

THE FEAST OF SAINT PANTELEIMON AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday July 27/August 9, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy and Great Martyr and Healer Panetleimon at his Holy Monastery which is located on the west side of the Patriarchate and near Jaffa Gate, within the Old City Wall.

The Church commemorates St. Panteleimon, whose first name was Panteleon, as a doctor by profession, who nevertheless healed the people through God's Grace rather than through human medicine. He believed in Christ and suffered a martyr's death through many tortures for his faith during the reign of Maximian, in 305 A.D.

St. Panteleimon was honoured in the aforementioned Holy Monastery which is dedicated to him, with Vespers in the Evening, and the Divine Liturgy in the morning of the Feast. The Services were led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Demetrios of Lydda and the hymns were delivered by the Choir leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and his helpers. Many faithful attended the Services honouring the Saint and asking his healing intervention.

His Beatitude and Hagiotaphite Fathers visited the Monastery during the Divine Liturgy to venerate the relics of the Saint.

After the Divine Liturgy the renovator of the Monastery Reverend Nun Haritini, offered a reception to the Patriarchal Entourage and the people present.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF PROPHET ELIJAH AT MAALLOULE

On Sunday July 23/August 5, 2018, the commemoration of Holy Prophet Elijah was celebrated a few days later from the actual feast day, at his Holy Church in Maaloule, near the city of Nazareth in Galilee.

This Holy Church belonged to the Patriarchate and was used by the Arab-speaking Orthodox Community there, which however deserted the Church and left the area after the political events in the year 1948.

The Patriarchate regained this Church from the Israeli army which had camped there. The Church was renovated and restored to liturgical function after the funding by the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of Tabor Archimandrite Ilarion and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth.

In this Church the Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Beatitude, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis. The Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth participated in prayer, while the Choir of the Nazareth Shrine delivered the hymns.

His Beatitude preached the Divine word to this congregation as follows;

“As a seer of God, the Thesbite with Moses beholdeth upon Tabor that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and which the heart of earthborn men hath not considered, even the Almighty Lord incarnate”, the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us today at this sacred Church of Prophet Elijah, so that we glorify Christ our God in Eucharist, and exclaim in joy and gleefulness: "Rejoice thou earthly Angel and heavenly man, O Elijah, great of name".

Prophet Elijah is distinguished among the prophets because, not only did he prophesize the incarnation of God the Word, but he also saw along with Prophet Moses at Mount Tabor on the day of Christ's transfiguration "that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and which the heart of earthborn men hath not considered".

Moreover, the Evangelist Luke commemorates Prophet Elijah when he refers to the apparition of God's Angel to Zacharias, to announce the birth of St. John the Baptist, who "will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17), meaning that he would have the spiritual gift and the power of Prophet Elijah.

And Apostle James the Brother of God, while emphasizing the power of prayer sets Prophet Elijah as an example saying: "Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops" (James 5:17-18).

The charismatic personality of Prophet Elijah is shown to act intensively with Godly zeal, both in the Old and in the New Testament, preaching repentance and fighting against idolatry to which the people of God had been drawn.

In other words, the contribution of Elijah in the preservation of the Divine History, the Moral Monotheism, which was revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai, had been decisive. A characteristic feature of this is the conversation between

King Ahab and Prophet Elijah; "When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?" "I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals" (3 Kings 18:17-18), "and the four hundred prophets of Asherah (disgrace)"(3 Kings 18:19).

It is noteworthy that those "prophets of Asherah" (disgrace) were the priests of Baal, and they foretold prophecies by magic spells on the one hand; on the other hand they worked for the deity of Astarte-Aphrodite with sexual orgies and shameful deeds. For this reason they were named the priests of disgrace.

The prophetic mission of Elijah, as well as his preaching of repentance have a timeless significance and immediate referral to our contemporary era of apostasy and iniquity. "Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction" (2 Thessalonians 2:3), says St. Paul, and he adds; "For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way" (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

Here, my dear ones, one begs the question; what is apostasy, rebellion, and lawlessness? They are the fallacy of the "child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You [the child of devil] are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord" (Acts 13:10) according to wise Paul.

And "the right ways of the Lord" are the commandments of God, namely the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, which is given to the people, so that they may be led to the truth of Christ through their repentance, as Prophet Ezekiel says: "And if a wicked person turns away from their wickedness and does what is just and right, they will live by doing so" (Ezekiel

33:19). And in more detail; it is righteous, when the sinner repents and turns away from sin and works righteousness, to live on as a very happy man, due to his righteous manner of living.

In other words, man is called to repentance through his freedom of choice and personal responsibility towards God. The grace of God is what performs the work in the repenting man; as St. Paul says, "where sin increased, grace increased all the more" (Romans 5:20). And elsewhere, "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:4-5).

To the excessive zeal of Elijah; "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant. I am the only one left" (3 Kings 19:14). God, by His apparitions to Prophet Elijah as "great and powerful wind", as "earthquake", as "fire" and as "a gentle whisper" (3 Kings 19:11-12), teaches the Prophet who has sunk in despair due to the triumph of evil, that he should have been considering God's love and long-suffering, for He is not pleased with the death of the wicked people, but awaits their repentance. "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32).

Therefore, my dear ones, let us entreat the wondrous and God-bearing Elijah, so that along with the Theotokos Mary, they may intercede for us to the only Friend of man, God. And let us say along with the hymn writer; "Beholding the great iniquity of men, and God's immeasurable love for man, the Prophet Elijah was troubled, being wroth; and he uttered uncompassionate words unto Him that is compassionate, and cried out: Be Thou wroth with them that have set Thee as nought, O most righteous Judge. Bet the bowels of the Good One were in no wise stirred to punish them that set Him at nought.

For He ever awaiteth the repentance of all men, since He is the only Friend of man". Amen.

After the Divine Liturgy there was a reception.

In the afternoon the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth offered a meal at the Holy Metropolis Headquarters.

From Secretariat-General

ORDINATION OF A RUSSIAN-SPEAKING DEACON AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday morning, July 22/August 4, 2018, during the Divine Liturgy at the Horrendous Golgotha, Mr. Alexander Yasevich was ordained a Deacon. He is a member of the Russian-speaking congregation of the Patriarchate at Ber Sheba parish in South Israel.

The ordination took place after the decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod, by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who has been taking care of the Ber Sheba Russian-speaking congregation and established there a House of Prayer dedicated to the Patriarch Abraham, the Holy Macaws and St.

Sophronios the Patriarch of Jerusalem, with the approval and support of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The Most Reverend Archbishop of Madaba addressed the ordained Deacon as follows;

“Reverend Sub-Deacon Alexander,

The Holy Church of Jerusalem has been exercising its pastoral mission around its jurisdiction and has not been held back by any kind of hard toil, danger, nor geographical distance, in order to minister and serve the Christians wherever they are.

Since the year 2008, I have undertaken the difficult task to gather the Orthodox Christians who live in the region of South Israel. In my daily prayer I had been asking for three things from God; to deem us worthy to find an initial place in order to experience our first Liturgy; to deem us worthy to acquire our first Priest; and finally to deem us worthy to build our own Church.

With God’s help we managed to have our first Holy Church in Ber Sheba and celebrate the Divine Liturgy there. At the same time, God brought you in our small Church and you willingly helped in the readings and in other tasks. From the very beginning I noticed your character and saw your obedience, your willingness and endurance in the temptations. I introduced you to the Archbishops of the Brotherhood and the Fathers of the Church and finally I took you to His Beatitude our Patriarch.

The Holy and Sacred Synod approved your ordination to the degree of the Deacon and your appointment to the newly-founded parish of Ber Sheba, as a helper and Deacon along with the current Priest Fr. Igor Ravsky. Your beloved wife and children, who are with you today, realized your love for the Church from the beginning and did not hinder your desire to serve Christ.

Now you need to have extra patience, first to deal with your own temptations and then with the temptations that will come to your parish. We will support you with our prayer, our council, and we will help you to perform your new duties correctly.

You should always remember that the one who wants to be first ought to serve all others, and follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who washed His Disciples' feet. Keep your heart humble, without asking anything for yourself, but ask only for what is best for Christ's flock.

I wish Christ, Who was crucified here in Golgotha and Resurrected at the All-holy Tomb, may strengthen you, and fill you with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit."

The address was followed by hailing "Axios! Axios!" by those who escorted him, relatives and members of the Ber Sheba parish.

After the ordination the newly-ordained Deacon Alexander offered a reception at the Office of Geronda Sacristan who was represented by Monk Nikolaos.

The ordained Deacon then visited and thanked H.H.B. at the Russian Holy Monastery of St. Mary Magdalene in Gethsemane.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF PROPHET ELIJAH

AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, July 20/August 2nd, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of Prophet Elijah the Thesbite at his Holy Monastery midway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, near the ancient Monastery of the Theotokos' Seat.

This ancient Monastery was built at the area where Prophet Elijah had slept under a broom tree, when an Angel of the Lord woke him up and told him; "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you". And he arose and ate and travelled on foot in the desert for forty days and nights with the strength he received from that food (3 Kings 19:5-7).

At this Holy Monastery for this feast there was Vespers in the evening, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa. The Divine Liturgy in the morning of the Feast was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Arab-speaking Priests, Archdeacon Mark, Hierodeacon Eulogios and Deacon Sophronios.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to the Congregation present;

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After the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen of the Monastery Archimandrite Paissios offered a monastic meal to those

present.

From Secretariat-General

THE SYNAXIS OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday June 30/July 13, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles at the Holy Monastery dedicated to them and is located on the seaside at the west bank of the Sea of Tiberias, within the big town of Tiberias.

At the Church of this Holy Monastery the Divine Liturgy for the Synaxis, namely the gathering of the faithful in order to honour the Holy Apostles, 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 and Secretary-General, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Arab-speaking Priests of the neighbouring areas of the Patriarchate and Archdeacon Mark. Archimandrite Philotheos and his choir delivered the hymns and there was a large congregation attending the service. His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to them;

“And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease” (Matt. 10:1).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The Chief Apostles Peter and Paul, who received their calling from on high by Christ, have invited all of us at the shore of the lake of Tiberias to celebrate their commemoration.

Yesterday the Holy duet Peter and Paul were honoured in Eucharist at Peter's hometown, Capernaum; today, the Synaxis of the Twelve Holy Apostles is honoured in this holy place where for the third time, "Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead" (John 21:14).

Our Holy Orthodox Church honours especially the elected Apostles by Christ Himself – "I have chosen thee twelve" (Jonh 6:70) – because they became good benefactors of mankind, according to the hymn writer: "With one accord let us honour in hymns the divine Disciples and Apostles of Christ, who thundered the heavenly doctrines unto us, those verdant meadows of the Faith, those common benefactors of mankind, those Servants of the Saviour".

Moreover, the Holy Apostles are especially honoured, because the characteristic feature of the Church of Christ is its Apostolic nature, as the God-bearing Fathers of the Church formulated in the Creed; "I believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church".

Having been called by the Lord, and having abandoned everything, those who were fishermen the fish and the nets, the Holy Apostles followed Him during all His earthly action until His Ascension, and after the Pentecost, once the Holy Spirit had inspired them, they became preachers of the faith in Christ and eye-and-ear witnesses to His Passion on the Cross, the three-day burial and His Resurrection from the dead.

The Holy Apostles' preaching on Christ, the Son and Word of God, Who was crucified and resurrected from the dead, was based on their personal experience, as John the Apostle and 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.

(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1-3).

To this very preaching, namely of the continuation of the redeeming mission of the Lord, of the redemption of mankind from sin and the corruption of death, were the Apostles called. And our Lord Jesus Christ Himself ordered them: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19).

The Church continues this order of the Lord, as it is the mystical body of Christ through the successors of the Apostles, the ordained Bishops and spiritual Shepherds, by the power and the working of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. The Apostles were those, who at the mission of the evangelism of Christ's Name and the pastoring of the newly-founded Churches, ordained Priests and Bishops around the various towns "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

St. Paul the Great, referring to the union between the gentiles and the Jews by God the Father in Jesus Christ says: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and

prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:19-21).

These founding stones, namely the Holy Apostles, along with the Chiefs Peter and Paul, does the Church of Christ honour and venerate today, glorifying the its cornerstone, our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who emptied Himself for us, to make us partakers of His fullness, according to the hymn writer: "He that is full is made empty for our sakes, that we might partake of His fullness; for without parting from the bosom of the Father He that is uncircumscribable is come down into thine all-immaculate womb and is made flesh; for this cause we all bless thee, O Mary Bride of God".

Let us entreat this God-bearing Chorea of the Holy Apostles along with Peter and Paul, who have been sent forth to those sitting in the darkness and shadow, to pray to Christ our God for the salvation and enlightenment of our souls and peace for our tested region. Amen."

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a monastic reception and a meal of fish, which were offered by the good carer of the Monastery Hegoumen Archimandrite Sophronios.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY CHIEFS OF THE APOSTLES PETER AND

PAUL

On Thursday June 29/July 12, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy and Glorious and All-lauded Chiefs of the Apostles, Peter and Paul at the Holy Monastery dedicated to them, which has been built by the memorable Patriarch of Jerusalem Damascene at the north-west bank of the Sea of Tiberias.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated for this feast, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina and Secretary-General, Makarios of Qatar, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Arab-speaking Priests from the neighbouring parishes, and Archdeacon Mark. Archimandrite Philotheos and his choir delivered the hymns, and the service was attended by a congregation of pilgrims and local faithful from the Galilee district. His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon;

“A joyous feast hath shone unto the uttermost parts of the earth today, even the all-august memorial of the most wise Apostles, the Chiefs Peter and Paul. Therefore Rome danceth and rejoiceth with them. Let us also, O brethren, joyously celebrate with songs and hymns this most venerable day, saying: Rejoice, O Peter, Apostle and true friend of thy Teacher, Christ our God. Rejoice most dearly beloved Paul, preacher of the Faith and teacher of the whole world. O holy and elect yoke-fellows, since ye have boldness, entreat Christ our God that our souls be saved” the Bishop of the Church Efraim from Karia says.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, Peter the rock of faith and Paul the preacher of the Church, the two men that shone forth by the grace of the Holy Trinity, the vessels of the Holy Spirit, have gathered all of us in this sacred shrine of Capernaum in order to honour their commemoration in Eucharist.

The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul are distinguished among the other Apostles because they have been elected by our Lord Jesus Christ to be chosen vessels, stewards of the mysteries of God and teachers of the whole world. Their holy and God-inspired epistles and letters are the irrefutable and non-negotiable consignment they have given to us men "who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 5-9) St. Peter teaches.

In other words, the final glory, our salvation, is ensured through the sorrows of the present life. And in these sorrows and testing we have the Holy Spirit as a helper, according to St. Paul's teaching by saying: "For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:22-23). "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, my dear brothers, came into the world to liberate man from the bondage of sin, namely from the darkness of ignorance and fallacy; and to lead man into the truth of freedom. The Lord says; "For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (John 18:37). (And everyone who is willing to learn the truth, hears and comprehends my voice and teaching and through its application he becomes a citizen of my spiritual and heavenly Kingdom).

To this voice of witness of the truth and witness of the Lord did the Holy Apostles hearken, and especially Peter and Paul among them. For this reason the Lord says to Peter; "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:17-18). And Paul, who has been called a chosen vessel (Acts 9:15) says: "[I] was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:4). The Lord said to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (1 Cor. 12:9).

The salvific mystery of the divine providence in Christ, my dear ones, is prolonged in the world throughout the centuries through the Church, the mystical body of Christ, and by the eye-witnesses and servants of the divine word (Luke 1:2). And these eye-witnesses and servants of the divine word, namely of the preaching of the gospel, are the Apostles and their successors, the spiritual shepherds and teachers of the Church, the workers and ministers in the Lord's vineyard. They are the ones who continue the mission of Jesus Christ and of His Apostles on earth by the grace of the Holy Spirit, according to their advice; "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Christ's gospel preaching refers to the perfection of our Christian faith, whose motivation is and should be the salvation of our souls. "For now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:11-12), St. Paul preaches.

And the first among the Apostles, Peter, calls the faithful to have Christ, the leader of their lives, as an example to imitate. "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:21-22).

Let us entreat the Holy men of Christ, Peter and Paul, who we commemorate festively today, so that by their intercessions, along with those of the Most Blessed Theotokos, our Lady and Ever-Virgin Mary, we may be granted the mercy and compassion of Christ our Lord and God and Saviour. Amen.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a monastic reception and then an outdoor lunch with fish, offered by the renovator of the Monastery Hegoumen Eirinarchos.

From Secretariat-General

THE UNDERTAKING OF DUTY OF THE ARCHBISHOP ARISTOVOULOS OF MADABA AT HIS H. ARCHDIOCESE

On Sunday June 25/July 8, 2018, the recently elected and ordained Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba undertook his duty at his Archdiocese.

The ceremony was completed through the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of the Dormition in Madaba, which has been recently built by Archimandrite Innokentios. As it is known, inside the Church of the Patriarchate dedicated to St. George in Madaba, there is the mosaic map of the 6th century A.D. which depicts the geographical positioning of Palestine as it was at the time of Jesus Christ's Presence on earth.

The Divine Liturgy for the undertaking of duty of the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba as the Patriarchal Representative in Madaba was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia, the Most Reverend Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom Archimandrite Ieronymos, the Priests of the Shrine of Madaba Fr. Nikolaos and Fr. Joseph and Deacon George. The service was attended by the Christian congregation of Madaba in great jubilation.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this

Congregation;

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21) according to St. Peter's epistle to the Christians.

Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba,

The Holy and Sacred Synod has elected you Bishop of the Holy Archdiocese of Madaba in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan after the Patriarchal proposal and by a unanimous regular voting. And the almighty grace of the Holy Spirit which heals the infirmities and fulfils all things has ordained you at the Episcopal Office by the hands of Our Mediocrity and Our co-celebrant Archbishops at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the Holy City of the Great King.

You have joined the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood since your early youth, being in communion with the root and the quality of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ's vineyard, as He said; "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). And indeed, without the Bishop who is according to the type of Christ, as the Apostolic Church Fathers say, one can do nothing. "Where the Bishop is, therein let the crowd also be; just like wherever Christ is, there the Catholic Church is" St. Ignatios the God-bearer teaches (BEP, vol. 2 p.281). "The one that is placed as a Bishop is believed to be at Christ's place" (BEP. Vol.1 p.97) St. Klimis of Rome says.

In other words, the Bishop is the guarantee of the Apostolic succession and especially the succession of St. James the Brother of God, the first Hierarch of the Church.

Beloved Brother in Christ, Archbishop of Madaba

Your ministry at the All-holy Shrines in self-denial, your

visible care for our Christian Congregation in Beit Jalla, your work in founding the House of Prayer for our Russian-speaking congregation in Ber Sheba, your continuous visits to the prisoners along other pastoral activities of yours, together with your preaching of Christ, and more especially your scientific training in Byzantine singing – as David says – “I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being” (Psalm 104:33), and of course your studies in Theology, are the things that led you to becoming Archbishop of this God-saved historical and biblical county of Madaba.

“Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God” (Psalm 50:23), the psalm writer says. To this very ministry of offering sacrificial praise, in other words, of honest reverence, lies the sui genesis path of salvation. “It is befitting not only to praise God and offer the sacrifice of praise, but also to live in a likewise manner” St. Theodoritos Kyrrou says.

Most Reverend Archbishop of Madaba, you have been called to this mission of care for the salvation of the souls of the sheep of the logical flock. Therefore, act as a shepherd in a good and God-pleasing manner to the flock that has been entrusted to you and teach the congregation of the Church in meek and friendly words, and bear witness to Christ’s witness, namely the Gospel of Christ’s pertaining to the Crucifixion and kenotic love.

Our Holy Order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood boasts with the “glory of the things that pertain to God” (Romans 15:17), because having being the minister of God’s Gospel, it bore God-pleasing fruit through the renovation and maintenance of the Holy Church of St. George, known as the Church of the mosaic map. The Hagiotaphite Brotherhood has also built from the foundations the Bishop’s residence and Hegoumeneion, a Guest House of the Community Church and a building complex

with a School in Hanina, a chapel with a block of flats in Ma'in and especially it founded the prototype School "Patriarch Diodoros" in Madaba, under the initiative and the tireless work of our beloved brother Reverend Archimandrite Innokentios, who has offered himself in the pastoral care of our Greek-Orthodox Community and the people of Madaba without receiving any money for himself; he has also cultivated the Apostolic and Fatherly tradition of our Orthodox faith.

Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba,

"That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. 1:14). "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), St. Paul orders. In other words, God has given us a spirit of love and wisdom in order to govern ourselves and others in prudence and reason; with the word "others" we mean the co-celebrant Priests and deacons, as well as the faithful people.

As for the yoke of obedience and the burden of the pastoral duties that you undertake are concerned, they refer to the leader and perfectionist of our faith, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:2) and His Church. For which the Lord says: "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30).

The hospitable people of Madaba, the pious Christian congregation of the Church, as well as the honourable members of the Church committee, welcome Us today in respect and family love, and more over the local civil authorities, the police and military forces, which are under the wise command of our respected King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Custodian of the Islamic and Christian Shrines in the Holy City of Jerusalem, His Majesty Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein, Who we thank in deep respect, and we pray to our Lord God to protect, invigorate and grant Him and the Royal Family health, longevity, for the goodness of the peaceful and harmonious co-existence of all the citizens of this country.

To you Holy Brother and Pastor of this God-saved town we pray that the grace of the Holy Spirit that was made manifest in the river Jordan in the form of a dove upon the Beloved Son of God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, may enlighten your mind and guide your steps towards the working of His commandments, by the intercessions of the All-holy Most Blessed and Ever-Virgin Mary, our Lady Theotokos, and of your patron Saint Aristovoulos the Apostle, one of the Seventy Apostles, as well as of today's commemorated Saint Fevronia the Great Martyr. Amen.

"Receive this Staff to shepherd the flock of Christ entrusted to you. To the obedient let it be a help and a support. With it, lead the disobedient and the wayward to admonishment and instruction."

After the Holy Communion and His Beatitude's blessing there was a reception at the Reception Hall of the Church and later on lunch at the Guest House of the Monastery of Madaba, offered by the Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba and the Community Council of the town. During the meal His Beatitude addressed the Archbishop of Madaba as follows;

"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" (Acts 20:28) St. Paul commands.

Most Reverend Holy Brothers in Christ Archbishops,

Reverend Clergy and Care takers of the Church,

Honourable guests,

Our Holy Greek-Orthodox Church of Jerusalem rejoices and is glad on the undertaking of duty of the new Shepherd in the historical town of Madaba, its Archbishop Aristovoulos.

As the Shepherd of the Mother of all Churches, Jerusalem, and

successor of St. James the Apostle and Brother of God, We hearken to the words of St. Paul: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28); so we have come to the decision, along with the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod to the reconstitution of the Archdiocese of Madaba.

Today, your town of Madaba with its outskirts is distinguished for the rapid development in the political and social fields, in business, tourism and especially in education. This is witnessed by the establishment and operation of many Universities, Academic Centres and Schools.

Needless to say that the contribution of the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate and of its reverend community at the Academic field of education has been sealed by the indeed meritorious initiative and actions of the Hagiotaphite Brother of Ours, Reverend Archimandrite Innokentios, to whom We are grateful.

The pastoral care of the members of Our Church and especially in the Archdiocese of Madaba and its spiritual jurisdiction refers to the evangelic words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26) as well as to the words: "That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4).

This Gospel message, my dear Brothers, is a message of love, peace, reconciliation and harmonious co-existence with all our fellow men and fellow citizens, without any cultural discrimination and especially without any religious discrimination. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). And in another place: "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16).

All the citizens and all the religious communities in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan enjoy this practical divine love and peaceful co-existence. Therefore we consider it again our duty to express our heartfelt thanks to the Reverend King of the Hashemite Kingdom of our dearest Jordan, and wish Him every sovereign strength from God, health and longevity in this blessed country.

And to the undertaker of his pastoral and Episcopal duties Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, we wish that the grace of the Holy Spirit may make him worthy of his mission in the spiritual vineyard of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, through the intercessions of the Most Blessed Theotokos Mary and of the Holy Great Martyr and Trophy Bearer George. Amen.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF HOLY PROPHET ELISSEUS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday June 14/27, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy Prophet Elisseus at the Holy Monastery bearing his name in Jericho. The Holy Monastery is dedicated to Prophet Elisseus, who was Prophet Elias' disciple and it is located at the town centre, where there is also the sycamore tree Zaccheaus the publican climbed in order to see the Lord. Prophet Elisseus worked miracles in the town of

Jericho such as the turning of the bitter water into drinking water in the spring that lies at the foot of the Sarantarion Mount.

At this Holy Church, Vespers was held in the evening and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning of the feast, led by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Archimandrites Ignatios and Chrysostom and Deacons. The Services were attended by members of the Arab-speaking Congregation of Jericho and pilgrims.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy there was a special prayer for the grapes, followed by a reception and a festal meal at the hegoumeneion. His Eminence praised the Hegoumen Archimandrite Philoumenos from Patra for the renovating work at the dome and other parts of the building of the Holy Monastery of Prophet Elisseus.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINT ONUPHRIOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, June 12/25, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our Father among the Saints Onuphrios of Egypt, at the his Holy Monastery which is located at a short distance from the Biblical Siloam pool in East Jerusalem.

This district is also named “The potter’s field”, because it on the field that the Lords’ of the Jews bought with the thirty silver coins Judas the traitor returned to them when he regretted his crime. They wanted to use the field for “the

burial of the foreigners". For this reason the Monastery is build above caves carved in rocks that were used as tombs. One of these tombs belongs to the first Patriarch of Jerusalem St. Iouvenalios (451 A.D.).

At the Holy Church of this Monastery, Vespers was held in the evening, and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the morning of the Feast, led by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the Archimandrites Ignatios and Kalistos, Archdeacon Mark and Hieromonks and Deacons from the Holy Metropolis of Patra from the Church of Greece. The hymns were delivered by the Reverend Archimandrites Eusevios,(who is also the Choir leader of the Central Monastery of the Patriarchate), and Demetrios, while the service was attended by nuns, and noble pilgrims.

His Eminence read the Sermon of the day on behalf of His Beatitude as follows;

"Godly-wise Father Onuphrios, in spirit thou didst become great Elias' follower, for thou dweltest far removed from the turbulence of the world; thou didst deny all the yearnings of the flesh and didst abide in the barren wilderness, where, with exceeding joy, thou, O blessed man, didst soar aloft in soul to the Heavens where thou truly hadst thy citizenship". The Hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The Grace of the Holy Spirit that has dwelled in our Father among the Saints Onuphrios has gathered us all in this sacred shrine of the potter's field, where the Holy Monastery dedicated to the Saint lies, in order to celebrate the great sacrament of the Eucharist, the bloodless sacrifice to our Trinitarian God.

Our Father among the Saints Onuphrios, who came from Egypt, became a citizen of the kingdom of heaven and conversed with the Angels. He managed this after he had heard of the lives of zealot Prophet Elijah and of St. John the Baptist and Forerunner. Our Father Onuphrios became imitator of these Holy prophets and Hermits, retreating to the inner desert where he lived for sixty years, "having seen no man in all these years" according to his synaxarist.

By his escape in the inner desert, our Holy Father became "an emigrant from this world of confusion" and "disclaimer of the passions of the flesh" hearkening to the words of St. Paul saying: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

So arduous and great was the asceticism of our Holy Father in the dry desert, that "he didst soar aloft in soul to the Heavens where He hadst his citizenship" according to the hymn writer. St. Onuphrios accomplished this hearkening to the words of David and Paul. St. Paul says; "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). And in more detail; do not marvel that we suffer persecution and sorrows. For reasonably thinking, I am convinced that what we suffer and endure in this current time cannot be compared to the glory which is destined to be revealed and given to us.

And Prophet David sings; "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more" (Psalm 103:15-16). The days of man, David says, are like the fresh and temporary grass. Just like the flowers of the fields, man flourishes for a little while. When the hot wind blows over the flower, it is destroyed and the flower is no more, leaving no trace behind of its former presence. Likewise, man goes away and never comes back, and he is forgotten.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, our Holy Church, the faithful members of its body, are rejoicing today on the glorious commemoration of our Father among the Saints Onuphrios. And this is so, because our Holy Father "from Heaven didst receive gifts transcending the mind of man, piously imparting them unto those, who longed for tokens of his ascetic feats;" according to the hymn writer.

And we ask ourselves, what are the attributes of St. Onuphrios' asceticism? They are the fact that our Holy Father became a vessel of the grace of the Holy Spirit, he became son of God, as St. Paul preaches; "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). This means that all those who are governed by God's Spirit are sons of God.

In other words, God's Spirit is the One Who should lead all the actions and deeds of our lives, as St. Ekoumenios says; "They will make [the Spirit of God] charioteer and leader for all their lives. And according to the Church Father Theodoritos Kyros "The regal Spirit" is the spirit, the mind, which rules and thus leads and helps man to overcome his passions and weaknesses. Wherever the "Spirit of God" blows, namely the Spirit of the Lord, there freedom lies, as St. Paul preaches; "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17). Our Father Onuphrios became participant of this liberty of the Spirit of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The exceptional character of the ascetic of the desert St. Onuphrios of Egypt, is not only an example to imitate, but also an exhortation to all the faithful and those who honour his commemoration, to protect themselves from the "spirit of error" (1 John 4:6), which unfortunately dominates the minds and hearts of many of our Christian brethren, as St. Jude preaches by saying; "How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own

ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost; Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 18-21).

Let us therefore entreat our Holy Father Onuphrios and our Holy Father Peter of Athos whom we also commemorate today, along with the Theotokos the Mother of God the Word, the Most Blessed One, the Ever-Virgin Mary, so that by their intercessions to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we may heal the passions of our souls. Amen."

After the Divine Liturgy, there was a special prayer for the fruit and a memorial service at the tomb of the founder of the Monastery and the tomb of Nun Seraphima.

Finally the Abbess of the Monastery Nun Paissia offered a festal reception to the Episcopal entourage at the Hegoumeneion and to all the pilgrims at the courtyard of the Monastery.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ALL THE SAINTS OF PALESTINE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday May 28/June 10, 2018, after the Sunday of All the Saints, the Patriarchate celebrated the established feast of all the Saints of Palestine, according to its Status Quo. They

are all the righteous saints of the Old Testament, the Apostles of the New Testament, the martyrs and the saints of the Church who lived and died in the region of the three Palestines, namely Galilee, Judea, and Arabia Petraea.

For this feast, the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was led by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Hierodeacons, while the choir was led by Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos. The Service was attended by faithful from Jerusalem and pilgrims.

From Secretariat-General

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