entreat our God and Saviour that we may be deemed worthy to reach His three-day Resurrection. And let us say along with the hymn writer: "The uncircumscribed Word of the Father became circumscribed, taking flesh from thee, O Theotokos, and He has restored the sullied image of its ancient glory, filling it with the divine beauty. This our salvation we confess in deed and word, and we depict it in the holy icons". Amen.

From Secretariat-General