

# **RECEPTION OF THE GREEK EMBASSY IN TEL AVIV FOR THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY OF MARCH 25, 1821**

On Wednesday, March 16/29, 2023, the Greek Embassy in Tel-Aviv organized a reception on the National Anniversary of March 25, 1821, hosted by the Ambassador of Greece, Mr Kyriakos Loukakis.

At this reception, the Patriarchate was represented by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, accompanied by Archdeacon Mark and diplomatic representatives of States and other officials participated.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF THE SYRIAN CHURCH VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE**

On the morning of Wednesday, March 16/29, 2023, the new Archbishop of the Syrian Church in Jerusalem, His Eminence Anthimos, upon assuming his duties, visited H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos after a small escort of his clergy.

Receiving him, His Beatitude wished for him strength from on high to take up and fulfil his pastoral duties in the flock of

his Church and for the good cooperation with the Orthodox Churches in the Holy Land.

On the same day, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isaias of Tamas visited His Beatitude with a group of clergy and laymen accompanying him.

His Eminence was received by His Beatitude and thanked him for his cooperation and support towards the Patriarchate in various matters, namely in the Church of Saint Marios in Lithrodonti.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **FORTIETH-DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE BLESSED PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM EIRINAIOS**

On Saturday morning, February 5/18, 2023 the Divine Liturgy at the Horrendous Golgotha, which was officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, was followed by the fortieth-day memorial service for the repose of the soul of the blessed Patriarch of Jerusalem Eirinaios.

The Service was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with High Priests and Hieromonks of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, monks, nuns and members of the Church of Jerusalem, who prayed for the repose of his soul in the land of the living.

After the Service there was a reception at the Patriarchate Hall.

**From Secretariat-General**

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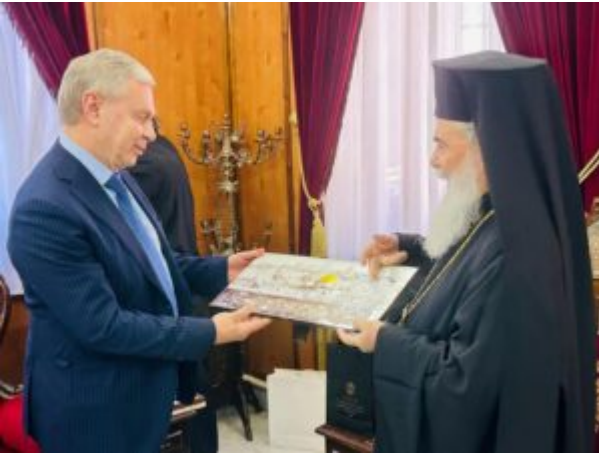
# **MR SERGEY CHEREMIN, MINISTER OF THE MOSCOW CITY GOVERNMENT VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Friday, February 4/17, 2023, His Excellency Mr Sergey Cheremin, Minister of the Moscow City Government and Head of the Moscow City foreign economic and international relations Department, accompanied by the Ambassador of Russia in Tel Aviv, Mr Viktorov, under the Head of the Russian Mission to Jerusalem (MISSIA) Archimandrite Alexander and under other diplomatic and ecclesiastical agents, visited His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

In the context of this meeting, His Beatitude repeated His prayer for the unity and communion in Christ of the brotherly Orthodox Churches through dialogue.

The Ambassador of Russia, Mr Viktorov, informed His Beatitude about the meeting, which he held after the Israeli politician, and former member of the Government, Mr Tzachi Hanegbi, and the discussion with him about His Beatitude's work to support the Christian Community and safeguarding the property of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and all Christians in the Holy Land.

**From Secretariat-General**



# **EVENT AT ZION SCHOOL FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATION OF WORLD GREEK LANGUAGE DAY**

On the evening of Thursday, January 27/February 9, 2023, an event was organized in the hall of ceremonies of the Holy Zion Seminar School of the Patriarchate in honour of the Greek Language Day which has been established in recent years.

This event was organized with the cooperation of the Greek Consulate General in Jerusalem and the Dragoman of the Patriarchate and School Managing Director, Archimandrite Mattheos. The event was presented by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Evangelos Vlioras, with the following preface:

“They gave me Greek as my language, the poor house on the sandy beaches of Homer. My only concern is my language on the sandy beaches of Homer...”

Your Excellency,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Greek language holds the precious and rare privilege of belonging to only 5 languages, out of the 6,500 official languages spoken today, which demonstrate an uninterrupted presence of 4,000 years of oral and written existence in the history of the human race. Notable is the fact that up to 5 centuries ago the Greek language was also an international language of communication.

But language is not just a tool for communication and transmission of information. It is a carrier of culture and historical memory. Within the linguistic shapes and forms that

sometimes become oral narration, sometimes written testimony, poetry, essay or song, are hidden the anxieties, the desires, the joys, the values and the history of a people who, according to our great poet Odysseus Elytis, has the privilege to call the sky "heaven" and the sea "sea", as Homer and Plato called it two and a half thousand years ago.

So we speak a language that only a few million people speak for two and a half thousand years without interruption and with minimal changes. This fact captures the peculiar dimension of our country, which, according to Elytis, is "small in terms of space and vast in terms of time" and confirms the saying of the linguist Yiannis Psycharis, that "language and homeland are the same". At the same time, the Greek language, as the language of the Gospels, makes the Greek language, and by extension Hellenism, a universal and timeless point of reference. In recent years, our national poet Dionysios Solomos highlighted the values of Hellenism as a universal cause, having nothing else in mind "beyond freedom and language". This universal dimension of the Greek spirit, as spread through the Greek language, is reminded and honoured by the establishment of the Greek State on February 9, the day of commemoration of Dionysios Solomos, as the International Day of the Greek Language.

Highlighting, promoting, and strengthening the learning and dissemination of the Greek language abroad are top priorities for the Greek State, not only because the language is a connecting link between the motherland and the diaspora, but also because the language, like Hellenism, is a living, dynamic and constantly evolving element. It constantly renews itself, adapts to changing conditions and assimilates new influences. Thus, the Greek language is the thread that holds us and brings us from the world of myth to the world of artificial intelligence and the internet.

As stated by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Katsaniotis, in his message for the International Day of the

Greek Language: "From the 'golden Mycenae' and Linear B", the speech of Homer and the great Tragedians, until today, in the age of information, digital technology and social media, the Greek language is alive and active, producing history, culture and science".

We can only grasp the thread and continue the course with a deep awareness of the responsibility imposed on us by our centuries-old linguistic tradition and history.

On this occasion, I would like to express special thanks to Professor Mr Nikos Michaelidis for the keynote speech of the event, H.H.B. the Patriarch of Jerusalem for His blessing for the event to be held at the Patriarchal school of Holy Zion, and of course the Managing Director of the School, Fr Mattheos, the children and the teachers and all those who worked for today's event.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your presence at the event tonight."

The main speaker on the subject of the Greek language was the anthropologist professor Mr Nikolaos Michaelidis of the University of Missouri, USA, with his lecture to be posted shortly.

Among the guests were; the representative of H.H.B. the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the French Consul in Jerusalem Mr René Troccaz and the Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus in Ramallah Mr Assos, members of the Greek Consulate and the Greek Parish of Jerusalem and the Arab-speaking flock, teachers and students.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# CELEBRATION EVENT IN QATAR

On Friday, January 13, 2023, in the space between the Bishopric and the Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Qatar, a celebratory event of the Twelve Days period was held, following an artistic program from various local traditions.

The artistic program included contemporary Christmas carols by the children of the Orthodox Arabic-speaking Catechetical School, the Greek-speaking Catechetical School, the Russian-speaking Choir, Qatar Arabesque, the Russian-Ukrainian International Centre for Music Kamerton Choir. The dancing Association of the Greeks of Qatar, wearing Greek traditional clothing, danced traditional dances and the Al Kofia Association, wearing traditional Arabic clothing, danced traditional dances and sang traditional songs.

At this event, gifts and objects of reverence were put up for sale, to support the work of the H. Archdiocese. A wide variety of Arabic, Greek, Serbian, Romanian, Moldavian, Russian and Ukrainian cuisine was also presented, offered by various companies and leading members of the flock.

The event was honoured with their presence by the Ambassador of Greece, Mrs Helen Michalopoulou, the Ambassador of Moldova, Mr Lulian Grigorita, the Ambassador of Bulgaria, Mr Plamen Stankov Delev, the Ambassador of Russia, Mr Dimitri Dugadkin, the Ambassador of Georgia, Mr Nikoloz Revazishvili and the Acting Ambassador of Serbia, Mr Slobodan Radeka, as well as representatives of other denominations in Doha.

The large attendance of the Qatari Orthodox and members of other Christian Communities confirmed the success of this activity.



From the Holy Archdiocese of Qatar

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# VISITS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF JERUSALEM AT CHRISTMAS

On Monday, December 27, 2022/January 9, 2023, the visits of the Christian Churches of Jerusalem took place on the occasion of our Christmas Feast.

First, the Patriarchate was visited by the Fraternity of the Franciscans under its Abbot Custos, Father Francisco Paton, who congratulated our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilo on the Christmas Feast and thanked for the joint cooperation to overcome problems that Christians face, such as at the Gate of David, at Siloam, at the Anglican and Protestant Cemetery on the hill of Holy Zion and also thanked Him for His letter of condolence on the deceased former Pope Benedict XVI.

His Beatitude said the following in English:

“Your Paternity, dear Father Francesco,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of our Respective Brotherhoods, Dear Fathers,

Christ is born!

Glorify him!

We thank you, dear Father Francesco, and your Brotherhood for your gracious greetings as we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of the Incarnate Logos, our Lord Jesus Christ. This is always a time of great rejoicing, as the hymnographer reminds us:

Today Christ is born of a Virgin in Bethlehem.

Today he who knows no beginning now begins to be, and the Word Is made flesh.

The powers of heaven greatly rejoice,  
and the earth with humankind makes glad.

(Mattins of the Nativity)

As we keep this festive season, we wish to take this opportunity first of all to express our condolences in this formal way on the passing away of His Late Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. We remember with deep respect his visit to the Holy Land in 2009, and his commitment to the Church.

We also are mindful today of your ongoing cooperation in the restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Our mutual commitment to this crucial cooperative venture between our two Brotherhoods remains a powerful sign of hope for the world of the Gospel that we share, and we wish to express our gratitude to you for this shared endeavour. The restoration will make the Church of the Holy Sepulchre an enduring place of pilgrimage for generations to come.

This festive Christmas season reminds us that we are people of prayer and hope. Our hope is in the Word made Flesh, who united earth and heaven, and who gathers us into a common destiny. And we remain in the life of the Word made Flesh as long as we remain a community of prayer. Prayer must always embrace everything that we say and do, for prayer is the

source of the strength that enables us to live the values of our faith. Prayer enables us to resist secular and political influences, and remain focused on the Gospel, which is the foundation for true peace, justice, and reconciliation.

We rejoice with you and your Brotherhood, dear Father Francesco, in this joyful Christmas season. MAY God bless you and the communities committed to your pastoral care, and MAY the light of the Incarnate Logos shine in our hearts and minds.

We wish you a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Thank you.”

Subsequently, all the other Christian Communities visited the Patriarchate, the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem under the Latin Patriarch Pierre Battista Pizzaballa, the Pre-Chalcedonian Churches, Copts, Syrians and Ethiopians and Lutherans and Anglicans.

The Leader of each Church prayed for peace during the Christmas season and for the continuation of the work to deal with the problems of Christians in the Holy Land.

In response, His Beatitude said the following, in English:

“Beloved Fellow Heads of the Churches,

Your Excellencies,

Your Eminences, Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

Brothers and Sisters,

Christ is born!

Let us glorify him!

We welcome you to our Patriarchate and we thank you for your warm expressions of greeting as we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of the Incarnate Logos, Our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Church proclaims

Heaven and earth are united today, for Christ is born.

Today has God come upon the earth, and humanity up to heaven.

Therefore let us also give glory.

(Compline of the Nativity)

The Christmas message is the message that by his incarnation, the Eternal Logos has united earth and heaven, so that we may live the values of the Good News of the Gospel. The message of Christmas is most emphatically not a message of discord, or violence, or division. It is the message of the triumph of love and compassion, which is the ground of peace, concord, and harmony. As Saint Paul reminds us, whatever we do without love is worth nothing (cf. 1 Cor.13:1-3). We Christians commit ourselves to this way of love.

We also seek to make manifest in our common life that Christmas is not a lovely folktale of long ago or a cultural event surrounded by a lot of social and commercial activity. Christmas is the very revelation of the Logos, the Word that was from the very beginning, through whom, as the Creed declares, all things were made. Let us keep this message of the mystery of the Incarnate Logos at the centre of our mission.

Here our togetherness and our common purpose find their anchor. And because our togetherness and common purpose are anchored in the mystery of the incarnation, they have proven to be effective. The Christian presence in the Holy Land down the ages has been a force for stability that has worked to

prevent acts of extremism, and our work together as spiritual leaders is a living witness to this.

In this same spirit, we stand together against the horrific and senseless desecration of sacred places, like the vandalism of the Anglican cemetery on Mount Zion a few days ago, perpetrated by suspected radicals whose agenda is to tear the fabric of our multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious landscape. This vandalism, occurring at the time of this festive season, is no accident. All our Churches have suffered such indignities, and they are on the rise, and we condemn all acts of religious vandalism from whatever source, which are designed only to intimidate, insult and inhibit our life together. And we take this opportunity to express our support to our brother, Archbishop Hosam, and the local Anglican Church. We would also like to communicate our appreciation to the Archbishop of Canterbury for his real concern for our predicament here.

We must also express our sincere condolences to the Custos of the Holy Land and his Fraternity and also to the Latin Patriarch on the passing away on New Year's Eve of His Late Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, who we had the opportunity to welcome to our Patriarchate.

Our Christmas celebration is a celebration of doxology and prayer. Therefore our task first and foremost is to remain a community of prayer not only for ourselves but also for the whole human family. This is precisely what we did in our celebration at the Church of the Nativity, where pilgrims come throughout the year, and which is itself a place of prayer for the whole world. This Holy City, the Holy Places, and our beloved Holy Land are the great arena of prayer, both for individual faithful people as well as for the Churches. Here prayer has seeped into the very stones, and here countless people have been moved to pray. By remaining a community of prayer, we remain grounded in the divine mystery of the Nativity of our Lord and in the spiritual values of his

Gospel.

MAY God bless you and the communities you serve and pastor, and MAY the light of the Sun of Righteousness that shines from the Holy Cave in Bethlehem illumine our hearts and minds.

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Thank you.”

Then the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia, as the representative of the Patriarchate, returned their visit to the Syrians, Copts and Ethiopians.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **HIS BEATITUDE HOSTS A RECEPTION AT THE HEGOUMENEION OF THE BASILICA OF THE NATIVITY IN BETHLEHEM**

On the evening of Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24, 2022/January 6, 2023, His Beatitude hosted a dinner for the President of the Palestinian State, His Excellency Mr Mahmoud Abbas Abu-Mazen, and for high-ranking Officials of his Government, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Stayeg, the President of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Palestinian Committee, Mr Ramzi Khouri, and elders of the flock.

In the context of this dinner, His Beatitude addressed the

President in English (the address will be posted soon).

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **MR NAUM VISITS HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS**

On the morning of Friday, December 17/30, 2022, H.H.B our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, received in his Office the doctor Mr George Naum, son of a priest, President of the Federation of the Byzantine Chanters Association of Greece, Director of the Amarousion and Psychiko Medical Center, accompanied by his wife and by the representative of the European Public Law Organization, Mrs Maria Zozonaki.

Mr Naum informed His Beatitude about the medical prototype achievements of his research and about their relationship and connection with the Theological Church Music, of which he is also a healer, as a member of the body of the Church of Christ and offered His Beatitude the exquisite handwritten musical composition by him and Mr Konstantinos Douzios "Liturgy".

His Beatitude blessed the work of Mr Naum and wished him the grace of the Holy Sepulchre for the continuation of his outstanding medical, scientific and musical work and presented him with the book of the History of the Church of Jerusalem of the Holy Sepulchre Archbishop of Athens Chrysostomos Pathopadopoulos and a cross for him and his wife and the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of Jerusalem.

From Secretariat-General

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# VISITS OF THE HAGIOTAPHITE BROTHERHOOD TO THE CHURCHES OF JERUSALEM ON THEIR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

On the morning of Tuesday, December 14th / 27th, 2022, the long-established visits of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood took place to the local Churches, celebrating their Christmas holiday, in accordance with the Gregorian Calendar.

First, the visit to the Franciscan Brotherhood took place. In it, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the Custodian Fr. Francis Paton with the following address in English:

*“Your Paternity, Father Francesco,*

*Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Beloved Members of our Respective Fraternities,*

*Dear Fathers,*

*We greet you with joy today as you and your communities celebrate the great Feast of the Nativity of the Incarnate Logos, the Word made flesh.*



*As the hymnographer tells us:*

*“Behold, the Most Holy Word comes unto his own  
in a holy body that is not his.*

*By a wondrous birth he makes his own  
the world that was estranged” .*

*(Irmos for the Forefeast of the Nativity)*

*In this festive Christmas season, it must be our special care to articulate a message of hope, especially for our communities here in the Holy Land. As we all so fully recognize, we are living through challenges and dangers unprecedented in our lifetime, and our Christian communities in the Holy Land are bearing a terrible burden. The combination of the consequences of the pandemic, world economic volatility, political uncertainty in the region, and the pressure to emigrate all weigh heavily on our people, especially on our youth.*

*What hope can we show our own people? Can this hope, the Incarnate Logos, our Lord Jesus Christ, reach our own people with life-sustaining force in the face of so much that seems to rob them of life?*

*The hope that comes to us at Christmas is precisely the expectation that we can live fully in the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious landscape in which Divine Providence has placed us, where there can and must be peace, justice, reconciliation, and mutual respect of those who know themselves to be the sons and daughters of the Creator and Father of all.*

*Hope is the conviction of those who are confident in God, even in the face of the most terrible of circumstances. For, as Saint Paul says, we know that affliction produces*

*endurance, <sup>and</sup> endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us (Rom. 5:3-5). Hope is the resolve that our Lord Jesus Christ has made his own a world that was once estranged, but has now been redeemed by his life, passion, death, and resurrection.*

*Dear Father Francesco, our unity of purpose in our common mission to guard and serve the Holy Places and to ensure the Christian integrity of the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, is itself another sign of hope, for this has produced real fruits. We wish to express once again our appreciation for all that you have done, and continue to do, in this regard, especially in your firm resolve in the face of provocative behaviour from radical groups. We are stronger and more effective in this alliance.*

*MAY our partnership ever deepen, that together we and our fraternities may be agents of hope to those entrusted to our pastoral care in the Christian communities of the Holy Land. In this way, the world may see hope born again in the Holy Land, and the Holy Land may shine as a beacon of hope to the world.*

*We wish you, the members of your Brotherhood, and all the faithful committed to your care, the blessings and the joy of this Christmas Feast.*

*Thank you".*

Then the visit to the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem took place. There, His Beatitude addressed the Latin Patriarch His Beatitude Mr Pierre Battista Pizzaballa with the following address in English:

*"Your Beatitude, dear Patriarch Pizzaballa,*

*Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Dear Fathers,*

*Beloved in Christ,*

*We wish to extend to you, Your Beatitude, the greetings and the blessings of this holy season as you and your communities celebrate the Christmas Feast. As we hear in the hymns at this time of the year:*

*A Light shall spring forth from the root of Jesse,*

*as the prophet full of light foretold...*

*O ye people, let us say:*

*Blessed are you, our God who has come among us:*

*Glory to you.*

*(Canticle Nine, Mattins, the Forefeast of the Nativity)*

*The Light that has come is the Incarnate Logos, the Word made Flesh, the Sun of Righteousness who has brought healing in his wings (Malachi 4:2). By uniting heaven and earth, divinity and humanity in himself, he has brought hope to the world, so that all may know that in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, (2 Cor. 5:19).*

*As we all well know, we are celebrating this Christmas season at a difficult time for our world and our region. In every aspect of our life, people are under pressure. So well-known are the circumstances of our present life that we need not number them all, but their cumulative effect on our communities is extremely serious. Perhaps most seriously, we see creeping despair, especially among our young people, who do not see a future of possibility for themselves in our region.*

*We have a message of hope in the Gospel of Christ so that hope may be made manifest in our life today. Our mission is precisely this, to bear witness to the manifestation of hope.*

*We wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge your commitment, Your Beatitude, to creating a culture of hope in our region, even in the face of tremendous difficulty and challenge. For hope is the only light that can pierce the darkness of despair and futility, and hope must be our constant message as well as our tireless resolve. The common mission that we share in protecting the Christian character of Jerusalem and the Holy Land and in pastoring the communities entrusted to us is nothing less than a mission of hope. May we always keep this hope before us in all that we do.*

*May God bless you and your communities in this holy season of light and hope, as we celebrate the birth of the living Hope whose light and life shine from the cave in Bethlehem for us all.*

*Thank you".*

Finally, His Beatitude, accompanied by the Patriarchal Commissioner His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolias and the Geronda Chief Secretary His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, visited the Apostolic Delegate (Nuncio), that is, the representative of the Vatican in Jerusalem.

Following these, was the visit to the Anglican Archbishop Naum Hossam, who, on the occasion of Christmas and the visit, offered His Beatitude a decorated porcelain plate.

**From Secretariat-General**