

# THE FEAST OF THE PROPHET ELISHA AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, June 14/27, 2024, the feast of the Holy Prophet Elisha was celebrated by the Patriarchate in his Holy Monastery in Jericho, near the sycamore tree of Zacchaeus.

This Monastery is located in Jericho, due to the action of the prophet mainly in that place.

During this feast, the Church commemorates the prophet, Elisha, as descended from the village of Abel-Meiz. This was the son of Shafat, a farmer by profession and was called by God to the prophetic office by the prophet Elijah. Elijah the prophet anointed Elisha as a prophet and threw his mantle on him. Elisha left the twelve pairs of oxen with which he was ploughing, and slaughtered and used them for a feast for the people and followed the prophet Elijah, being faithful to him throughout his life. He worked many miracles, as narrated mainly in the book of 4 Kings of the Old Testament. He saw his teacher Elijah taken up on a chariot of fire into heaven and he asked for and received his grace and mantle, on which he passed the Jordan river as if on a boat.

In the aforementioned Holy Monastery, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos celebrated the Divine Liturgy with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolas and Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Holy Sepulchre Fathers, the first of whom was the Typikon keeper of the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen Archimandrite Alexios, the Archimandrites Silouanos and Kyriakos and Fr Issa Mousleh, the Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Dositheos. Hierodeacon Simeon was the Greek chanter with the assistance of Mr Georgios Varaklas and the choir of the Orthodox congregation chanted in Arabic.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude proclaimed the divine word as follows:

“And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so” (4 Kings 2, 9-10).

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Reverend Christians

The spirit of the prophet Elijah, that is, the Holy Spirit that was transmitted to his disciple Elisha, has gathered us all in this Biblical place of Jericho in the Jordan River area, where the Monastery of Prophet Elisha is located, to celebrate his annual commemoration.

The Holy Prophet Elisha is distinguished among the prophets who prophesized the incarnate presence of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth, because, as a disciple of the great prophet Elijah, he learned of him and worked many miracles by the grace of God, as his synaxarist writes: “the water is naught, and the ground barren. And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake” (4 Kings 2, 19-22).

Moreover, the great Elisha raised dead people; he cleansed Neeman the Syrian from leprosy and made his servant a lepper as a punishment for his greed and disobedience; He even smit the waters of the Jordan River and made them part, using

Elijah's mantle (Cf. 4 Kings 2,14).

The Holy Church of Christ honours the prophets as the "righteous" people of God, the saints of God. The prophets, and of course, prophet Elisha are the chosen vessels of God, inspired by the luminous power of the Holy Spirit. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4,24), the Lord says.

The holy prophets are those who prepared and foretold the great mystery of the Divine Providence in Christ, as Saint Paul preaches: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3,16).

Regarding this, the Lord's words to His disciples after His resurrection are noteworthy: "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24, 25-27).

Interpreting these words of the Lord, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "Nothing coming from God is of no importance, but all and every single one of them have their specific place and use. The servants of the Lord were sent to the right place beforehand, to prepare the Lord's coming, introducing prophecy as the necessary preparation for the faith in Christ".

In other words, my dear ones, the gift of prophecy that God gives, is the gift of revealing the hidden plans of God, as the prophet Amos says: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3,7).

Like another Paul, who was taken up in the third heaven (Cf. 2 Cor. 12,2), the prophet Elisha reached spiritual heights and

received the hidden knowledge of God by God. As his hymnographer writes: "Plainly informed by a divinely inspired oracle, the wondrous Elijah anointed thee a prophet, O glorious Elisha. In thee the bounteous grace of the Holy Spirit found rest and came to dwell" (Matins, Ode 3, Troparia 1,2).

It is made clear that the gift of prophecy is the prototype of the Apostolic office, from which both the prophets and the apostles draw strength and genuine divine knowledge. According to the true testimony of the writer of the Book of Kings, the prophet Elisha used Elijah's mantle and made the waters of the Jordan River part and walked through them, reaching the other side of the river. Through this 'sign', the other prophets recognized Elisha as Elijah's disciple and honoured him, bowing down their heads before him (Cf. 4 Kings 2,13-15).

Let us implore this great and marvellous vessel of the Holy Spirit, the great prophet of God, that along with the intercessions of our Most Blessed Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, he may pray for us all. And let us say along with the hymnographer: "With hymns let us the faithful honour Elijah and Elisha, the pinnacles of the Prophets, those brightly shining luminaries of the whole world; and let us cry out in harmony unto Christ: O compassionate Lord, by the entreaties of Thy Prophets, grant Thy people forgiveness of sins and great mercy" (Vespers, Aposticha Glory). Amen! Many happy and peaceful returns!"

After the Divine Liturgy, the good carer of the Monastery, Archimandrite Parthenios, offered a reception to the Patriarchal entourage and the congregation.

At noon the Hegoumen of Abba Gerasimos Monastery Archimandrite Chrysostom hosted a meal in honour of His Beatitude in a restaurant in the city.

**From the General Secretariat**

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# THE FEAST OF SAINT ONUPHRIUS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, June 12th/25th 2024, the commemoration of our Holy Father Onuphrius of Egypt was celebrated by the Patriarchate in the Holy Monastery named after him in the site south of Siloam's pool and in the place of Alcedama, i.e. the field of "the price of blood" which the Jews bought to bury the foreigners with the money that Judas returned repentantly.

On this day, the Church remembers that the holy Onuphrius lived initially in the Coenobitic monastery of Hermoupolis and then went to the desert and lived there for sixty years with extreme fasting and prayer, even without clothing. The monk Paphnutius found him in this condition, who also revealed him to the Church and buried him there covering him with his garment. On his memory and in this place, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with concelebrants their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth and Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Hegoumen of the Oblou Monastery Archimandrite Nektarios, Archimandrites Claudios, Ieronymos, Silouanos and Christodoulos, Archdeacon Markos, and Hierodeacon Dositheos. Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Eustathios Tsoumanis delivered the chanting as the service was attended by faithful Orthodox Christians.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new

man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness", Saint Paul preaches (Eph. 4,22-24).

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

The Grace of the Holy Spirit brought us all to this hagiographic place of Alkedamas, i.e. the village of blood (Acts 1:19), the eponymous Holy Monastery of Saint Onuphrius of Egypt, so that we may thankfully celebrate his sacred commemoration.

Our Father Onuphrius is distinguished among the righteous and faithful personalities of our Holy Church, because he was, in his ascetic and solitary ascetic life, a perfect imitator of the great prophets Elijah of Thesbes and John the Forerunner. "At the age of sixty, Saint Onuphrius lived in the desert, a man who did not understand the whole" his synaxarist reports. His hymnographer also says: "Thou becamest an earthly Angel, deified by thy Godward striving, O all-blessed Onuphrius; for thou didst emulate the life of John and of Elijah" (Matins, Ode 6, Troparion 2). And elsewhere, "As Angels in the flesh who dwelt with the hosts incorporeal, ye lit the desert like stars flashing n the night with your ascetic pains and toils. Now, O God-bearing Fathers, importune God's great mercy for us who sing your praise, Onuphrius and cry out: Alleluia" (Kontakion).

And the psalmist chants wondering: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob" (Ps. 24,3-6).

Those who seek the face of Jacob's God, that is, God the Father, are according to the wise Solomon the righteous, whose

reward is in eternal life and in the Lord and their care of the Most High; "for this, they receive the kingdom of decency and the diadem of goodness from the hand of the Lord". (Wisdom of Solom 5,16).

Our Holy Father Onuphrius, who is honoured today, was shown to be righteous, who, on the one hand, received his care in the desert, being alone in it for sixty years, apart from the Most High God; on the other hand, he obtained the diadem of beauty that is, the crown of justice from the hand of the Lord. In this case, let us also listen to Saint Paul saying: " I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing", (2 Tim. 4, 7-8).

According to Saint Chrysostom, "there is not one surface, but two. One is the present and existing, the other is the future and in the end gloriously existing". The second and subsequent appearance of the righteous judge, that is, of Christ, was loved by all the friends and believers of him, of Christ, especially the blessed Onuphrius. And this is because Jesus Christ commanded: " If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14, 23).

Interpreting this word of Jesus Christ, St. Cyril of Alexandria says; those, whose mind shines with every virtue and who is suitable for learning the divine and hidden mysteries, will receive the fatherhood, the illumination of the Holy Spirit and will see with the eyes of their intellect the Lord, Who has dwelt in them. Therefore, the knowledge of the saints is not common to all, but it is excellent, special and very different.

Our God-bearing Father Onuphrius, who loved God with all his mind and with all his heart, received precisely this guidance,

illumination, but also the knowledge of the Holy Spirit in his mind and pure heart.

To this, our wonderful Father Onuphrius exhorts us and calls us, to the love of the Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ through the intercessions of our Most Blessed Virgin Mary the Theotokos and the Holy Apostles.

And after the hymnographer we say: "O righteous Father Onuphrius, since in all godliness thou didst possess a most sacred soul, thou didst bear temptations well, being strengthened with faith divine; and once united to God by means of love, thou in the land of the meek didst pitch thy tent, since thou wast made most fair with the splendour of the virtues; hence, we all joyously keep festival on thy memorial" (Matins, Praises, Troparion 2). Amen. Many and peaceful returns!"

Subsequently, a Trisayon ☩☩ took place for the repose of the soul of the departed nun of the Monastery Serafima Euthymiadou. Then at the Tomb of the Monastery's Founder Hieromonk Kyrillos, the blessing of the beginning of the fruits was read.

Finally, the hard-working and caring Nun Paisia, the abbess of the monastery, offered a rich festive treat and recreation necessary for the heat of that day.

**From the General Secretariat**

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# **THE FEAST OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

# AT THE RUSSIAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY -MISSIA

The feast of the Monday of the Holy Spirit was solemnly celebrated on June 11/24, 2024 at the magnificent Cathedral of the Holy Trinity belonging to the Russian Mission of the Mosco Patriarchate (MISSIA).

The Divine Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth and Isychios of Capitolias, the Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Head of MISSIA Archimandrite Vassianos, Archimandrite Nikon and other Hieromonks and Priests of MISSIA, Holy Sepulchre Hieromonks, among whom, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archimandrite Christodoulos, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the female Church Choir of Ein Karem Gornia, as the service was attended by the Ambassador of Russia Mr Anatoli Victorov, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos and many Russian-speaking faithful Christians.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16,7) the Lord said to His disciples.

Reverend Archimandrite Vassianos, Representative of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril in Jerusalem,

Dear Brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

The grace of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ has gathered us all in this historical Church of the Holy Trinity, today, Monday of Pentecost, to celebrate the life-giving and Almighty Holy Spirit, the One Person of the Holy Trinity, who is equal, of one essence and of the same glory with the Father and the Son.

The Holy Church of Christ gives special honour to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, which brings together the whole institution of the Church. The institution of the Church is the body of Christ, as well as the spring of life, that is of eternal life, of our salvation as the hymnographer writes: "The Holy Spirit provideth all things; He gusheth forth prophecy; He perfecteth the priesthood; He hath taught wisdom to the illiterate. He hath shown forth the fishermen as theologians. He holdeth together the whole institution of the Church" (Saturday Vespers, Sticheron 3). And elsewhere he writes: "The Holy Spirit hath ever been, and is, and shall be, neither beginning nor ending; but He is ever ranked and numbered together with the Father and the Son. He is Life, and life-creating; Light, and light-bestowing; by nature good, and the source of goodness; through Him the Father is known, and the Son is glorified; and thereby all men acknowledge a single sovereignty, single covenant, a single worship of the Holy Trinity" (Sunday Vespers, Sticheron 2).

Great wonders did the Lord work on this day when the Holy Spirit revealed the Church of Christ to the world. Great is the Lord's glory, for by the power and illumination of the Holy Spirit we become through baptism members of Christ, of the Church, as we put on Christ. And we are sealed with the permanent seal of the Holy Spirit.

The Disciples and Apostles of Christ travelled around all nations preaching the Gospel of Christ, consecrating Churches and were distinguished in hard toil, to whom Saint Paul says: "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). Interpreting these words, Saint Chrysostom notes that "Paul says these, not because it is preferable to have the salvation of the flock, but because it is the benefit of the flock when we look after ourselves".

Paul's example refers to the current active pastors in the various local Orthodox Churches, which Christ "gave...for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children,... carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4, 11-14) that is, "the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6,12).

This unity and "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4,3), have we come to proclaim in this Eucharistic gathering, with the brotherly Churches of Russia and Romania in the Holy City of Jerusalem, where the words of prophet Joel were fulfilled: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2,17).

The events that took place at the Upper Room in the Holy Zion, where all the disciples of Christ were gathered (Cf. Acts 2,1) remain always the prototype for the unity of our brotherly Orthodox Churches in the Holy Spirit and in the love of Christ. As Saint Cyril of Alexandria says; "the pouring of the Holy Spirit was given, God pleased the human nature excessively, crowning it with the glory from on high, hiding their sin out of His goodwill as it was in the beginning".

It is noteworthy that the melodic words of Saint John of Damascus "Come receive the fire-breathing dew of the Spirit, as the ransom cleansing from faults and offences, O all ye

that are the Church's light-formed children; for now is the Law come forth from holy Sion: tongues formed of beacon-fire, even the Spirit's grace" (Katavasia, Ode 5). And in more detail; light-formed children of the Church, accept the fiery dew of the Holy Spirit, that is the cleansing from our sins. Because now the grace of the Holy Spirit has gushed forth from Jerusalem in the form of tongues of fire.

Indeed, the Holy Spirit who enlightens and sanctifies our souls, made us light-formed children of the Church, through His divine illumination, as Saint Gregory the Theologian says: "The enlightenment is the illumination of the souls...partaking of the light, abolition of darkness". Therefore, our dear brethren, let us pray to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Theotokos Maria, to become partakers of the light of the Comforter Holy Spirit.

And let us say along with the hymnographer: "Of old the tongues were confounded because of the audacity in the building of the tower, but now the tongues are made wise for the sake of the glory of Divine knowledge. There, God condemned the impious because of their offence; and here, Christ hath enlightened the fishermen by the Spirit. At that time the confusion of the tongues was wrought for punishment, but now the concord of tongues hath been inaugurated for the salvation of our souls" (Sunday Vespers, Glory). Amen. Many happy and peaceful returns!"

Soon afterwards the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude gave the following speech:

*"Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Dear Archimandrite Vassian,*

*Dear Fathers,*

*Beloved Monastics,*

*Sisters and Brothers in Christ,*

*On this joyous day of the Monday of the Holy Spirit, we celebrate in the blessed grace of the Feast*

*of Pentecost, which we observed yesterday. The Feast of Pentecost is a great feast for all of*

*Christianity, but especially for Orthodox Christians, and especially for us who are here in the Holy*

*Land and in this City of Jerusalem, where our very heritage has been formed by the Christian*

*faith.*

*Here in this Holy City the Church was revealed on the first Pentecost, and the gift of the Holy*

*Spirit that was bestowed upon the disciples remains with us today. This gift of God's sustaining*

*Spirit has shaped the common heritage of the values of the Gospel in which Christians have been*

*brought up and which we bring to the human family.*

*The meaning at the heart of this common heritage of faith and the values of the Gospel means*

*that the unity of the Orthodox Churches, which are national Churches, is not in the first place*

*about the unity of doctrine; it is rather about the unity of the human family.*

*This is the vision and purpose of Pentecost, as our Lord Jesus Christ said to the apostles, that the*

*good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the*

*nations (Mt 24:14).*

*Today we can see that the human family is in trouble. Our unity is broken and the message of*

*Pentecost is obscured. The unity of the Church and the unity of the human family are damaged*

*the world over, and our existence and our own specific ethnic and cultural identity are under*

*threat. We see happening what Saint Paul in the Acts of the Apostles said, from one ancestor*

*[God] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and*

*the boundaries of the places where they would live so that they would search for God and perhaps*

*grope for him and find him. (Acts 17:27). God made us from one ancestor, but we have wandered*

*far and are often lost in our search for God.*

*Our mission here as the Church of Jerusalem is to work for peace and reconciliation in our region.*

*We know full well the truth of Saint Paul's words, If one*

*member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it (1 Cor. 12:26). These words are as true of the family of the Church as they are of the human family, because we are all part and parcel for the human family.*

*We have the privilege and the responsibility of worshipping in the very places where our Lord*

*Jesus Christ shed his precious blood for the sake of the human family. It is in this light that we*

*understand the imperative of the unity of the Church and the unity of the people whom we serve.*

*The hymnographer says it well in the Kontakion for the Feast of Pentecost, when he writes*

*When the Most High came down*

*and confounded tongues of men at Babel,*

*he divided the nations.*

*When he dispensed the tongues of fire,*

*he called all to unity,*

*and with one voice we glorify the Most Holy Spirit.*

*We pray today to Almighty God, that we may respond with a full and eager heart to his call to*

*unity – the unity of the Church and the unity of the whole human family.*

*Thank you.”*

On this occasion, His Beatitude offered an icon of Bethlehem, while Fr Vassianos offered an icon of the Holy Trinity made by Andrei Roubliov.

After the Divine Liturgy, there was a reception and a festal monastic meal, where His Beatitude addressed those present, stressing the need of the unity of the Orthodox Churches.

**From the General Secretariat**

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## **VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE**

On Friday, June 8/21, 2024, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received:

1-The Managing Director of the Patriarchal School of Holy Zion Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos with the teachers and the students who graduated in the current year.

His Beatitude spoke to them, analyzing the centuries-old religious, cultural and ecclesiastical work of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, in which they are also called, if they have such a vocation and inclination, to assist in their timely entry into the Holy Sepulcher Brotherhood.

2-The Director of the Red Cross Office in Ramallah, Mr Arnaud

Meffre, who analyzed the humanitarian work carried out by this organization in Israel, Palestinian Authority and Gaza and the difficulties it encounters in its practice of this work after October 7, 2024.



From the General Secretariat

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## VISITS AND PASTORAL ACTIVITY OF HIS BEATITUDE

On Thursday, the 7th / 20th of June 2024, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received:

1 – Father Mark of the Austrian Hospice Foundation with ten volunteers from Austria.



In this group, His Beatitude analyzed the pastoral and cultural activity of the Patriarchate from the beginning of the first Church until AD 638, the time of Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem, until the present time in the context of the states of Israel, Jordan, Palestinian Authority and Qatar under each Patriarch of Jerusalem with his ecclesiastical jurisdiction recognized and all the privileges of the Patriarchate recognized over the ages.

2 – Then His Beatitude received the General Diplomatic Representative of the American Embassy in Israel for Palestinian Affairs, Mr George Noll with his colleague.

His Beatitude spoke about the work of our Patriarchate in the Palestinian Authority and in Gaza and about the inseparable relationship of the Old Testament with the New, completing and sealing the Old in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.



3 – Then His Beatitude received Mr Ode Kawas, head of the Arabic-speaking Schools of the Patriarchate, for a discussion on the issues of these schools.

4 – The teacher Mrs Panayiotan Kafetji, and discussed directions for the teaching of the Greek language in the Arabic-speaking Community of the Patriarchate and in the Patriarchal School of Saint Dimitrios.

5 – Mr Dib Youssef with his wife, who translated into Arabic the work of the blessed professor Fr. Georgios Kapsanis, Hegoumen of the Monastery of Gregoriou in Mount Athos.

6 – The Head of the Community of Yaffo Fr Konstanti.

7 – The Abbot of the Monastery of Prophet Elisha in Jericho Archimandrite Parthenios, to invite Him to the Monastery's celebration on the 14th of June.

8 – On the evening of this day, His Beatitude blessed, through

His presence, the gathering of Orthodox Scouts in the ceremony hall of the Notre Dame Hotel in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos, the Ambassador of Cyprus to the Palestinian Authority Mr Assos and the former Director of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Committee of the Palestinian Authority Mr Hana Amire.



This gathering was characterized as a “Leaders Inauguration Ceremony”, i.e. as a leader installation ceremony. In this, His Beatitude announced the establishment of the Local Council of Jerusalem and encouraged the activity of the Scouts, who strengthen the Christian presence in the Holy Land through their participation in the ceremonies of the Church, especially on Holy Saturday.

At this meeting, awards of excellence were awarded to distinguished Scouts for their participation in various humanitarian activities.

# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE D. LITURGY IN TURAN OF GALILEE**

On Sunday, June 3rd/16th 2024, Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy in the Holy Church of Saint George of the Turan Community, a village located near Nazareth.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences, the Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, and the Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantine, and priests with first in rank the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nektarios, the Priests of the Russian-speaking flock of the Patriarchate, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. Many Orthodox believers of this parish participated in devotion, as the local Byzantine choir delivered the chanting under the guidance of His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba in various languages.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude preached the divine Word with His following sermon:

“Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Dear Christians,

“The choir of the Fathers which came together from the ends of the whole world, taught the one essence and nature of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit, and clearly transmitted the mystery of theology to the Church. Praising them in faith let us bless them saying: O godly company, divinely eloquent warriors of the regiment of the Lord, greatly radiant stars of the noetic firmament, impregnable towers of the mystic Sion, flowers of paradise, wafting forth the scent of myrrh, golden mouths of the Word, boast of Nicaea, adornment of the whole world: pray ye earnestly in behalf of our souls!” (Matins, Praises, Glory) the hymnographer of the Church proclaims.

The grace of the Holy Spirit brought us all together today in the Holy Church of your city, Touran, to celebrate the First Ecumenical Council of the three hundred and eight God-bearing Fathers, who theologized and proved that the Son of God was truly perfect man and proclaimed and confessed this perfect man and perfect God as of one essence and nature with God the Father.

This Ecumenical Council was convened in Nicaea by the Roman Orthodox Emperor Constantine the Great in the year 325, who attended there and sat with them at the prompting of the Holy Fathers. In this Council, on the one hand, the blasphemies of the deacon Arius were condemned, who denied the divinity of the Son of God and proclaimed Him to be a “creature” and born “out of non-beings”; on the other hand, he was excommunicated and expelled from the God-human body of the Church and was deposed.

It should be noted that the heretical teaching and doctrine of Arius was the source of all the subsequent heresies created by “men who speak perversely” (Cf. Acts 20, 30) and “those who preached the faith were deceived” (Cf. 1 Tim. 6, 21). In other words, heretics are those who pervert the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Scriptures delivered to us by the holy disciples and apostles of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as Paul preaches: “The time has come for the sanctifying teaching to come.” For the

time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 4, 3-4).

Those who possess the sanctified faith are the successors of the Apostles, that is, the Bishops ordained and established by their honourable hands, to whom the blessed Paul orders: "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).

These are the Holy Spirit-Bearing Fathers, who saved and entrenched our right and sanctified faith, theologizing in the Ecumenical and Local Holy Councils.

It is because of this that Paul calls himself Father, because he begat many children in the Holy Spirit, as he says addressing the Corinthians: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel", (1 Cor. 4,15). Interpreting this word of Paul, the great Origen says: A father is the one who first spread and proclaimed the Christian faith, whereas a teacher is the one who takes charge of the child and takes care of his Christian education (education).

The communion in the Holy Spirit and succession between the Holy Apostles and Fathers of the Church is also expressed by the hymnographer of the Church: "The Church was strengthened unto one faith through the preaching of the Apostles and the doctrines of the Fathers. The Church is robed in truth woven of the word of God from above. It teaches truth, and glorifies the great mystery of faith" (Kontakion).

Indeed, the Church of Christ upholds and glorifies the great mystery of reverence, the mystery of the incarnation of the

Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ from the pure blood of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, through its bishops and our godly Fathers, who are clothed with power from on high, which was given to the Apostles after the Lord's Ascension to heaven: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24, 49).

The Christ-bearing Fathers of the Church who assembled the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea were clothed with this power from on high, the illumination of the Holy Spirit, who with one mouth and one voice proclaimed the Son and Word of God to be of one essence with the Father, being God of the true God, and also wrote the blessed Creed.

The Creed, which was fulfilled by the second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in AD 381 is the "good legacy" (II Tim. 1:14), the good and precious treasure of the evangelical teaching, which Christ entrusted to the spirit-bearing Fathers of the Church. Let us also listen to the great Basil saying: Neither do we accept any newer confession of faith drawn up by others, nor do we ourselves dare to deliver products of our own intellect, in order to change the reasons of reverence into human words. But what we have been taught by the Holy Fathers, these we proclaim to the enquirers.

In the person of this Father of the Church, the Holy Martyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, the prophetic and apostolic character of the Holy Fathers of the Church is depicted in the redeeming work of the Church in the world. And this is because the Holy and God-bearing Fathers of the Church are the guarantee of the unadulterated and sanctifying faith, that is, of our Orthodox faith, which defines, or better said, supports the way of life of us Christians.

Therefore, the Church of Christ today also honours the preachers of the faith with the great Apostles for the glory and thanksgiving of God but also for the consolidation of our

Orthodox faith through the intercessions of our most blessed Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. After the hymnographer we say: "You are greatly glorified, O Christ our God, who established our Fathers as luminaries upon the earth, and through them led us all to the true Faith. O Most compassionate, glory to Thee" (Apolytikion of the Fathers). "Amen. Many and peaceful returns".

A reception and a banquet followed, which the Community provided in honour of His Beatitude and His Entourage.

This was followed by a visit to the family of the Rum Orthodox Mr Rawan Saad, who is helping with the Patriarchate's internet project.

**From the General Secretariat**

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## **HIS BEATITUDE'S PASTORAL ACTIVITIES**

On Friday, June 1/14, 2024, the following people visited His Beatitude:

1. The Cardinal Archbishop Matteo Maria Cardinal Zuppi, accompanied by a group of Roman Catholic believers, to ask for the blessing of the Holy Places and the Mother of the Churches in these difficult times of the war situation in the Holy Land.



His Beatitude received them and emphasized the difficult conditions under which the Churches of Jerusalem protect the Status Quo of the Holy Land and support the Christian entity in the Holy Land, which the European Union cannot support as it does not project the value of the Bible.

2. His Beatitude received the Priests of the Rame Community of Northern Israel, Fr George and Fr Elias.



3. The Priest of the Ambelin Community Fr Savva with a member of his Community.



4. In the afternoon, His Beatitude led the Funeral Service of the blessed attendant of Saint James Cathedral, Ibrahim Salfiti, who served this Holy Church for over fifty years.

**From the General Secretariat**

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# **HIS BEATITUDE'S ACTIVITIES**

On Monday, May 28 / June 10, 2024, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the conservator of icons and books Mr Stavros Andreou and his collaborators from Russia, visited the area of □□the house of blessed Patriarch Diodoros, which is being prepared for the creation of an Ecclesiastical Museum.

From the General Secretariat

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# **VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE (6-6-2024)**

On Wednesday, May 23 / June 5, 2024, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, and the Holy Sepulchre Fathers, received the diplomatic representative of Hungary in Ramallah, Mrs Rita Herencsár, upon her service there.

In the context of this meeting, an interesting discussion took place about the good relations between the Patriarchate and Hungary, about His Beatitude's visits to Hungary and about Hungary's practical support to the Christians of the Holy Land by providing scholarships to female students, as well as of the financial grants for the renovation of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the renovation of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre.

On the known practical interest in this matter, His Beatitude thanked Mrs Rita Herencsár and wished her good success in the continuation of the high diplomatic mission of the representation of her country.

**From the General Secretariat**

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# **THE FEAST OF SAINTS CONSTANTINE AND HELEN AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Monday, May 21 / June 3, 2024, the feast of Saints Constantine and Helen was celebrated in the Patriarchate.

On this holiday, the Church commemorates the work of the great glorious king and equal to the apostles Saint Constantine, the recognition of Christianity as a free religion within the Roman state by the decree of the Milanese, in AD 312 and of Saint Helen, who visited the Holy Land in the year AD 326 and erected the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem and other shrines.

Through the work of these two saints, the new era of Rum Orthodox tradition in the Holy Land was inaugurated.

In honour of these two holy sovereigns and equal-to-the-apostles, Constantine and Helen, founders and protectors of the Rum Orthodox era in the Holy Land, which is held today in the presence of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Great Vespers was held on Sunday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Monday morning at the Central Monastery presided over by His Beatitude Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were the Typicon Keeper Archimandrite Alexios and the Archimandrites Nicodemus, Stephen, Amphilochios, Makarios, Epiphanius and Dionysios.

On Monday morning the Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Beatitude with the co-celebration of the Typicon Keeper Archimandrite Alexios and the Archimandrites Nicodemus, Stephen, Amphilochios, the Patriarchal representative in Acre Archimandrite Silouanos and Priest Farah. The chanting was delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba and Hierodeacon Simeon with the help of the Patriarchal School of Zion students. The service was attended by the Consul Mrs Anna Mandika, local faithful and pilgrims.

After the Liturgy, the congregation went up to the Patriarchate Hall, as the Fathers were still dressed in full priestly liturgical vestments.

At the central Gate of the Patriarchate, the responsible for the Bakery, abbess of the Holy Monastery of Panagia Sayda-Naya, nun Seraphima, distributed small loaves of bread to all, as a traditional blessing.

In the Patriarchate, His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“Not from man did great Constantine with his blest mother Helen receive the royal sovereignty but by God’s grace from Heaven. For he beheld the divine Cross as a bright flashing trophy. With it was he victorious over all who opposed him, and he destroyed the deceit and error of all the idols while making strong throughout the world Orthodox faith and practice” (Matins, exaposteilarion).

Your Excellency, Consul General of Greece Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Dear Christians and Pilgrims,

Today the Holy Church of God and the city of Jerusalem are glad and rejoice on the solemn memory of the glorious saints, God-crowned and equal to the apostles, the great sovereigns Constantine and Helen.

These Saints became great sovereigns and leaders not only for Christ's Church but also for the whole of humanity, since Constantine the Great issued, the Decree of Milanese in AD 313, through which all the persecutions against the Church ceased, Christianity triumphed and the darkness of demonic idolatry was dispelled. In 325 he convened the First Ecumenical Council in Nice, which he presided over in person. In 328 he laid the foundations of the so-called Constantinople, to which the imperial throne was transferred from Rome, also named New Rome.

This invaluable contribution was greatly magnified by the reverence of Saints Constantine and Helen for the Holy Land and for the building of the redeeming testimony, the Holy Sepulchre of Christ in 326. "This is my first and only purpose... that this holy place, which by God's commandment, I released from the addition of the burden of idols, and was made even holier, as it was holy by the beginning of God, and testifies for the faith of the redeeming passion, it was thus brought to light as a great structure to be magnificently adorned", King Constantine writes to Makarios Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem.

Being grateful to these glorious founders of the "Order of the Spoudaioi (Studious)", that is, our Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood on the one hand and to the originators of the Christ-like spiritual greatness of Romiosyni on the other, we celebrated a Patriarchal Divine Liturgy in the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen and prayed to the Holy Triune God for peace in our region tested by the fire of war.

Along with the hymnographer, let us say: "Rejoice, O great all-wise Constantine, thou fount of Orthodox Faith, that dost water continually all the lands beneath the sun with thy sweet and delightful streams. Rejoice, O root from which there sprouted forth the fruit that nourisheth Christ's most holy Church. Rejoice, thou most glorious boast and fame of all the farthest ends of the earth, fist of Christian kings. Rejoice, thou joy of faithful men" (Matins, Praises, Troparion 1).

Amen. Christ is Risen. Many and peaceful returns."

A monastic meal followed.

**From the General Secretariat**