THE NAME DAY OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS

On Saturday March 11/24, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, on the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs of Lake Sebastia of Pontus, one of whom is Holy Martyr Theophilos.

1. VESPERS

In the evening of the feast the 9th Hour was read at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen and then, bells tolling, according to the established Typikon order, Festal Vespers was held at the Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Participants in prayer were Archbishops, while the Priests were co-celebrants, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The choir of singers was under the lead of Mr. Demetrios Balagiorgos, while the service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and a congregation of many pilgrims.

2. ON THE DAY OF THE FEAST

On Saturday morning March 11/22, 2018, the Divine Liturgy on the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs and the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was celebrated at the Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, officiated by His Beatitude, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishops, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops, Aristarchos of Constantina and

Secretary-General, Methodios of Tabor, Demetrios of Lydda, Nectarios of Anthedona, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and Hagiotaphite Hieromonks with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The choir was formed by Archimandrite Aristovoulos and the choir of Professor Demetrios Balagiorgos. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and many pilgrims from various countries. After the Divine Liturgy there was a Doxology and finally the full congregation returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

There Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina was the first to address H.H.B. as follows;

Address of Geronda Secretary-General

Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina

on the Name Day of H.H. Beatitude

our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III

March 9, 2018

Your Beatitude Father and Master,

The Commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs, the crowned athletes who confessed Christ at the Lake of Sebastia of Pontus, is a spiritual replenishment depot of the Orthodox faithful for the continuation of their race towards the welcoming of the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ.

This feast of the One Holy and Catholic Church of Christ is celebrated by the Mother of Churches with special emphasis, as its Holy Head, Your Beatitude, bears the name of one of these forty martyrs, St. Theophilos.

For this reason, today we celebrated the bloodless sacrifice, followed by a Doxology at the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, "this holy dwelling place of the glory of God", attended festively by the full body of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the reverend clergy and faithful of our Patriarchate, who have come from all places of its jurisdiction, namely, Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian State.

Having prayed in the Holy Sepulchre for the health and longevity of Your Beatitude, and now returning in this historic reception hall of our sacred dwelling place, we render the fair praise for all righteous and worth-praising deeds Your Beatitude has been labouring for our venerable Patriarchate.

To start with our commemoration, it is undeniable that last year's completion of the historic project of the restoration of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre by the National Technical University of Athens, was a work majorly owed to the inspiration of Your Beatitude and Your safeguarding of the balanced cooperation of the Three Major Communities, while during the current year, Your Beatitude has toiled tenaciously for the support of our nation's rights, every time they were threatened by violations of the Status Quo by the Armenians, at the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre and the chapel of the finding of the Sacred Cross. Moreover, Your Beatitude has striven and worked tirelessly towards the solution of the issue of the Ethiopian's chapel by the Gate of the Church of the Resurrection, which remains closed to this day due to their lack of cooperation.

There has also been a special interest in the spiritual guidance of the Arab-speaking congregation of the Patriarchate, through the printing and distribution of the appropriate books, among which the Litourgical texts of the Patriarchate in Arabic to be used by the Priests. Similarly, restoration and refurbishment projects of the congregation

have been funded in both Jordan and Israel, as for example the Church of Koufr Smea Community. The Patriarchate has also taken care of its Russian-speaking congregation, especially in Beer Sheba and the neighbouring areas.

As far as the support and claiming of our property rights are concerned, these were continued by the appeal of our Patriarchate under Your Beatitude's command to the Israeli Court of Appeal, after the wrongful decision of the Israeli District Court which gave effect to the illegal and corrupt long-term contracts for the Jaffa Gate Hotels, to the settler group "Ateret Kohanim".

However, the undiminished and vibrant interest, as well as the determination of Your Beatitude were made manifest recently, when the Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, imposed illegitimate taxes on Church property, contravening the long established tax exemption rights of our Patriarchate and of the other Churches, as well as the established through the sacred history Status Quo of Jerusalem, and also, during the proceedings for the proposed bill to the Knesset by Member of Knesset Rachel Azaria, which threatened to deny the Churches their right to freely deal with their own properties. Having no other solution, Your Beatitude then took the initiative of the cooperation of the Three Major Communities and the decision of the closure of the Holy Sepulchre, after the Divine Liturgy of the Sunday of Orthodoxy there, on February 12/25, 2018, as a sign of protest against these measures.

The All-holy Church of the Resurrection which is overcrowded by thousands of pilgrims on a daily basis, remained closed for them until the Israeli Prime Minister Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu intervened with a statement, according to which, all actions from the Municipality regarding the collection of taxes as well as all legislative activity on Church properties was suspended, including the "Bill of Church Lands" proposed to the Knesset by Member of Knesset Rachel Azaria. There was also a decision to establish a professional team led by Minister

Tzachi Hanegbi with the cooperation of the representatives of the Churches in order to solve these current issues. Consequently, the Three Major Communities agreed on the reopening of the Gate of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the morning of Wednesday, February 15/28, 2018.

The aforementioned endeavours, which are a representative sample of the grand total of your servitude, inspire us the Hagiotaphites to have courage in order to continue working and cooperating in a brotherly spirit among us, and in a spirit of obedience to Your Beatitude, in order to safeguard our Fathers' inheritance and consign it twofold to our successors, for the praise of our Patriarchate and our blessed nation and for the glory of our Trinitarian God.

Raising my glass on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and all the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, I wish You, Your Beatitude, many happy returns, in peace, stability, benevolence, pastoral fruitful guidance and in abundance of heavenly gifts. So be it.

The Consul General's address as follows;

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today's feast has a special significance to all of us, as the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the noble Congregation, the pilgrims and the Orthodox Community honour with the appropriate grandour the Name Day of the Head of the Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches, His Holy Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

It is a special honour and joy for me to be present at this feast and I would like, Your Beatitude, to convey our

wholeheartedly wishes for health, longevity and strength, in order to continue Your important mission, which increases every day in significance in this hard time.

On this occasion, I would like to express our undivided support to the sacred Institution, the Ambassador Jerusalem Patriarchate, which throughout the ages has played a supremely significant role, and as the centre of Orthodoxy in the Holy Land, it remains an inexhaustible source of hope, projecting from the Holy City the values of Christianity and the message of the salvation of man to all directions.

The Jerusalem Patriarchate is, of course, a steady reference point for all Greeks, wherever they are, and symbolizes the long presence of the Greeks in the Holy Land, while it never fails to represent a strong bond of friendship and cooperation with other nations, as it also represents the Orthodox Christians in the region, safeguarding the valuable traditions and conveying the ecumenical message of Orthodoxy to all directions. For all of us, the Sacred Institution is, of course, the depositary of the most important Sacred Shrines of Christianity, which the Hagiotaphite Fathers defend in devotion and self-denial on a daily basis, and always inspire and strengthen the faith and reverence of the faithful around the world, as well as the bonds with the Church of Jerusalem.

Your Beatitude,

The sincere intention of understanding and reconciliation You systematically display and cultivate, so much so among your relations with the other doctrines and religions, as also in Your wider attempts for reconciliation and peace-making in this much-suffered region, adds to the moral stature of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, within the efforts of defending the Christian presence in the Middle East, promoting its role as a factor of moderation and stability in a period of instability and turbulence, that seem to feed the intolerance and rivalry.

Your Beatitude,

The burden upon Your shoulders is heavy and the fight coinciding from it is long and arduous. I know you face challenges, aware of the criticality of the circumstances and the necessity to defend the Status Quo in the Holy Land, which has safeguarded the peaceful co-existence of all religions here for centuries. It is my deep belief, that with God's help and the active support of all of us, You will continue and succeed in Your mission.

All the Consulate staff, as much as myself, pray that You may have health, strength and longevity for the benefit of the Patriarchate, of the Brotherhood, of Your Greek-Orthodox Congregation, of Orthodoxy and of peace in the Holy Land.

Many Happy Returns.

There were also other addresses, as His Beatitude thanks them in His address below;

"Having left every military array of the world, ye cleaved unto the Master Who is in the Heavens, O Forty Prizewinners of the Lord; for having passed through fire and water, O blessed ones, ye rightly received glory from Heaven and a multitude of crowns" the melodist of the Church proclaims.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece

Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims.

As today our Holy Church and especially the Church of Jerusalem honours and venerates the sacred commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs, and in particular their co-martyr Theophilos, whose name is given to Our Mediocrity, we came down to the All-holy Church of the Resurrection along with the

reverend members of the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, where we festively celebrated the Divine and Bloodless Worship, and we also rendered a thanksgiving Doxology "unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God" (1 Tim. 1:17).

"At the commemoration of Thy martyrs, O Lord, the whole creation keeps festival; heaven with the angels greatly rejoices, and the earth with all mankind makes glad" St. Theodore of the Studion says.

Our Patriarchal Mediocrity along with all the members of the Hagiotaphite Fathers chorea and the pious members of our Christian congregation are participants of this festal jubilation and gleefulness. And this is so, because Our sacred Name Day is not referred only to Our Mediocrity, but especially to the institutional status of the Patriarchal office of the Church, the mystical body of our God and Saviour Christ in the world.

By honouring the commemoration of Christ's martyrs and all the saints, whom we are named after, we actually honour our regeneration (paligenesis) of salvation in Christ and His Holy Spirit, as St. Paul preaches: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;" (Titus 3:5-6).

And we have been grafted in the good olive tree, namely the Church, the body of Christ, through the regeneration and renewal of the waters, the Holy Baptism; while the holy martyrs in general and today's honoured Forty martyrs of the lake of Sabastia, have been renewed through their martyr blood of Christ's love.

And we claim this, because the foretold Church by the Law of Moses, the Patriarchs and the Prophets, the Church of "the

Great Will of the angel" (Isaiah 9:6), was revived and regenerated through the sacred blood and water that came out of the pierced side of the Son of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ Who was Crucified for our sake.

This witness is witnessed by St. John the Evangelist and confirmed by the sanctified place of Golgotha, whose true witness is confessed and evangelized over the centuries by the chorea of the ministering Hagiotaphite Fathers together with their Father and Hegoumen, namely each and every Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem who is the successor of St. James the Brother of God.

Today therefore we honour and celebrate the commemoration of St. Theophilos, the co-martyr of the Holy Forty Martyrs. These blessed martyrs went through water and fire and worthily gained the divine glory and praise by our Holy Trinitarian God.

These Holy Forty martyrs, along with their co-martyr Theophilos, who made heaven on earth and illumined the universe, and now stand by the Holy Trinity in three hypostases, intercede for us.

Let us entreat these Holy Forty Martyrs whose commemoration of glorious prizewinning we celebrate, and the Most blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and Mother of God, the refuge of our souls, to grant us the great mercy and peace towards the three-day Resurrection of our God and Saviour of our souls.

On this occasion, we pray for all who joined Us in prayer and honoured this feast, that they may have power from on high, and the grace of the All-holy Tomb, patience and every blessing from God, expressing our warmest thanks to 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 the Hagiotaphite

Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Russia, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Cvril, Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the brotherly Church of Romania, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, Reverend Archimandrite Philotheos, who spoke on behalf of the congregation of Acre-Ptolemais, Reverend Fr. Farah Bandour, who spoke on behalf of St. James Cathedral, the School Director of the Patriarchal School of Zion Reverend Archimandrite Mattheos, the teacher of St. Demetrios School Mrs. Chrysi Triantafilaki and all participants in this feast."

At noon there was a festal fasting meal.

From Secretariat-General

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THE AKATHIST AT CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

On Friday afternoon, March 10/23, 2018, at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, there was the Service of the Akathist by Joseph the hymn witer, in the Service of the Small Compline, after the Vespers of the Holy Forty Martyrs of His Beatitude's Name Day. The choir at the Services was led by the choir leader Archimandrite Aristovoulos and Mr. Demetrios Balagiorgou.

The 1st Stasis of the Salutations of the Theotokos was recited by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, the 2nd Stasis by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki from the Church of Greece, the 3rd Stasis by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, and the 4th by Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The Services were attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and members of the Greek Community in Jerusalem.

After the Dismissal the congregation returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

From Secretariat-General

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THE FEAST OF THE ADORATION OF THE CROSS AT THE MONASTERY OF THE CROSS

On Sunday March 5/18, 2018, 4th Sunday of Lent, after the Sunday of the Adoration of the Cross, the feast of the Adoration of the Cross for the encouragement of our fasting was celebrated at the Holy Monastery of the Sacred Cross, where wood of three different branches was planted, and which was used to make the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Monastery is in West Jerusalem, near the Israeli Knesset.

In this Holy Monastery, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the morning of the Feast, led by the Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod, Most Reverend Archbishop Demetrios of Lydda, with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Archimandrites Kallistos and Demetrios and Archdeacon Mark. Nuns of the Patriarchate formed the choir, while the service was attended by the Patriarchal School Students, members of the Greek Consulate and the Greek Community of West Jerusalem and pilgrims.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by the Service of the Adoration of the Sacred Cross and then the Hegoumen Archimandrite Klavdios offered a reception to the Episcopal entourage and the congregation at the hegoumeneion.

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THE FEAST OF ST. GERASIMUS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday March 4/17, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of St. Gerasimus of the Jordan at his Holy Monastery in the valley of Jordan on the west bank of the river near Jericho.

Having arrived in the Holy Land from his country, Asia Minor in the middle of the 5th century, St. Gerasimus strove in ascesis in various Palestinian Monasteries, until he founded his own Monastery, the Lavra of Kalamon. There, he led thousands of monks to the Orthodox Doctrine of the 4th Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon, of the two Natures of Christ in His One Hypostasis.

In this Holy Feast, after the warm welcome of the Scouts, the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with cocelebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos o f Nazareth, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios o f Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Alexander of Pereyeslav in Ukraine, the Most Reverend Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Demetrios of Lydda, Philoumenos of Pella and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim Helenoupolis. Participants in the prayer were also the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophylactos of Jordan, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia from the Church of Greece, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Archimandrite Meletios, followed by the Hegoumen of Fhes Archimandrite

Ieronymos, the Hegoumen of the Monastery of the Shepherds Archimandrite Ignatios and local Priests; Fr. Issa Mousleh, and Fr. George Bananoura, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Anastasios. In the choir, Archimandrite Aristovoulos and the choir singer Demetrios chanted in Greek, Arabic, Russian and Romanian. The service was attended by a large congregation of pilgrims from various countries.

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

"The ladder of divine virtue, thou didst scale with ardour, and thou didst attain to the height of divine noetic vision, receiving reflections pure and clear, revealing the divine mysteries of Christ. Hence we honour thee with piety, as we cry, Gerasimus, thou God-bearer: Glory to Christ, Who hath given thee strength. Glory to Him Who hath crowned thee. Glory to Him Who worketh healings for all through thee"; The melodist of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The abundance of the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all in this place of the desert, the place of the preaching for repentance by St. John the Forerunner and Baptist, in order to praise in thanksgiving and doxology the sacred memory of our Father among the Saints Gerasimus who was glorified through his ascesis in the Jordan area.

Giving heed to the words of the psalmist: "Lo, I have fled afar off and have dwelt in the wilderness" (Ps. 54:8), St. Gerasimus left his home town in Lycia of Asia Minor and according to the witness of Cyril of Skythopolis, in his book "Lives of Saints", he mastered the monastic life with many feats against the evil spirits and retreated to the Jordan area to become an anchorite.

Just like the deer runs towards the springs of water with great desire, similarly St. Gerasimus' soul thirsted ardently for nothing else but the Living God. As David the psalmist says: "My soul thirsted for God, the mighty, the living; when shall I come, and appear before the face of God?" (Ps. 41:3).

In other words, having realized the importance of the soul, St. Gerasimus despised the earthly treasures for the sake of the heavenly immortal goods, namely the righteousness and vision of the glory of God, according to David's words: "But as for me, in righteousness shall I appear before Thy face; I shall be filled when Thy glory is made manifest to me" (Ps. 16:15). And in more detail, I will work righteousness and through it I will see with the eyes of my soul your face [My God], my soul will be filled at the sight of the glory and the radiance of your face. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Mat. 5:8) says the Lord.

Life in Christ, namely the Christian's struggle to attain his union with God, or rather to gain the gift of the illumination of the Holy Spirit is the ultimate purpose of the Church, which is the mystical body of Christ in the world. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12) says the Lord.

This very "light of life", namely of the true and eternal life, is what our Father among the Saints Gerasimus gained, through the absolute renouncing of the worldly life of this era, and his retreat to the desert. He did this following St. John the Baptist, the Apostles, the God-bearing Fathers, Confessors, Martyrs, and Athletes of Christ, as well as his contemporary dwellers of the desert of Judea and around the river Jordan.

The dwellers of the desert who lived a life in Christ, my dear brothers, are no others than the citizens of the living God's city (Hebrews 12:22), namely the Church of Christ, the

heavenly Jerusalem, where the Angels and all the Saints feast and spread joy and jubilance abundantly.

To this very Church, the Synaxis and Communion of God's beloved and chosen children who have been registered as heavenly citizens, have we also become members, all of us who bear Christ's name. We have drawn nigh to God through the incarnate God the Word and His Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; and this God is the Father and Judge of all. We have also drawn nigh to the spirits of the righteous who have become perfect as St. Paul preaches: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:22-23).

Behold therefore why the hymn writer of the Church proclaims: "At the commemoration of Thy martyrs, O Lord, the whole creation keeps festival; heaven with the angels greatly rejoices, and the earth with all mankind makes glad. At their intercessions have mercy upon us".

Indeed my dear ones, the heavens rejoice and the earth is made glad today on the annual commemoration of our Holy and righteous Gerasimus of the Jordan, who "scaled with ardour the ladder of divine virtue and attained to the height of divine noetic vision".

Towards this "height of divine noetic vision" are we also called my dear brothers, by our Holy Father Gerasimus and especially at the period of Great Lent, as the hymn writer says: "Slaying the wild beasts of the passions with fasting, let us draw nigh unto Christ through dispassion and purity".

This means that Christ is nigh to all of us, waiting for us to approach Him, having first cleansed ourselves through the time of Lent, which is the incriminator of sin and the advocate of

repentance. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:7-8), St. James the Brother of God advices us.

Come let us draw nigh Christ our God, entreating the Mother of God, the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and asking our Holy Father Gerasimus, saying along with the melodist: "Standing by Christ along with the Saints, Holy Gerasimus, intercede for those who keep your Holy Commemoration", and deem us worthy to draw nigh also to the Resurrection of our Saviour Christ. Amen. Many Happy Returns!"

After the Divine Liturgy there was a Litany around the Holy Monastery and finally a festal fasting meal at the refectory.

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THE FEAST OF THE ADORATION OF THE SACRED CROSS AT THE

PATRIARCATE AND THE FEAST OF ST. PORPHYRIOS OF GAZA

On the third Sunday of Lent, the Sunday of the Adoration of the Sacred Cross, on February 26/ March 11, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Adoration of the Sacred Cross, so that by Its power we may continue the Lenten period until we come to celebrate the Holy Pascha.

This Feast was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos according to the order of the Patriarchate as a "Parresia" at the All-holy Church of the Resurrection. Great Vespers was held at the Catholicon of the Church and on the morning of the Feast the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Holy Sepulchre. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Geronda Secretary General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastiya, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the visiting Metropolitan Sioni of the Church of Bulgaria Archimandrites among whom Elder Kamarasis Nectarios, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacons Anastasios and Sophrony. The choir leader of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos sand on the right and Archimandrite Demetrios on the left. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and many local faithful and pilgrims.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a litany of the Sacred Wood three times around the Holy Sepulchre and then around the Shrines.

Finally the procession returned to the Patriarchate

Headquarters where His Beatitude addressed the guests as follows:

"Cleansed by the grace of the Fast, let us in thanksgiving cry aloud with a pure mind unto Him who alone is pure: Thou hast given Thy blood for all of us, 0 Word, and Thou dost sanctify us by Thy Cross", the melodist of the church proclaims.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The luminous adoration of the Sacred Cross has shone upon all people today, on the third Sunday of Lent, as our Holy Church foretells the Resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Today all of us who abide in the Holy Land and those who are visiting it, have been deemed worthy to venerate the wood of salvation, namely the Sacred and Life-giving Cross, on which God the Word gave His blood for all of us.

The wood of the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ was placed on the place where His feet once stood, on the Horrendous Golgotha, witnessing the true witness of St. John the Evangelist, according to which; "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:34).

In other words, the sacred wood of the cross became the means through which, according to the hymn writer "Thy side was pierced and from it flowed the waters of forgiveness, refashioning our mortal nature". And according to St. Paul, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus

every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" (Phil. 2:8-10).

Behold why when we venerate the Sacred Cross we become participants of Christ's great power, of blessing and sanctification. "We Christians kiss thee (Sacred Cross) with awe, and glorifying God who was nailed on thee, we cry aloud: O Lord, who on the Cross wast crucified, have mercy upon us, by the prayers of the Theotokos, for Thour art good and lovest mankind". And deem us worthy to venerate Thy Glorious Resurrection. Amen. Many Happy Returns.

Have a good Easter."

On this day there was also the celebration of the commemoration of St. Porphyrios Archbishop of Gaza, who established the Christian faith in Gaza in the 5th century. The Saint's tomb is preserved there, at the very old and historic Holy Monastery of the Patriarchate which bears his name. The Service was officiated by the Most Reverend Archbishop Alexios of Tiberias and it was attended by many Christians-citizens of this town.

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THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday February 12/25, 2018, the Jerusalem Patriarchate celebrated the victory and triumph of the Church through the restoration of the holy icons, after the harassment caused by iconoclasm, during the reign of the reverend Empress Theodora Augusta and her son Emperor Michail III, in 842 A.D.

The restoration of the icons in the holy Churches is celebrated as a feast of Orthodoxy because the icons depict and confirm the incarnate presence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on earth, Who is the icon of His invisible Father.

This feast was celebrated by the Patriarchate as "Parresia", namely a great feast with the presence of the full congregation at the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, with Vespers in the evening and the Divine Liturgy in the morning of the feast. The services were officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with cocelebrants in the morning the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sebastiya, Demetrios of Lydda and Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks present with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacons Anastasios and Sophrony, and Priests from other Churches. The right choir was led by Archimandrite Aristovoulos and the left by Mr. George Alvanos. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and a congregation of monks, nuns, local faithful and pilgrims from Greece, Russia and other Orthodox countries.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a procession of the Holy Icons three times around the Sacred Edicule and then around the Shrines, which ended by the reading of the Synodical Canon of Orthodoxy from the Triodion opposite the Sacred Edicule. Finally the Patriarchal entourage and the congregation returned to the Patriarchate, where His Beatitude addressed the faithful as follows;

"Restoring to the churches the representations of Thy flesh, O Lord, we ascribe to them an honour that is relative, and so express the great mystery of Thy dispensation. For Thou hast not appeared to us, O loving Lord, merely in outward semblance, as say the followers of Mani, who are enemies of God, but in the full and true reality of the flesh; an so the icons that depict Thy flesh lead us to the desire and love of Thee" the melodist of the Church exclaims

Your Excellency, Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

A joyful and gleeful day is this day in the Church of Christ, on the Feast of Orthodoxy, namely the restoration of the holy icons and their veneration.

The commemoration of this event does not only refer to the restoration of the icons, but also to the healthy faith of our Orthodox Church, the faith that has been delivered to us by the Prophets, the Apostles, the Holy and God-bearer Fathers of the Church, who martyred for her with their own blood. The hymn writer of the Church says "but we shall glory in the icon of the Word made flesh, which we venerate, but worship not as an idol".

The well-approved St. Basil the Great says; "the honour goes to the prototype of the icon". In other words, by venerating the icons we honour the persons who are depicted and the events of the sacred history, namely the great and salvific mystery of the divine providence, as so clearly the hymn writer explains saying; "Restoring to the churches the representations of Thy flesh, O Lord, we ascribe to them an honour that is relative". According to St. Theodoros of the Studion, "by venerating the icon of Christ, we venerate Him relatively". Also St. Tarasios, Patriarch of Constantinople says; "I am a venerator [of the icons] relatively, not worshiping them".

The fallacy of the iconoclasm, which harassed the Church for a long time, aimed at the enforcement of the irreverent religion of the people holding the false belief of a self-chosen worship [superstition]. It is exactly similar to our contemporary reality, imposed by the visible rulers of this world (Eph. 6:12), who ostensibly in the name of the human rights, impose by law "the detestable idolatry of the time that is past" (1 Peter 4:3), according to the Apostle Peter. And according to the Psalmist: "And man, being in honour, did not understand; he is compared to the mindless cattle, and is become like unto them" (Psalm 48:21).

We, my dear Brothers, "who follow in the footsteps of the faith" (Romans 4:12) and "the rule" (Gal. 6:16) of our Holy Fathers who had received the Divine Knowledge, "we know one Lord and God, glorified in Three Persons and Him alone we worship; we have one faith, one baptism, and we are clothed in Christ. This our salvation we confess in deed and word, and we depict it in the holy icons". This same Lord, we entreat Thee, grant peace to Thy people and Thy Church, so that we may be deemed worthy to go through the Holy and Great Lent and celebrate Thy glorious Resurrection. Amen. Many happy returns!"

From Secretariat-General

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THE BOILED WHEAT MIRACLE BY ST. THEODOROS TYRON AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday February 11/24, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the boiled wheat miracle by St. Theodoros Tyron the Great Martyr, who martyred at the reing of Maximian and Maximinus in 297 A.D.

On this Feast, the Church commemorates the appearance of St. Theodoros Tyron to the Archbishop Eudoxios of Constantinople in a dream, to inform him the Julian the Apostate had mixed the fasting food of the 1st week of Great Lent with the blood of sacrificed animals to false gods, in order to contaminate the Christians. The Saint advised the Archbishop that the Christians should not eat that food, but eat boiled wheat instead. His advice was followed and the Christians avoided the contamination and honour St. Theodoros ever since, commemorating this miracle on the Saturday of the 1st Week of Great Lent.

In honour of this miracle, Vespers and the 1st Stasis of the Akathist were held at the Holy Monastery of St. Theodoros on the west side of the Patriarchate on the way to the New Gate, by the Hegoumen of the Monastery and Typikon Keeper of the Holy Church of Saints Constantine and Helen Archimandrite Alexios. On the morning of the feast day, Matins and the Divine Liturgy were officiated by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastiya with co-celebrants Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and deacons; Archimandrites Ignatios the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of the Shepherds and Mattheos the Dragouman and School Director of the Patriarchal School of Zion, and the Priests Nectarios and Nikolaos. The Service was attended by a congregation of monks, nuns and laity and members of the Greek Community and the Arab-speaking congregation of the Patriarchate.

During the Divine Liturgy, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos came for veneration, escorted by Hagiotaphite Fathers.

After the Divine Liturgy the Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages were offered a reception by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Alexios at the Hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Holy Monastery.

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THE 1ST STASIS OF THE AKATHIST AT THE PATRIARCHATE

The Canon of the Theotokos and the 1st Stasis of the Salutations of the All-Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary were officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, on Friday afternoon of the 1st Week of Great Lent, February 10/23, 2018, at the Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection. The right choir was led by Archimandrite Aristovoulos and the left by Mr. George Alvanos, while the service was attended by a large congregation of monks, nuns, and laity. The service was also attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos.

After the Service and the dismissal, His Beatitude preached the Divine Word and wished the congregation a blessed Great Lent as follows;

"An Angel and the chiefest among them, was sent from Heaven to cry: Rejoice! To the Mother of God. And beholding Thee, O Lord, taking bodily form, he stood in awe, and with his bodiless voice he cried aloud to her such things as these: Rejoice thou through whom joy shall shine forth. Rejoice, thou through whom the curse shall be blotted out. Rejoice thou the Restoration of fallen Adam. Rejoice, thou the Redemption of the tears of Eve", the hymn writer of the Church says.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians,

Our Holy Church, honouring on the one hand the great and

sacred mystery of God's providence, and on the other, our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, has established the Service of "The Akathist", or "The Salutations of the Theotokos", which is held during the fasting weeks of the Holy and Great Lent.

The purpose of fasting in general and of the Holy Lent in particular refers to the health of both body and soul of the faithful members of Christ's Church. It is not appropriate not to rejoice for the health of the soul but grieve over the changing of our diet, and thus appear to care more for the pleasure of the flesh rather than the diligence of the soul, St. Basil the Great says, and he defines fasting as "a medicine counterbalancing sin".

After His baptism in the river Jordan, our Lord Jesus Christ was taken by the Holy Spirit in the desert, where He fasted "for forty days and forty nights" (Mat.4: 1-2). And He did that before He preached the Gospel for the salvation of man, and of course before His passion in the flesh, the three-day burial and His Resurrection from the dead.

On other words, Christ is the One Who wants all men to be saved and receive the full knowledge of truth through faith. "Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:4-5) St. Paul preaches.

No one, my dear brothers, can attain to the fullness of the truth in Christ, without the confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Who has come down to earth from heaven for our salvation and has become incarnate through the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit and became man.

In other words, the historic person Virgin Mary, was deemed worthy to become the Mother of God. And the Theotokos became the Mother of God, because the Only Begotten Son and Word of

God, was conceived as human in her womb, gestated in her vital organs and was held in her arms and breastfed from her breasts.

This great and strange and paradox mystery to which the only truthful witness is Virgin Mary from Nazareth, is interpreted theologically by the composer of the hymn which is the introduction of the Archangel Gabriel when he was sent from heaven to tell Theotokos "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" (Luke 1:28).

Christ, my dear brothers, is the joy of the world, which has been shown forth through the Virgin Mary. And this is because through the Most Blessed Theotokos, the Divine Word put upon Himself our human nature according to St. Andrew of Crete; "O Virgin inviolate and Mother of God who hast not known man, from thee has God, the Creator of the ages, taken human flesh, uniting to Himself the nature of men."

The conceived by the Virgin Mary and united in the Holy Spirit human nature of God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the one which brought forth the redemption from the curse of the first created couple. It is His human nature the one that recalled the fall of the first Adam and saved Eve from the tears of sorrow. For this reason the melodist says: "Rejoice — Theotokos Mary — thou through whom creation is renewed". This is the "renewal of the human nature that Christ made", according to Theodoritos Kyrou.

Since the purpose of the Holy Lent is our renewal in Christ, our rebirth through repentance, therefore the Most Blessed and Ever-Virgin Theotokos Mary is projected during the fasting period, because it is through her that our human nature was renewed and revived. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). So, anyone who is united with Christ, is a new creation in Christ. The old state which was formed by the law and sin has faded. Behold, all

things are new, St. Paul preaches (2 Cor. 5:17).

Our Holy Church calls us, my dear brothers, to prepare ourselves through fasting, which is indeed the counterbalancing medicine of sin, but also through repentance, which is the strength of salvation. According to St. John of the Ladder, repentance is the daughter of hope, the renouncing of despair. Let us therefore prepare ourselves, my dear ones, so that we may be deemed worthy to celebrate the Resurrection of our Saviour Christ and along with Him our common resurrection from sin. "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" St. Paul says (1 Cor. 5:7).

Let us entreat our Most Holy Theotokos, and Mother of God and say along with the hymn writer: "Theotokos the hope and protection of those who sing thy praises, take from me the yoke of sin and, Pure Lady, accept me in repentance." Amen. Have a Blessed Great Lent and a Happy Easter."

From Secretariat-General

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THE FEAST OF ST. CHARALAMBOS

THE HIEROMARTYR

On Friday February 10/23, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of St. Charalambos the Hieromartyr at his Holy Monastery on the north side of the Church of the Resurrection at the 8^{th} Station of Via Dolorossa.

St. Charalambos was a Priest of the Christians in Magnisia, capital of Thessalia. At a very old age he confessed Christ and suffered a martyr's death. He was beheaded during the reign of the emperor Septimius Sevirus when Lukianos was the Commander of Thessalia in 198 A.D.

For this Feast at the aforementioned Holy Monastery of the Old City of Jerusalem, Vespers in the evening and the Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified gifts were officiated by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, with cocelebrants Archimandrite Porphyrios, Priests Farah and Nectarios and Archdeacon Mark. The choir was formed by the choir leader of the H. Church of Saints Constantine and Helen Archimandrite Eusevios and the left choir singer of the Church of the Resurrection Mr. George Alvanos. The services were attended by a congregation of nuns and pilgrims. Archimandrite Porphyrios delivered a sermon to the congregation (see video).

During the Divine Liturgy H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos came for veneration, escorted by Hagiotaphite Fathers and wished the Hegoumen Archimandrite Kallistos strength in his ministry and a blessed Holy and Great Lent. After the Divine Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts, the Hegoumen Archimandrite Kallistos offered a reception to the Episcopal entourage and the congregation at the hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Holy Monastery.

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THE FIRST PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY OF THE HOLY & GREAT LENT AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Ash Wednesday morning, February 8/21, 2018, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was present at the Service of Matins and the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at the Holy Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen.

The Divine Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts was also celebrated at the Horrendous Golgotha, by Geronda Sacristan Most Reverend Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis. The choir was formed by the Templar Fathers and the choir leader of the Allholy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos, while the service was attended by a congregation of local faithful and pilgrims.

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