

# GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR THE YAFFO SCHOOL GRADUATES

On Saturday evening, 20 June/3 July 2021, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, accompanied by His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Priest Issa Mousleh and Archdeacon Mark attended the graduation ceremony of the Yaffo School graduates.

The well-organized ceremony by the School Principal Mrs Najla Hanhan, the Teachers' Association and the fourteen graduates, began with the Apolytikion of Pentecost and continued with the welcoming address for His Beatitude, a short documentary with the graduates' school life and the address of the Principal Mrs Najla Hanhan.

In it, the principal invited by name each of the graduate students to parade on stage under the clapping of the other students and their parents and relatives. Once all graduates were on stage, Mrs Hanhan continued her address, referring to the graduate's performance, exams in various Universities, thanking their parents for their gratitude and of course, His Beatitude for His support.

The ceremony also included songs and addresses of the graduates, in English, Hebrew and Arabic, the School Anthem, addresses from the parents' representatives, a wish for the recovery from his operation for Archbishop Damascene of Yaffo, videos-snapshots from last years' school activities, and the handing over of the school flag to the next year's graduates.

The ceremony concluded with His Beatitude's address through Father Issa Mousleh, stressing the long-term interest of the Patriarchate for the Christian and the general education of the school students, thanking the Principal for the school progress and each of the students individually, and finally

wishing them academic and professional success.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **A NAVAL DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Saturday morning, 20 June/3 July 2021, a Naval Delegation of the Republic of Cyprus, under Commander Mr George Papakleovoulos visited the Patriarchate as they are in Israel for the maintenance of the ship 'Commodore Andreas Ioannidis' at the port of Haifa.

The team was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers and spoke to them for the long-term spiritual bond of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem with the Church of Cyprus through the Apostles Paul and Barnabas, the latter being the founder of the Church of Cyprus. His Beatitude also referred to the Pastoral relations due to the incoming pilgrims from Cyprus. i

Due to this relationship between the two Churches, Hagiotaphite Fathers from Cyprus served the Patriarchate and excelled in their ministry, such as the memorable Metropolitans Epiphanius of the Jordan, Arkadios of Ashkelon and later of Skythopolis, and Gregory of Tiberias, who also were renovators of the All-holy Shrines.

After these words, His Beatitude blessed this visit and wished the Commander of the ship and his colleagues the success of their visit, the safe return to their country and the

preservation of its integrity.

His Beatitude offered Mr Papakleovoulos an icon of the Theotokos and the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre and an icon of the Theotokos to each of the twenty crew members of the Delegation, while the Commander offered His Beatitude the coat of arms of the ship of 'open sea – Commodore Andreas Ioannidis'.

Accepting His Beatitude's blessing, the members of the Delegation went to venerate the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL OF ZION STUDENTS RECEIVE THE PATRIARCH'S BLESSING FOR THEIR HOLIDAYS**

On Tuesday 9/22 June 2021, the graduates and the other students of the Patriarchal School of Zion, with Archimandrite Mattheos and other staff members of the School, were received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. The students thanked His Beatitude for the education and the

boarding school care that was offered by the Patriarchate and asked His blessing for their holidays with their families for the summer.

His Beatitude blessed the students and encouraged the novices to return after their holidays and continue their studies in the School and in Universities if they wish later on, and join the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood as monks and clergy to minister the Church and the nation.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **AWARDING THE AWARD OF THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN TO THE MEMORABLE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM BENEDICT**

On Tuesday, 12th / 25th May 2021, the day of the anniversary of the Independence of Jordan, at the Royal Estate of Jordan, His Majesty the King of Jordan, Abdullah Ibn Hussein II, presented His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos the award of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the memorable Patriarch of Jerusalem Benedict, in recognition of his contribution to the stability of the relationship between the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate and Jordan and the signing of Jordanian Law 27 of the year 1958.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS ADDRESSES THE NEW ANGLICAN BISHOP IN JERUSALEM**

On Thursday afternoon, 30 April / 13 May 2021, the enthronement ceremony of the newly-elect Most Reverend Archbishop Hosam Elias Naoum took place at the Holy Cathedral of Saint George of the Anglican Church in Jerusalem. Present at the ceremony were; the new Archbishop's predecessor, Most Reverend Suheil Dawani, the British Consul in Jerusalem Mr Philip Hall, clergy and laity-members of this Church and representatives of the Churches of Jerusalem, among whom His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, His Beatitude the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem Pierre Battista Pizzaballa and the Custos of the Holy Land, His Grace Father Francesco Patton.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who was accompanied by His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, addressed the new Anglican Archbishop Hosam Elias Naoum, underlining his contribution while he was the Secretary of the Meetings of the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem. His Beatitude's full address follows below:

"Your Grace, dear Archbishop Hosam,

Dear Mrs Naoum,

Your Grace, Archbishop Michael,

Your Graces,

Reverend Clergy,

Faithful Members of the Anglican Church,

Respected Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We greet you warmly, dear Archbishop Hosam, and your wife and family, on this blessed occasion when you are celebrating both the Feast of the Ascension and your enthronement with the formal beginning of your ministry as the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem. You are the fifteenth bishop to serve the Anglican Community in Jerusalem, and with your clergy and people, we give thanks to Almighty God that you have been chosen for this responsibility.

As you know full well, you come to your new role at a time of great challenge and a great opportunity. This is a difficult time for our city and for this region. We are still living with the pandemic and its profound social, economic, and spiritual consequences. There is disturbing political and social unrest, and the Christian presence in Jerusalem and the Holy Land face new and growing threats from radical elements who seek to undermine the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious landscape here, in which we have lived for centuries. The Christian character of Jerusalem and the Holy Land is under threat as never before in our lifetime.

Even so, as Saint Paul says, *we do not lose heart*. In this joyful Eastertide, we are renewed in our hope of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Places, of which the Divine Providence has made us guardians and servants, remain sources of spiritual refreshment both for the local Christian community and for the countless pilgrims. As the new Archbishop of the Anglican Diocese, you bring considerable experience, especially in your highly respected role over many years as the Secretary of the Heads of Churches, among whom you now take your rightful place as the

Anglican Archbishop. We also know of the new hope that your new ministry brings to your community.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Anglican Church in the Holy Land have had a long and close history of mutual respect and affection and common purpose in the good state of the Christian presence in the Holy Land. We look forward to deepening our relationship over the years of your leadership and finding fresh ways of journeying on the path of unity. We must never give up our commitment to the full, sacramental unity in Christ that is His will for all who call themselves Christians. The Orthodox Church and the Anglican Community share a special bond, not the least in our common patristic heritage, and this is a foundation on which we can build even closer relations here in our region.

We would like to take this opportunity to mention once again our respect and admiration for your predecessor, Archbishop Suheil, for his committed pastoral ministry and for his attentive collaboration among the Heads of Churches, and we wish him and his wife, Saffeeqa, a happy and healthy retirement.

We would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the role of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury in his unwavering support for us and for the Christian presence in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Archbishop Justin, like his predecessors, continues to be a good friend and ally to us here, and for this, we are extremely grateful.

May God bless you, dear Archbishop Hosam, your wife, Rafa, and your family, and all the clergy and people committed to your charge, and may our risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ enlighten your heart and your mind as you assume this new trust and responsibility.

Thank you."

**From Secretariat-General**

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# VISITS OF THE PATRIARCHATE FOR THE EASTER OF THE WESTERN CHURCHES

On Thursday, 26 March/ 8 April 2021, the Patriarchate visited the Western Churches on the occasion of Easter. The Hagiotaphite Brotherhood visited the Franciscan Fraternity in their Monastery the Custody of the Holy Land and the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

In the first visit, the Hegoumen of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the Custos of the Holy Land Father Francesco Patton as follows:

“Your Paternity, dear Father Francesco,

Beloved Members of our Respective Brotherhoods,

Dear Fathers,

We greet you warmly, Your Paternity, and the members of your Brotherhood and all the communities that you serve as you keep the joyful feast of Easter. As we sing in our Orthodox tradition:

*Come, all who believe in Him, adore Christ's holy  
resurrection.*

*For, see through the Cross joy has come into the whole world.*

*Always blessing the Lord, we praise his resurrection.*

*For He suffered crucifixion and by death has killed death.*



(Easter Canon, eighth Ode)

We are keeping the holiest season of the year this year, as those who have known the particular suffering of the pandemic that has so damaged the economic, social, and religious life of our communities, and that has robbed pilgrims from all over the world of the spiritual refreshment of the Holy Places. For us, this has been a season of trial and difficulty.

We have also experienced worsening attacks by radicals against the Christian presence in the Holy City of Jerusalem and in the region in general.

And so we greet the celebration of Easter this year with special joy, for we can see the possibility more clearly of a post-pandemic world.

As we congratulate you on your celebration of Easter, we look forward to our own celebration. Despite the fact that our Easter celebration does not coincide, for Jerusalem, it is important to maintain the festive spirit of Easter. For Jerusalem, where the very Tomb of Jesus Christ is located, is the true witness and has seen with her own eyes and heard with her own ears our sacred history.

We here in the Holy Land live a unique ecumenical spirit, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a particular example of this, embracing as it does all our communities. In this regard, we wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank you for all that you do to continue and to deepen the path set by your predecessor to ensure the best possible cooperation between our communities and between all the Churches and Christian communities in the Holy Land.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is of universal significance. As an important example, recently we had hoped to welcome His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, who desired to make a personal pilgrimage, and we hope that this visit may be re-scheduled soon and take place

without hindrance. Here we see the universal mission of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the duty that lies on the shoulders of all of us to do all in our power to work for “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). In our common mission in the administration of the Holy Places, and especially of the Holy Sepulchre, our excellent and close relationships are of paramount importance; but we must never let go of the ultimate vocation of full and sacramental unity.

We wish you, dear Father Francesco, your Brotherhood, and the communities that you serve, the joy of this Easter Feast. MAY the light of the resurrection enlighten our hearts and minds so that Jerusalem may be a bright beacon of hope for all its inhabitants and all those who love it.

Christ is risen!

Thank you.”

In the second visit, His Beatitude addressed the Latin Patriarch Pierre Battista Pizzaballa as follows:

“Your Beatitude, Dear Archbishop Pizzaballa,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

We greet you, with the Paschal greetings, dear Archbishop Pizzaballa, as you and your communities celebrate Easter. As the hymnographer says:

*Come, all peoples, sing praise to Christ and worship Him:*

*Glorify His resurrection from the dead.*

*For He is our God, who has freed the universe from the enemy's deceit.*

This is the second year in which our communities are keeping the holiest season in a pandemic, and while the situation is greatly improved for many in our region, the burden of the past year on our people has been great. Our local congregations have suffered terribly, both from the pestilential itself – that is to say, the virus – and from its economic and social consequences. As we all know, there have been no pilgrims for so much of this time, and restrictions on entry to the country are still strict. Many of our communities are still waiting to be vaccinated, and we are still a long way from a return to normal life. All of this is a terrible affliction for our people and a challenge to us.

In addition to the pandemic and its consequences, we have faced ongoing and increasingly worrying attacks by radicals against the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

But even in the face of all these challenges and difficulties, we have hope.

The relationships that we have built and developed over the years are so needed in order to help and protect our communities, the Holy Places, and of course, the special religious Character of Jerusalem. We firmly believe that this achievement is a positive step in furthering our cooperation to attain the full unity of the Churches, which is the will of our Lord Jesus Christ in his prayer to His Father, *that they may all be one* (John 17:21).

We cannot underestimate the crucial importance of this united effort, and we wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank you, Your Beatitude, for your sacrificial leadership and for your tireless work for the sake of Jerusalem. For we are aware of the pastoral challenges that you are facing. We pray to our risen Lord to strengthen you and enlighten you with the light of the resurrection so that you will be able to bear your pastoral mission here in the Holy Land.

Christ is risen!

Thank you.”

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL FEAST FOR THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY OF 25 MARCH 1821**

On Thursday afternoon, 12/25 March 2021, the Patriarchal School on the hill of Zion hosted a ceremony for the feast for the Anniversary of 25 March 1821.

The feast was honoured by the presence of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and the Consulate Staff, the Chairman of the SchoolBoard, His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, along with Monks, Nuns and members of the Greek Community.

The ceremony included an introductory speech by the Managing Director of the School, Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, the Sermon of the Day by the Science teacher Mr Nikolaos Souliotis, songs by the School choir, under the lead of the Byzantine music teacher Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos, reciting of poems, short plays and reading of texts by the School Students.

With all the performance and the videos played on the large screen, the audience was transferred to the four hundred years of bitter slavery of our nation under the Ottoman Empire which

treated the Christians brutally, with persecutions, fights, exile, deaths, martyrdoms, beheadings, mass kidnapping of children, and myriads of other sufferings, that our nation endured, without losing its Greek and Byzantine (Rum) identity. Instead, the Greeks held a national uprising against all these, with unparalleled bravery and sacrifices of blood.

The Revolution started from Peloponessos and Argosaronikos and gradually expanded to the rest of the mainland and the islands, and after an eight-year struggle, it concluded to the formation and recognition of the New Greek State in the year 1830 after the naval battle of Navarino.

At the end of this modest and moving ceremony, His Beatitude and the Consul General thanked the Managing Director of the School, the teachers and the students for their performance, which invoked feelings of national pride and thrill, along with a strong reminder of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, especially for the politics, that we should follow the example of the 1821 fighters and increase the national inheritance bequeathed by them.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE      LATIN      PATRIARCH      IN  
JERUSALEM      VISITS      THE**

# PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, 17/30 January 2021, the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, His Beatitude Pierre Battista Pizzaballa, visited officially the Patriarchate, accompanied by some of His clergy.

The Latin Patriarch was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Hieromonks.

On this official visit, His Beatitude addressed His Beatitude Pierre Battista Pizzaballa as follows:

“Your Beatitude,

On this occasion of your official visit at the newly appointed Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, we welcome you not as a stranger, but as an old and trusted friend. The news that His Holiness Pope Francis had appointed you as Latin Patriarch was widely welcomed both by your community and by all who are committed to the well-being of the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Saint Paul writes in the First Letter to Timothy:

“I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching... always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully (2 Tim. 4:1-2, 5).

For many years, first as Custos and then as a Bishop, you have shown yourself to be a faithful pastor to all those entrusted to your care in the spirit of these words of Saint Paul. You are deeply familiar with your people at this place, and we are glad that in you as the new Latin Patriarch we have a colleague with experience who understands the problems and the

challenges that the Christian communities are facing in our time.

During your time as Custos, and continuing after your appointment as Apostolic Administrator, the co-operation that has been built between our Brotherhoods and our communities has produced tangible fruits that have been crucial in helping us all, deal with the common issues that we are facing in defending the Christian presence in the Holy Land and safeguarding the integrity of the Holy Places for the whole world.

We cannot emphasise enough the importance of the mutual trust that has grown up amongst us. Never before has the co-operation between our communities proven so effective and productive in our common mission. We cannot forget the instrumental role that you played in the joint effort in the restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and we thank you for your unwavering steadfastness in this regard.

The pandemic has only made our mission more complicated and urgent. We have greater responsibilities and our mutual respect and co-operation are more crucial than ever before. We have every confidence that in your role as Latin Patriarch you will continue to give your best efforts to all that makes for stronger and even more effective relationships.

As we know, Jerusalem is the womb from which the Church was born, and in our own time, Jerusalem can be the womb from which new efforts for the unity of the Church may be delivered. Here in Jerusalem, we are a witness of the authentic spirit of ecumenism, for nowhere else on earth do so many Christian traditions celebrate together in one place in mutual respect and understanding and harmony. Each of us has our own traditions, customs, and culture, and we have a deeper understanding of the true nature of dialogue. Needless to say, we should also mention the special place that our Anglican and Lutheran sisters and brothers have in this ecumenical

vocation.

The Divine Eucharist is at the heart of the mission of the Church, and we must never lose our attentiveness to the path to the union of the Churches for which we pray in every Liturgy that will restore to us the common Chalice when once again we shall be able to be co-celebrants together at the altar. We are aware that we can never be complacent. We must deepen our communication with each other and sustain this ecumenical spirit in all that we do.

We congratulate you as you assume your new responsibility in this difficult time, and we assure you of our prayers and support, as together we place the safety and security of the Christian presence in our beloved Holy Land and the Holy Places before all other considerations.

May God bless you, and may God bless all the communities entrusted to your pastoral care.

Thank you.”

His Beatitude offered the new Latin Patriarch an icon of the renovated Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre and a Patriarchate emblem.

Replying, the Latin Patriarch said that He came in Jerusalem 30 years ago, under obedience, then he was appointed as the Custos of the Holy Land and recently as the Patriarch of the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem. He had not aspired to these positions, but accepted them in obedience; therefore, Jerusalem has become an inseparable part of his life for the last 30 years. During this time, he accepted the co-operation of the Greek Patriarch as an important support in his mission, and for this reason, he is grateful and looks forward to the continuation of this co-operation and for the completion of the restoration project at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

**From Secretariat-General**



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# THE OFFICIAL OF THE US EMBASSY VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, 14/27 January 2021, the Chief of the Palestinian Affairs Unit of the U.S.A. Embassy (formerly the US Consulate of Jerusalem) Mr George Noll visited the Patriarchate, accompanied by two of his colleagues.

Mr George Noll was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In this visit, His Beatitude was attentive to Mr George Noll's interest and informed him how the Patriarchate has been coping with the pandemic year of Covid-19; that the Patriarchate guided its clergy and the faithful Christians to behave in co-operation with the Health Authorities of the State of Israel, where they live, as well as in Jordan, and the Palestinian State, places of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Patriarchate, since the days of Saint James the Brother of God and First Hierarch of Jerusalem, who convened the first Local Synod in Jerusalem in AD 40, and since the days of the Pact treaty which was signed between Patriarch Sophronius and Caliph Umar Khattab (also known as Ashtiname, or as al-'Uhda al-'Umariyya, in Arabic), in AD 638.

Moreover, His Beatitude informed Mr Noll that the Patriarchate keeps all shrines accessible and functional, operating thus in a pastoral and not in a political mission, according to the Gospel narrative "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's".

Mr George Noll thanked His Beatitude for this briefing and

expressed his intention to co-operate with the Patriarchate from his position as the representative of The U.S.A., within the framework of the aforementioned ecclesiastical principles.

For this meeting, Mr George Noll offered His Beatitude a symbolic Christian present, while the latter offered in return a beautiful silver icon, depicting the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Temple of Solomon.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE CUTTING OF THE NEW YEAR CAKE AT THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL OF ZION**

The cutting of the New Year Cake at the Patriarchal School of Zion for the New Year 2021 took place around noon on Wednesday 7/20 January 2021.

Present in this ceremony were the Chairman of the School Board Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Managing Director of the School, Archimandrite Mattheos, the School teachers and members of the Greek community.

The students sang the troparia of the Circumcision of the Lord and of Saint Basil, and His Beatitude wished everybody a Happy New Year, before cutting and distributing the cake. The students also sang the Polychronion for His Beatitude and the

Christmas carols.

His Beatitude wished the students to have a studious new year, with progress, knowledge of sciences and the truth in Christ.

**From Secretariat-General**