

# VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE

On the morning of Tuesday, July 5 / 18, 2023, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos accepted the assumed service as Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to Israel, Mr Cornelios Corneliou, accompanied by Mrs Irene Trigidou.

His Beatitude informed the Ambassador about the Mission of the Patriarchate to the Holy Land and wished him the blessing of his high mission for the good of his beloved homeland Cyprus in its liberation from the Turkish occupation.

His Beatitude then received the Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox cardiologist Mr Hisham Nasser with his recently married son Mr Amer Nasser, the former Bishop of the Anglican Church in Jerusalem Mr Suhel Dawani and the former Lutheran Bishop of Jerusalem Mr Munib Yunan.

Finally, His Beatitude received the President of the Community Council of Acre, Mr Fouad Brek, and the Representative of the Kufr Smea Community, Mr Abu Hanna, and discussed with them issues of their Community.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

**THE FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF  
THE HOLY APOSTLES AT THE**

# PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, June 30 / July 13, 2023, the feast of the Synaxis of the Twelve Holy Apostles was celebrated by the Patriarchate.

By saying "Synaxis" the Church, means the gathering of the faithful in the Holy Churches, in order to commemorate the Twelve Holy Apostles, for the sake of the mission they accomplished, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, to preach Christ crucified and resurrected and they "enchanted the whole world".

This feast was celebrated by the Patriarchate in the Holy Monastery of the Holy Apostles in the city of Tiberias with the Divine Liturgy in the morning, presided over by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth and the Archbishop of Aristarchos Constantina, Holy Sepulchre Hieromonks and Arabic-speaking Priests from the neighbouring regions of Galilee. The chanting was delivered by Archimandrite Artemios in Greek sail and by the choir of Acre in Arabic, in the presence of the Consul of Greece in Haifa Mr Constantinos Zenovios and believers of the Galilee region.

To these believers, His Beatitude proclaimed the divine word as follows:

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28,18-20).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

The grace of the Holy Spirit that has dwelled on the Holy Twelve Apostles has gathered us all today in this place where Jesus appeared after His resurrection, "by the Sea of Tiberias" (John 21,1), to honour their Synaxis.

The Holy Apostles are the foundation of the faithful members of the body of the Church, as Saint Paul says: "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2,19-20).

And this because the Lord commanded them to first go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, secondly to teach the nations to observe what they had commanded them and thirdly to assure them that this Lord is with of them [the disciples] all the days until the end of the age, (Cf. Matt. 28, 18-20).

These three characteristics of the character of the apostles constitute the apostolic institution of the Church. We say this because the Apostles of Christ received the Grace of the Holy Spirit not morally but essentially. "And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit" (Acts, 13,52) during their sermon in Antioch of Pisidia, the Apostle Luke writes. And to the apostle Peter, the Lord says: "You are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of heaven shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

"When the Splendour of the Spirit appeared to you in deed and verity, O wise Apostles, ye all took the fulness of it into yourselves, initiated into lofty teachings in the upper room; and now, as is meet, ye are counted blessed" (Matins, Canon of the twelve, Ode 9, Troparion 2) the hymnographer of the Church

proclaims.

On the foundations of the group of the Holy Apostles, those chosen by our Savior Christ, the earthly Church in the world was built, having as its citizens the Christians, who are already according to Paul “fellow citizens of the saints and householders of God » (Eph. 2:19) and “on earth they live, but in heaven they rule” according to Diognitos; On the other hand, the rule of it [the Church] in the Holy Spirit was shown, since it is the way of life of piety but also the way of governing of this, based on the Synodical system, established by the Apostles in Jerusalem according to the testimony of the author of the “Acts of the Apostles” the Evangelist Luke, saying: “the Apostles and the Elders came together to see about the word...” (Acts 15,6).

On the other hand, the Apostles were appointed by the Lord as His successors, as the holy Pachomius also says: “God the Word, ... ascending to heaven, preordained [=appointed in advance] His apostles as His successors”.

The importance and content of Apostolic Succession for the Church and its salvific work is formulated precisely by Hippolytus of Rome, saying: “The Holy Spirit delivered in the Church, the apostles transmitted to the righteous believers; we, as their successors benefiting from this grace, by participating in the priesthood and teaching and are considered to be guards of the Church”.

Indeed, my beloved brothers, the Holy Apostles are considered guardians of the Church, because its special component is “Apostolicity”. Let us also hear the Apostle Luke, saying in the Acts of the Apostles: “As they pass through the cities, they deliver to them to keep the doctrines that were appointed by the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem” (Acts 16,4). [And in more detail: as I was passing through the cities I delivered by oral teaching to the believers in them to keep the decisions, which had been definitively judged as the only

correct ones by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem].

Notable in this regard is the admonition of the Apostle Paul to his disciple Timothy, saying: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith", (1 Tim. 6, 20-21), "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us", (2 Tim. 1,14).

Indeed, the Holy Fathers of the Church, gathered in the Holy Spirit, commemorate the "apostolicity" of the Church in the Creed, proclaiming: "I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church". And this is because the Holy Apostles are those who sit in cities and ordain Elders and Bishops "shepherd the Church of the Lord and God" (Acts 20,28).

So this is why the Apostles are called by Saint Gregory of Palamas "arch-shepherds or even architects of the common piety and virtue". This is again why the schism in the body of the One, Holy and Catholic Church is a great sin: because it endangers the stability of the Apostolic succession, whose genuine and authentic bearers are the normally ordained bishops of the local Churches.

We, my dear brethren, who honour the sacred commemoration of the holy and glorious Apostles, let us join the hymnographer in the prayer: "O Good Saviour, Who by nature art the Friend of man and great in compassion, by the divine supplications of Thine all-hymned Virgin Mother, and the intercessions of Thine Apostles Peter and Paul, send unto us from Heaven Thy mercies and succour" (Matins, Canon of the Chief Apostles, Ode 9, Theotokion). Amen. Many happy returns."

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception and a banquet under the well-appointed priest of the Monastery Archimandrite Parthenios.

# THE FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, June 29 / July 12, 2023, the feast of the Holy Glorious and Chiefs of the Apostles Peter and Paul was celebrated by the Patriarchate.

On this feast, the Church honours the Apostle Peter, remembering that he heard the call of the Lord at the Sea of Tiberias and followed Him after his brother Andrew and confessed Him saying: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16,16) and denied Him, but he repented and proclaimed Him to the gathered multitudes on the day of Pentecost and in Judea, Antioch and finally in Rome, where he died by death on the cross.

The Church also honours the apostle Paul, a former persecutor, but enlightened on his march to Damascus and called to the apostolic office and preaching Christ and labouring for all others through Christ and being able to say: " I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20) and wrote his 14 letters and ascended to the third heaven.

The feast of the honour of the two Chiefs of the Apostles was celebrated in the Holy Church in Capernaum by the sea, founded by the late Patriarch Damianos of Jerusalem in 1931.

The Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with their Eminences, the Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, and the Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Archimandrite Sillas and Priests from the Galilee district, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Dositheos. The chanting was delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba with the choir of Beer Sheva in Greek, Russian, Arabic and Romanian, and by the Acre Byzantine choir, without Fr Philotheos. The service was attended by many faithful Christians, Greeks, Russians from Galilee and others.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation:

“Let us all praise with sacred hymns Peter and Paul the men of God, the foremost of the Apostles and the bright lights of the whole world; the preachers of the holy Faith, the trumpets of theology, revealers of divine decrees, the pillars of the august Church and the destroyers of error” (Matins, Exaposteilarion), the hymnographer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and Pilgrims

The most sacred grace of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul has gathered us all in this holy place of the biblical seaside town of Capernaum to celebrate their commemoration.

The chiefs of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, are especially honoured by our Holy Church because they were called by the Lord; Peter of faith, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16,18), while Paul as a chosen vessel, “But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9,15).

Both of them were full of the Holy Spirit and the Divine Grace, just like the rest of the Apostles, Peter, however, confessed the divinity and sonship of Jesus saying: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16,16). "Through the addition of the article [the Son], he confessed Him to be the genuine Son of God by nature", Saint Chrysostom interprets. "He did not say this without the article, but with the article 'the' Son, therefore, He is the one and only...being born of the same essence of the Father", Theophylaktos comments.

Paul received special gifts and revelations from God as he says: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12,2-4).

Peter's correct proclamation of faith and confession of Jesus Christ served as the stone upon which the Church is built, as the Ark of salvation of our souls "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you" (1 Peter 1,9-10), Saint Peter preaches.

And Paul's proclamation, "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15,13-14), became the cornerstone upon which the faith of Christ crucified and risen from the dead was founded, as expressed, apostolically, theologically and in doctrine by the Holy God-bearing Fathers of the Church, through the Holy Spirit in the Ecumenical Councils, according to the precise "form of doctrine" (Romans 6,17), which is the rule of the Christian teaching, as Saint Paul says.



It is also noteworthy that the apostolic preaching and the Christian teaching of both Peter and Paul were not limited to the Jews only, but were extended especially towards the nations, namely the idolaters, following the Lord's command, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28,19). Saint Paul, therefore, confesses that he was called by God, "that I might preach him among the heathen" (Gal. 1,16). Moreover, he says to the Christians of the nations, "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office" (Romans 11,13).

Indeed, my dear brethren, Saint Paul glorified, and honoured his ministry around the nations, preaching and proving at the same time that the Incarnate God the Word Who became man, the Son of God and our Lord Jesus Christ is "the light of the world" (John 8,12), "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14,6) and the freedom; "and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3,17). That is why Paul preaches, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. 3,19). Similarly, Peter says, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Peter 1,16).

Both Peter and Paul became eye-witnesses and seers of God's glory and majesty, and they are an example of repentance for the sinners, as the hymnographer exclaims: "As example of conversion, Thou hast given to them that sin Thy two faithful Apostles, Lord: the one said he knew Thee not t Thy holy Passion, but again repented; the other fiercely strove against and persecuted the preachings of Thy Name; and both of them became the chiefest of the company of Thy friends, O my Jesus Almighty Lord, Thou divine Saviour of our souls" (Small Vespers, sticheron 3).

My dear brethren, as we honour today the chiefs of the

Apostles and teachers of the universe, we are called to imitate their repentance, as Saint Gregory Palamas urges us, beseeching their intercessions, along with those of the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, for the salvation of our souls. Amen. Many happy returns!"

After the Divine Liturgy the renovator of the Monastery Monk Eirinarchos hosted a reception and a festal meal with fish from Tiberias Sea.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **HIS BEATITUDE RECEIVES THE CHURCH COMMUNITIES FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ACRE AND GALILEE**

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III received today, Friday July 8, a number of the Orthodox Community leaders and Church distinguished members from the city of Acre and its' surrounding areas (Metropolitanate of Acre, Ba'neh, Jedaideh, Makr, Ebillein, Kufr Smai', Kufr Yasif, Sakhnin, Rameh, Shafa'amer, Abu Snan).

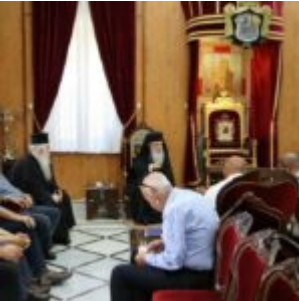
During the meeting which was attended by their Eminences Metropolitan Benedictos of Bethlehem, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina (the Secretary General), and Archbishop Christophoros of Jordan, His Beatitude recalled late Archimandrite Philotheos, the Patriarchal Vicar in Acre, who played a monumental role and served his community with utmost

dedication, asking the Lord to grant him a place in heaven.

In addition, His Beatitude listened carefully to the concerns and needs of the various communities of Acre, more specifically their ecclesiastical and pastoral requests, a region that the Patriarchate holds near and dear to its heart. His Beatitude affirmed the role of the Patriarchate in embracing all members of the Orthodox Church and Christians in the Holy Land, emphasizing that the demands of the communities of Acre and the Galilee are the demands of the Patriarchate, as they are inseparable entities, and these demands stem from the devotion to both the church and the region. Therefore, His Beatitude affirmed that these requests will be taken into consideration in the upcoming Holy Synod, which will be held soon.

Furthermore, Archbishop Christophoros expressed the spirit of love and unity among the attendees, emphasizing the importance of joint cooperation between the Patriarchate, led by His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem, all the spiritual leaders working with responsibility, and a shared clear vision aimed at the revitalization of the Church and the stability of its communities, recalling the achievements that have been accomplished to that effect in Jordan by the blessing of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Towards the end of the meeting, His Beatitude blessed the attendees, calling upon the compassionate God to inspire the Holy Synod Fathers to make the appropriate decision that serves the interests of the Jerusalem Church community in the city of Acre and the towns and villages in its surroundings. In return, the attendees expressed their gratitude to His Beatitude for his love, concern, warm reception, and hospitality.



---

## VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE

On Thursday, June 23rd / July 6th 2023, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, accepted:

1. The Elder Treasurer Fr Daoud, Head of the parish of the county of Taibe near Ramallah for matters concerning this Community.



2. The Elder Treasurer, Fr Nikolaos, Head of the Acre-Ptolemais region of Northern Israel Greek Orthodox Arabic-speaking Community in Abu Snan with a group of fifty young people of the Catechetical School of this Community.



3. The Elder Father Savvas, Head of the Greek-Orthodox Arabic-speaking Community of Northern Israel in Abelin for issues concerning this Community. **From Secretariat-General**

---

## VISITS TO HIS BEATITUDE

On Tuesday, June 21/July 4, 2023, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos accepted:

1. The former Mayor of Bejalla, Mr Nikolaos Hamis, followed by members of his family and the Priest of Bejalla, Father Youssef Hodali.



2. A group of Israelis from Northern Israel near the border with Lebanon under Mr Sidi Zidkiyahu Simenhaus.



1. A twenty-member team of Police officers from various countries as shown in the attached list of the International Police Association, here: [https://jerusalem-patriarchate.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2023\\_07\\_04\\_13\\_44\\_33.pdf](https://jerusalem-patriarchate.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2023_07_04_13_44_33.pdf)

Receiving them, His Beatitude referred to the complexity of the work of the Police in Jerusalem, which is overcome through the Grace of Jesus Christ, whose redemptive Blood watered Jerusalem and the entire Holy Land.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# THE FEAST OF THE PROPHET ELISHA AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, June 14/27, 2023, the feast of the prophet Elisha was celebrated by the Patriarchate. This feast was celebrated in the Holy Monastery named after him in Jericho, in the area where there is also the sycamore tree of Zacchaeus.

During this feast, the Church commemorates that the prophet Elisha was descended from the village of Abel – Meul and was a farmer by profession. God sent the prophet Elijah to him and anointed him as a prophet. Then the prophet Elisha slaughtered his twelve pairs of oxen with which he was working and offered a feast to the people and followed the prophet Elijah.

God anointed Elisha as a prophet and graced him with the power of many miracles, which are mentioned mainly in the books of Kings of the Old Testament.

Through his prayer, the prophet Elisha turned the bitter and dangerous waters of the spring of Jericho into sweet. He also healed Naaman the Syrian from leprosy, resurrected the son of the Shunammite woman, and made his servant Jezi a leper because of his avarice.

Saint Elisha followed his teacher, the prophet Elijah, until the end when the prophet Elijah was taken up in a chariot of fire into the heavens and threw his fleece down to Elisha, on which he stepped and crossed the Jordan River.

In honour of the prophet Elisha, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos led the Divine Liturgy in the above-mentioned Church, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and the Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Holy Sepulchre Hieromonks, among whom the Reverend Archimadrites, Ignatios, Hegoumen of Beit Jala, Claudius, Onuphrius and Kyriakos, Fr



Stavros Aranki and Fr Youssef Hodali and others, Archdeacon Mark and the Hierodeacon Dositheos. The service was attended by Jericho believers and pilgrims.

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

“Take as an example, my brothers, the long-suffering and long-suffering of the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord”, (James 5:10) Saint James the Brother of God orders.

Beloved brothers in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

The grace of the Holy Spirit brought us all together today in this Holy Monastery of the Prophet Elisha, to celebrate his solemn memory and to thank the Lord our God, “gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4, 11-12).

“Of the prophets, some foretold Christ by word, and those according to him [Christ] revealed Him by their works; by word foretold about Him; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve with them; by works, He was shown by Elijah the Thesvite and Elisha his disciple”, says the Bishop Basil of Seleucia.

Indeed, Elisha was distinguished as one of the great religious personalities of Sacred History. He was called to the prophetic office, anointed by God’s command under the prophet Elijah as his successor (3 Kings 19,16). The Prophet Elijah saw Elisha ploughing his field and called him to follow him, he threw his fleece at him (3 Kings 19,19-20). This act symbolized the calling of Elisha to the prophetic office and the drawing of power and divine authority from it. By means of the fleece of the Prophet Elijah, Elisha divided the waters of the Jordan River and crossed it. From this event, the “sons of

the prophets" recognized in Elisha the spirit of the teacher Elijah and worshipped him to the ground (2 Kings 2,7 / 4 Kings 2, 13-15).

The prophetic work of the spirit-bearing Elisha is inextricably linked with extraordinary actions and various miracles, which were recorded by the Holy author of the Books of the Kings. From the power of the miraculous divine energy in him, we can distinguish the change of brackish water into a drinkable spring in the inner region of your city Jericho (2 Kings 2, 19-22), the multiplication of the oil of a poor widow, in order to relieve her from serious debts, (2 Kings 4,1-6), the resurrection of the son of the rich Shunammite woman who hosted him, (2 Kings 4, 18-37), the healing of the leprosy of the Aramean general Naaman, ( 4 Kings 5, 1-14) and after his [Elisha's] death, the resurrection of a dead man, thrown into the Prophet's tomb and coming to touch his bones, (4 Kings 13, 20-21).

The mention of the Prophet Elisha by our Lord Jesus in today's gospel reading is noteworthy: "And many lepers were with Elisha the prophet in Israel, and none of them was clean, except Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4,27). These words of the Lord infuriated those present in the Synagogue because Jesus "began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4,21). In other words, the work of the prophets and that of Elijah and Elisha was carried out in the person of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, as Saint Cyril of Alexandria interprets. The Psalmist also testifies to this truth, saying: "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm" (Psalm 104, 15).

The Holy Prophets and the righteous people in the Old Testament were the anointed ones by the Lord because they were dedicated to Him [God] and inspired by Him. God called these to minister the mystery of the divine Providence, hidden from the ages in God, (Cf. Eph. 3:9), as Saint Paul preaches.

This divine call to the ministry of the mystery hidden in God was also received by our today celebrated Prophet Elisha. Let us, therefore, hear the Author of the Book of Kings: "And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up, lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes" (2 Kings 4, 32-35).

In the described manner, in which Elisha resurrected the son of the Shunammite woman, the interpreter Basil of Seleucia discerned the pattern of the incarnation of the Son and Word of God, thus he points out saying: "Elisha bears the type of Christ".

In fact, the bright Elisha bears the type of Christ, because he, as his hymnographer states: "the Holy Spirit showed thee to be an uprooter of every evil and a planter of every virtue, O all-blessed Elisha" (Matins, Ode 4, Troparion 1).

And the abundant grace of the Holy Spirit in Elisha is none other than that of the Spirit of Christ. And this Holy Spirit, as the wise Paul preaches, "understands our infirmities", prays with us and "overcomes our groaning and whispering" (Cf. Rom 8:26) for our spiritual progress and salvation.

The prophetic and miraculous speech of the God-bearer Elisha was strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit. This means that the Holy Spirit rests in the hearts of those who live a virtuous life and keep their hearts pure, according to what is said in the Psalm: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and put your own [and sovereign] spirit in my heart." ", (Cf. Psalm 50:12).

For we too, my beloved brothers, beseech the prophet Elisha, the one who has boldness in the presence of God, that after our most blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, but also of our celebrated Holy Father Methodius Archbishop of Constantinople, that they may intercede for our souls and for the peace of the Holy Land and the universe. Amen. Many happy returns”.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen of the Monastery, Archimandrite Philoumenos, provided a reception.

At noon, a meal was offered by the Central Council of the Jericho Community in a city restaurant.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **THE FEAST OF SAINT ONUPHRIUS AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Sunday, June 12/25,2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of our Father among the Saints Onuphrius the Egyptian.

On this feast, the Church commemorates that Saint Onuphrius lived in the strictest monastic anchorite striving in Egypt, after the example of the prophet Elijah and Saint John the Baptist. Saint Pafnoutius found his dead body and buried it.

This feast was celebrated at the Holy Monastery dedicated to him, opposite the pool of Siloam, at the potter’s field which was bought by the Pharisees “to bury the foreigners” (Matt. 27, 7-8), with the thirty silver coins that Judas returned to them (Matt. 27,3-6).

Inside and around the monastery there are tombs carved in the rocks. One of them belongs to the first Patriarch of Jerusalem, Saint Iouvenalios during whose Patriarchal Office the Church of Jerusalem was declared a Patriarchate in AD 451.

At the Church of this Monastery, the Divine Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, and the Archbishops, Aristarchos of Constantina and Makarios of Qatar, Holy Sepulchre Hieromonks and Priests from the Holy Metropolis of Patra, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Dositheos. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and pilgrims.

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

“Godly-wise Father Onuphrius, by separating thyself from the turbulence of the world, thou wast lifted to the height that is found far above the world; and longing after the very Source of Good, thou hast in truth reached what thou didst most desire. Since thou art all aflame with the shining rays thereof, O blest of God, by thine intercessions snatch us from the gloom of sin” (Vespers, stichera 3) the hymnographer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

The noetic heavenly light, the Holy Spirit that enlightened the eyes of the heart of our Holy Father Onuphrius the Egyptian has gathered us all in his Holy Monastery, in this biblical place of the potter's field, which is called “the field of blood unto this day” (Matt. 27, 7-8), to celebrate his commemoration in honesty and truth (cf. 1 Cor. 5,8).

And we say this because the purpose of the feasts of our Holy

Church is the rendering of honour to those who have renounced the world and bore their cross and followed Christ, on the other hand, the promotion of their virtues to the faithful, in imitation of the saints.

Our Holy Father Onuphrius was such a true imitator of Christ, who heard of the lives of the prophet Elijah and Saint John the Baptist and retreated into the deeper desert, seeking to be blessed by holy anchorite men, whose burning desire was the immigration to the heavenly city, as Saint Paul preaches: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13,14).

This ardent desire had also captured the soul of our Father Onuphrius, just like that of the psalmist who exclaims: "I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name" (Psalm 119,131-132).

In this ardent desire and honest love for Christ, Saint Onuphrius had God the Father as his accomplice, as Saint Paul confirms: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8,28).

Interpreting the phrase "to them who are the called according to his purpose", Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "According to his purpose means according to their will, just as some righteous and holy men became saints not only because God called them, but also because this was their own will".

Our Holy Father Onuphrius obtained these two wills. And this is so, because he "loved the Lord God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind" (cf. Matt. 22,37), according to Christ's command. The exceeding power of the love for God is praised by the hymnographer of Saint Onuphrius, saying: "O love, thou transcendently shining light! O sum of

all the virtues, whoever fillest the heavenly orders with gladness and grace, and hast made thy dwelling in the Saints, the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles: by their prayers also dwell in us, that with them we may sing to God: Alleluia" (Matins, Oikos).

Saint Onuphrius, whose holy commemoration we celebrate today, shines like a bright light in our contemporary world of apostasy, lawlessness and the prevailing disorder. And it shines like a light, because he became a migrant from the confusion of the world, living and being fed off in the deserts and on the mountains, clothed with Christ and always listening to the voice of St. Paul saying: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3,20), therefore, "Be careful of nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4,6).

Interpreting these words of Saint Paul, Ecumenios says, "Be careful of nothing, do not say anything, not even curse against the enemies, do not say anything when in sorrow". In other words, my dear brothers and sisters, we should put such trust in the Divine Providence, that our mind and heart will be free from any agony and concern of our needs. We should rely on God, so much so, that we keep the peace and tranquillity of our hearts unshakable. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," Saint Paul says (Romans 8,18).

The vision of this very future divine glory did our God-bearing Father Onuphrius achieve, having thus boldness towards God. Therefore, as we honour his holy commemoration, let us entreat him, along with our Most Blessed Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and the also celebrating today, our Holy Father Peter of Mount Athos, that they may intercede with our Lord God for our souls and for the peace of our region and of

the whole world. Amen. Many happy returns!”

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a litany at the tombs of the founders of the Monastery and a memorial service at the tomb of the blessed nun Seraphima, concluding with the prayer for the fruit.

Finally, the renovator of the monastery, Abbess Paisia hosted a reception for His Beatitude and the congregation.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **ICON MAINTENANCE WORKS IN THE HOLY CROSS MONASTERY, NEW JERUSALEM**

On Tuesday, June 7/20, 2023, His Beatitude Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos received a group of female conservators from Russia under the icon and book conservator Mr Stavros Andreou and Mr Igor, who will maintain the icons of the Patriarchate working in the Holy Cross Monastery.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **THE GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR**



# THE GRADUATES OF THE REMLA SCHOOL

On the evening of Tuesday, June 7th/20th, 2023, the awarding ceremony of the Remla School certificates took place in the ceremony hall of the cultural center of the city. This ceremony is the 28th since the Community founded the School with the practical support of the Patriarchate.

This ceremony, begun by the "Our Father", included notable performances by the fifty graduates of the School, male and female students, patriotic music, dances, and other performances, attended by parents and other relatives of the graduates, the Hegoumen of Remla Archimandrite Nifon, the President of the Community, Mr Faez Mansour, and members of the Community Council, the Mayor of the city, representatives of other Municipalities and denominations.

From Jerusalem, the ceremony was honoured by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolas, the Elder Chief Secretary His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hierodeacon Dositheos and Fr Issa Mousleh.

The importance and value of Education for the graduates' lives and the Patriarchate's continuous support was particularly emphasized by His Beatitude in his speech by Fr Issa, after which He handed over the certificates to each of the graduates, wishing them success and a good career.

**From Secretariat-General**