

THE FEAST OF PROPHET ELIAS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, 20 July/ 2 August 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Prophet Elias from Thesbis.

On this feast, which has its origin in the Old Testament, in the books of Kings and in the New Testament, in the Gospels and in Saint James' letter, Prophet Elias is commemorated as the incarnate angel, the prophets' summit, the second forerunner of the coming of Christ, the one who casts out sickness and cleanses lepers, who sent down fire from heaven through his prayer and slaughtered the priests of Baal in the altar of Mount Carmel, the one who did not see death but was ascended into the heavens on a fiery chariot and threw down his mantle upon his disciple Elisaios, who walked on it and crossed the river Jordan.

In prophet Elias' honour, at his Holy Monastery, which is located between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, Great Vespers was held on Monday afternoon, and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Tuesday morning. The Services were officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, with the co-celebration of their Eminences the Archbishops, Theodosios of Sebasteia and Aristovoulos of Madaba, Archimandrite Meletios, Priests Farah and Khader from Saint James Cathedral, Priests from Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour. The chanting was delivered by Saint James Cathedral Byzantine Choir, and the services were attended by faithful from the aforementioned towns and the representative of the Greek Consulate, Mrs Christina Zaharioudaki.

Before the Holy Communion, the officiating High Priest read His Beatitude's Sermon as per below:

"We know thee to be a vessel containing the Divine Spirit, and

an Angel upon the earth, breathing the fire of divine zeal, turning away impiety and reproving kings, anointing Prophets, and cutting down with the sword the priests of shame, O Elias, for this cause, we cry to thee: Deliver us from future shame" (Matins, Second Canon, Ode eight, Troparion 1), the hymnographer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The festive commemoration of the fiery ascend into the heavens of the Holy Glorious Prophet Elias the Thesbite, has gathered us all in this Holy Church to glorify Christ in Eucharist, Who has glorified him.

The Prophet Elias is distinguished for his excessive divine, and conscious zeal as his hymnographer says: "Elias the zealot, the lord over the passions...For in his achievements he proved to be an Angel in the body and an incorporeal man" (Entreaty, Troparion 1).

The multiple achievements of the prophetic mission of Elias the Thesbite made him "a man of God", according to the testimony of the widow from Sarepta of Sidon: "And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth" (3 Kings 17:24). This is also confirmed by Saint Luke the Evangelist when he speaks about Saint John the Baptist: "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).

Interpreting this verse, Zigavinos says: "[the Bible] calls 'spirit' the spiritual gift, and power the energy. And he says that both the gift and power he received from Elias". And Origen notes, "For he does not say 'by the soul of Elias'; for it was not a reincarnation. But by the spirit and the power of

Elias. For there was spirit and power in Elias, which was the spiritual gift, like in each of the Prophets. And the spirit that was in Elias was given to John...and the spirit...that was given to the Prophets he calls a gift”.

The Holy Apostle James, the Brother of God, refers to the Prophet Elias in his letter as an example of the power of prayer: “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months” (James 5:16,17).

The Synaxarist of the Prophet says, “Elias’ zeal for the glory of God is compared to the fire, and his speech is compared to the teaching and examination just like a burning candle; for this reason, he was called a “zealot”. Moved by his Godly zeal, Elias strictly controlled the irreverence, namely the idolatry and the illegal actions of the archons of his era.

It is noteworthy that the righteous Elias sent down fire from heaven on Mount Carmel, which burnt down his sacrifice in front of all the people, for the knowledge of the truth as the Holy Scriptures testify: “And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, ... Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that these people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the dust and licked up the water in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God” (3 Kings 18:36-39).

Moreover, Prophet Elias separated the route of the river Jordan and crossed it along with his disciple Elisaïos as if on dry land, and while he was talking to his disciple, he was suddenly taken up in the heavens by a fiery chariot and was

ascended to place where only God knows; "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (4 Kings 2:11-12).

And this is because, as Saint John, the Evangelist says, "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13).

Prophet Elias, my dear brethren, has a special place among the prophets and the righteous of the Law of Moses in the Old Testament. It was rightly said that he resembles the great personalities of Moses and the Forerunner and is considered a type of Christ. Elias appears next to Moses at the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor. Elias and Saint John the Baptist are recognised as fervent and strict preachers of repentance.

Elias the Thesbite is commemorated by the Prophet Malachi as the preacher of repentance before the Second Coming of Christ: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse," the Almighty God says (Malachi 4:5-6).

According to the multiple assurances of Christ, the Holy Elias will come before the end of the world just like Saint John the Baptist came during His first coming "in the spirit and power of Elias" (Luke 1:17) to return the hearts of the children to the fathers through the preaching of repentance (ref. Matt. 11:2-14 and 13:13-17).

Interpreting the above words, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "just like the blessed John the Baptist was preaching; 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight (Matt. 3:3), likewise, the Holy Elias, being close to the Lord

used to preach, 'and while He has not come yet, to judge the world in righteousness".

We, my dear brethren, honouring the most sacred commemoration of the Holy Prophet Elias the Thesbite, who has great boldness before God the Father in the heavens, let us entreat his intercessions along with those of our Most Holy Lady and Ever-Virgin Mary, and say along with the hymnographer: "with a living word thou didst close up the rain of heaven; and now, I pray thee, with thy spiritual world, open unto me the gates of repentance, O Saint, sending rain-showers of compunction unto my soul, and save me who cry: Bless Christ, O ye priests, and supremely exalt him, O ye people, unto the ages" (Matins, 2nd Canon, Ode 8, Troparion 3).

Amen! Many happy returns!"

The Episcopal Entourage and the congregation were offered a reception at the Hegoumeneion by the hardworking and efficient caretaker of the Monastery, Monk Achillios. The Episcopal Entourage was also offered a festal meal at noon.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY APOSTLES AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, 30 June/ 13 July 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Glorious twelve Apostles at the Holy Church dedicated to them on the

west shore of the sea of Tiberias, at the centre of the town of Tiberias.

On this feast the Church gathers, namely, it keeps the "Synaxis" of its faithful to honour the twelve Apostles to whom the Lord sent His Holy Spirit, and by whom He "kept the whole world into their net".

For this feast, Vespers was held on Tuesday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Wednesday morning was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom the Archimandrite Parthenios and Priests from the Metropolis of Nazareth. The chanting was delivered by the Hegoumen of Acre, Archimandrite Philotheos in Greek and Arabic, as the service was attended by Arab-speaking and Russian faithful.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"O Disciples of the Saviour, you saved the world; for you travelled all over it and illumined peoples, and by your teachings, you burned up the delusion of the idols like kindling, and you dragged up the Gentiles from the deep of ignorance to divine knowledge. And now, intercede with Christ, that He be merciful to us on Judgment Day" (Matins, Praises, Glory), the hymnographer of the Church Cosmas the Monk proclaims.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The grace of the glorious and all-lauded twelve Apostles has gathered us all in the Monastery dedicated to them, by the seaside, namely at the sea of Tiberias, where Jesus revealed Himself to His Disciples after His resurrection (ref. John 21:1-13), to celebrate their Synaxis.

The sacred day of the Twelve Apostles is an extension of the commemoration of the Chiefs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, whom we celebrated yesterday at the seaside town of Capernaum.

Referring to the choosing of the Twelve Apostles, the Evangelist Luke says: "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them, he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles" (Luke 6:12-13).

Interpreting these words of the Gospel, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "Having spent the night in prayer, our Lord conversed with the Father and God in heaven in an unspeakable and incomprehensible [to us] manner and gave Himself as a type of salvation, He taught the correct and pure way of prayer and made them mystics of the universe".

Indeed, the Holy Apostles became mystics, meaning teachers, and preachers of the mystery of the Divine Providence as the Evangelist Matthew witnesses. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in the 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).

Christ's Disciples did not do anything by themselves, namely with their own thinking, but everything that He gave to them as commandments. Therefore, Athanasios the Great says: "Jesus did not tell them simply to baptise, but He said they should teach first...so that faith would become correct from the knowledge and after faith, the completion should come with the baptism". And according to Saint Chrysostom, "He commanded to study about the doctrines and teach about the commandments".

Noteworthy on this is the interpretation of Saint Gregory of

Nyssa: "dividing the Christians' manner of living between the moral part and the precision of the doctrines, He secures the redeeming doctrine with baptism, while He orders to manage our lives through the keeping of the commandments".

In other words, the Apostles' preaching is distinguished in two things regarding the Christian manner of living. On the one hand, the knowledge of the correct faith, namely the precision of the doctrines through baptism. On the other, to the application and keeping of the commandments of the Gospel of Christ.

Behold, therefore, why Saint Paul advises: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:15). And to his disciple he says: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20).

The tradition of the Church and of the Holy Apostles, my dear ones, is the source of the doctrines of our faith and of the ecclesiastical preaching of the spiritual and moral teaching, moreover of the Holy Bible, as Saint Maximus the Confessor says; "we have secured through the teaching in writing the doctrines and preaching of the Church, while we have accepted what has been passed over in secret through the tradition of the Apostles, and both have the same power toward the mystery of the Divine Providence".

The contribution and the divine work of the Holy Apostles are owed to the power Jesus gave them on the one hand (ref. Matt. 10:1-8), and on the other, to the union of the gentiles and the Jews in the one Church of Christ. And this, because the Apostles and the prophets, being vessels of the Holy Spirit, became the foundation of the revealed in the world and redeeming sacred history as the Apostle Paul says very clearly: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far

off are made nigh by the blood of Christ... 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. 2:13-20).

The whole institution of the Church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles, as phrased in our Creed, and according to which the Holy Church of Christ is called "Apostolic". The unity of the various local brotherly Orthodox Churches is established on the Apostolic character of the Church. And this, because as the psalmist says, through the Apostles, "The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen" (Psalm 98:2).

We, who celebrate the Holy Apostles, along with the Mother of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, let us entreat them to pray to the Son and God for the peace of the world, the salvation of our souls and the unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Amen. Many happy returns!"

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception and a meal by the good Head of the Monastery, Hegoumen Archimandrite Parthenios.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL AT

THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday 29 June/ 12 July 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy Glorious and Chiefs of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, at the Holy Church dedicated to them in Capernaum.

On this feast the Church honours the Apostle Peter as the one who confessed Christ to be the Son of God and heard by Him, "You are Peter and, on this rock, shall I build my Church", and the Apostle Paul as the one who was called by the Lord on his way to Damascus and preached Him "more than anyone else".

For the feast of the Chiefs of the Apostles the Divine Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos in this Church, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth and Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks among whom Archimandrite Parthenios, Arab-speaking Priests from the Holy Metropolis of Nazareth and Priests from the Russian Church of Diaspora, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by Mr Gotsopoulos with the help of the Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba and a Byzantine choir, as the service was attended by a congregation of Greek, Russian and Palestinian faithful Christians.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation:

"A joyous feast is shining on the whole world today. It is the preeminent commemoration of the most wise and paramount Apostles, Peter and Paul. O brethren, let us also joyfully celebrate this solemn day, with hymns and poetry, and let us salute them and say, "Rejoice! O Peter, Apostle and genuine friend of your teacher, Christ our God! Rejoice! O beloved Paul, preacher of the faith and teacher of the whole world! As you were both chosen in holiness and have confidence in

prayer, earnestly entreat Christ our God, for the salvation of our souls" (Glory, aposticha Vespers), the hymnographer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians and Pilgrims

The citizens of Jerusalem on high, Peter, the chief of the Apostles and rock of the faith, and Paul, the preacher of Christ's Church, have gathered us all in the Church dedicated to them in this holy Shrine of the biblical town of Capernaum to celebrate their commemoration.

Having become vessels of the Holy Spirit, they preached the redeeming Gospel of Christ all over the universe and were distinguished among the other apostles who were called by the Lord. Peter's confession "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16), is what made Jesus say "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).

And Paul's preaching about the Lord, immediately after his baptism in Damascus, that Christ is the Son of God (ref. Acts 9: 19-20) was the result of the Lord's words to Ananias: "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 blessed Peter's confession and Saint Paul's preaching that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16) are of great importance, because Christ is not only recognised as the Messiah but primarily and mainly as perfect God, "having been born of the same essence with the Father", as Theophylaktos says. "He confessed Him to be the genuine Son of God", Saint Chrysostom teaches. "He realised Him to be of the same nature and especially the Son of God", Zigavinos comments.

Peter and Paul, the Chiefs of the Apostles, through the Holy Spirit managed to capture into their logical nets the multitudes of the nations, to make them know the true God, according to the words of Jesus Christ: "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).

The twelve Apostles in general, and especially these two, Peter and Paul, became the establishers of the Churches that were founded all over the world, as Saint Paul witnesses: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:8-9).

"The unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8) that Peter got to know as an ear-and-eye witness of the Lord's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (ref. 2 Peter 1:18), he evangelizes to all saying: "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. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount" (2 Peter 1:16-18).

It is noteworthy that Peter abandoned his profession as a fisherman and received from on high, by the Father, the revelation of the incarnation of God the Word. While Paul, "was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:4). Having received the experience of these unspeakable divine mysteries, Peter and Paul sowed the seeds of reverence all over the world and enlightened the whole congregation of the Church.

Behold, therefore, why these two Saints are called foundations and pillars of the Church, preachers of the faith and teachers of the universe. "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (Psalm 19:5) the Psalmist proclaims. Behold, again, why this holy couple is the boast of the Church. It is noteworthy also, that the Church boasts over its founders and pillars, the Apostles Peter and Paul, while they boast over the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ "by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14), Saint Paul preaches. And according to Saint John Damascene, "the weapon of the cross became the salvation of the faithful and Paul's boast". That is why the hymnographer says, through Your Cross, O Christ, there was one flock of the Angels and the people and one Church; the heavens and the earth rejoice, Glory to Thee.

Indeed, my dear brethren, the One Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in heaven and on earth, rejoices, and thus we say along with the hymnographer: "Rejoice, Peter and Paul, unbroken foundations of the divine dogmas, friends of Christ, worthy vessels. Come and be in our midst invisibly, and count us worthy of immaterial gifts, as we extol your feast with songs" (Glory of Praises, Matins). Amen! Many happy returns!"

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception and an outdoor meal with fish from the Tiberias sea, by the renovator of the Monastery and the Church, the hardworking Caretaker Monk Eirinarchos.

From Secretariat-General

THE GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE RAMLE SCHOOL GRADUATES

On Thursday evening, 17/30 June 2022 the graduation ceremony of the 54 graduates from Ramle School took place at a reception hall in the Community of Ramle – Ancient Arimathaea. This school was founded by the Community, after the moral and financial support of the Patriarchate during the Office of the blessed Patriarch of Jerusalem Diodoros.

In this well-organised ceremony, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem was represented by His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of the Myrrh-bearing Women in Ramle, Archimandrite Niphon and the Priest Issa Mousleh. The ceremony was also attended by the President of Jamaye-Community of Ramle, Mr Faez Mansour, the Israeli Mayor of Ramly, Mr Mihail Vintel, the graduates' parents and relatives and others.

The School Principal Mrs Ilham Mahoul presented the work of the School and the high percentage of students who succeed in the university entrance exams.

For the support of the School's work, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos offered \$10000.

Fr Issa Mousleh delivered His Beatitude's address on His behalf as per below:

كلمة صاحب الغبطة كيريوس كيريوس ثيوفيلوس الثالث بطريرك المدينة المقدسة وسائر أعمال فلسطين والأردن في تخرج طلبة مدرسة الرملة الرومية الأرثوذكسية

30/5/2022،

اصحاب النيافة الجزيلي الاحترام

الاباء الاجلاء المحترمون

حضرة ابنتنا المربية الفاضلة الأستاذة الهام مخول مديرة المدرسة
،الجزيلة الاحترام ،

،حضرات المعلمات والمعلمين وأولياء أمور الطلاب المحترمين

الحضور الكرام مع حفظ الألقاب للجميع

سلامٌ المسيحٍ لكم° جميعاً

يسعدنا أن° زُعبِرَ لكم° عن° وافرٍ فرحتنا وابتهاجنا ونحن°
نقفُ بينكم في هذا اليوم الذي نحتفلُ به سويساً لنخرج بناتنا
وأبنائنا وقد أتموا مرحلةً هامة من مراحل حياتهم، وإننا
بذلك نتقدمُ بالكثير من الامتنان والاحترام لأولياء الأمور
والهيئتين الإدارية والتدريسية على ما قدّموه من جهدٍ
وعطاءٍ في سبيل الوصول بطلاً بنا إلى أعلى المراتب والدرجات
،ومساعدتهم للانطلاق نحو أولى خطوات مستقبلهم

إن من أهم الأمور التي علينا أن ندركها أن التعليم
يُعتبرُ البنية الأساسية التي يركزُ عليها المجتمع، لذلك
علينا أن نتمسك به وأن نعمل على تطويره ومسايرة التجدد
المتسارع في العالم لكي تتمكن الأجيال من مواكبة التطور و التقدم
لبناء وطنهم و استقلال ذاتهم ، لذلك من واجبنا أن نوفر لهم كل
مقومات النجاح و التفوق ليقوموا بواجباتهم نحو أسرهم
،ومجتمعهم ووطنهم على أكمل وجه

وإن النظام التعليمي في أية دولة هو الأساس الراسخ
ليكتمل البناء ويقوى، فالتعليم هو الذي يصنع الأيادي
المعطاءة التي تعمّر وتبني وتطوّر، ممّا أتاح الفرصة
لطلبتنا الأعضاء أن يحصلوا على نتائج مشرّفة في الامتحانات
العامّة، على الرغم من جائحة كورونا التي اجتاحت العالم و حدّت
من التقدم في الكثير من المجالات إلا أن الإدارة العليا لمدارس
البطيركية و على رأسها سعادة العين الدكتور عودة القواس و
بحكمته الرزينة استطاعت التغلب على هذا الفايروس بمعية مدير
المدرسة الأستاذ جلال محيسن، كما لا ننسى الدور الريادي الذي يقوم
به رئيس لجنة المدارس المتروبوليت يواكيم الجزيل الاحترام برعايته
، و دعمه المعنوي و المادي لمدارس البطيركية

: الحضور الكرام

إنَّ هذا الصَّرحَ الأكاديميَّ - الثَّقافيَّ - العربيَّ - الرُّوميَّ -
بمعلميه و إدارته قدَّ خرَّجَ أشخاصًا لهمْ مراكز مرموقةٌ وعاليةٌ
في مجتمَعِنَا الأصيلِ والَّذينَ نفتخرُ ونعتزُّ بهمِ .

وفي الختامِ لا يسعُنَا إلَّا الدعاءُ لأبناءِ شعبِنَا الفلسطينيِّ
بأنَّ تتحقَّقَ آمالهمِ بالسَّلامِ والحريَّةِ والاستقرارِ وقدَّ حقَّقوا
أهدافَهمِ الَّتِي يثابرونَ منْ أجلِها كِشعبٍ يستحقُّ الحياةَ
بإقامةِ دولتِهمِ الفلسطينيَّةِ وعاصمتِها القدسُ الشَّريفُ قدسُ
الأقداسِ تحتَ ظلِّ القيادةِ الحكيمةِ لفخامةِ الرُّئيسِ محمودِ
عبَّاسِ رئيسِ دولةِ فلسطينِ - حفظه اللهُ ورعاها، وأنَّ يعمَّ السَّلامُ
والحبُّ في جميعِ الأراضِ المقدَّسةِ وفي منطقةِ الشرقِ الأوسطِ والعالمِ
بأسره و نرجو لكمِ عامًا خاليًا منِ الوباءِ و البلاءِ و الغلاءِ وكلِّ عامِ
وأنتمِ بألفِ خيرٍ .

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF PROPHET ELISHA AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, 14/27 June 2022 the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Holy Prophet Elisha.

On this feast, the Church commemorates the events written in the Book of Kings in the Old Testament, according to which the Prophet Elisha came from Jericho and left his profession when Prophet Elijah called him. He offered a feast to the people with the twelve pairs of oxen he used on his farm, followed Prophet Elijah and became a benefactor for the people of the Jordan district through the signs and miracles that God deemed him worthy to work.

Near Jericho, at the foot of Sarantarion Mount, he turned the bitter waters into drinkable. He saw his teacher, Prophet Elijah being ascended to heaven on a fiery chariot and received his grace twofold. He received his teacher's fleece with which he parted the waters of the river Jordan and crossed the river to the other side. He slept in the Lord in B.C. 839.

To the Prophet's honour, the Divine Liturgy on the morning of the feast day was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos at his H. Monastery in Jericho. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences the Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Isidoros of Hierapolis, the Archimandrites Klaudios, Kyriakos from the H. Monastery of Saint Gerasimos of the Jordan, Onuphrius from the H. Monastery of Sarantarion Mount and Priest Nectarios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon, Archimandrite Chrysostom and Mr Varaklas in Greek and by the Jericho Community choir in Arabic. The Liturgy was attended by Arab-speaking and Greek faithful from Jericho and Greece.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"Having received a double portion of the Spirit's grace, thou didst become a wondrous Prophet known throughout the earth, ever rescuing from dangers all them that hymn thee; and thou grantest thy rich grace of wondrous miracles unto those who hasten unto thee with fervent faith and cry out to thee: Rejoice, O Prophet most marvellous" (Kontakion), the hymnographer exclaims.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The Holy Church of God honours joyfully today the sacred commemoration of the Holy Prophet Elisha in the Holy Monastery dedicated to him near the river Jordan, in the historical city

of Jericho.

Prophet Elisha was anointed by Prophet Elijah and became his successor according to God's command, as written in the Book of Kings: "And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint ...and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room... So he departed thence, and found Elisha... and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee...Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him" (3 Kings 19:15-21). According to Sirach, when Prophet Elijah ascended into heaven, Elisha was filled with Elijah's spirit; "Elijah was covered by the whirlwind, and Elisha was filled with his spirit" (Sirach 48:12).

The righteous Elisha was distinguished among the Prophets as well as a religious figure. He displayed a great and vigorous social activity and worked many miracles, of which most prominent were, the division of the waters of the river Jordan with Prophet Elijah's fleece, (4 Kings 2:14), the making of the waters of the spring in Jericho suitable to drink (4 Kings 2:19-22) and the healing of Naaman the Syrian from his leprosy (4 Kings 5:1-14).

The casting down of Elijah's fleece on Elisha symbolised the latter's calling to become a prophet and receive from him the divine power and authority according to the saying; "Light is sown for the righteous" (Psalm 97:11). Interpreting this psalm, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says, "the noetic and divine light rises in the mind and heart of anyone who is pure and righteous".

Elisha's power and authenticity are praised by the Wisdom of Sirach; "When Elijah was enveloped in the whirlwind, Elisha was filled with his spirit. He performed twice as many signs

and marvels with every utterance of his mouth. Never in his lifetime did he tremble before any ruler, nor could anyone intimidate him at all. Nothing was too hard for him, and when he was dead, his body prophesied. In his life he did wonders, and in death his deeds were marvellous" (Sirach 48:12-14).

In today's Gospel narrative according to Saint Luke, we heard, my dear brethren, that while teaching in the Synagogue in Nazareth, Christ mentions especially the Prophet Elijah and his disciple Elisha. And this is because Elijah was sent in Sarepta of Sidon to a widow, while Elisha healed Naaman the Syrian from his leprosy only (cf. Luke 4:25-27). It is noteworthy that both the widow and the Naaman were gentiles, idolaters.

Through the commemoration of these events, Jesus meant that both Prophets, Elijah and Elisha, foretold the Christ of God, the Son and Word of God on the one hand, and on the other, preached to the Church of the nations, namely to the worshipers of the idols, who were going to accept Christ and be cured of their spiritual leprosy, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Prophets most ardently sought not only to learn about the salvation in Christ but also tested everything related to it, as the Apostle Peter says: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:10-11).

Interpreting these words, Ecumenios says: "having said the spirit of God, he theologizes Christ", while Theophylactos notes, "[the Scriptures] write that the Holy Spirit that spoke through the Prophet's was Christ's Spirit".

This very Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ enlightened the mind and heart of our Holy Prophet Elisha. That is why his hymnographer exclaims: "Rejoice Elisha supremely wise, for after cleansing thy mind of the carnal desires and lusts, thou within thee didst receive God the Spirit's clear-shining beams, which thou didst pass on to all, O glorious one, and didst appear wholly like unto the light. Hence, thou art gone to dwell in the never-setting light that is on high, ever praying for us all, who praise and honour thee" (Vespers, sticheron 1).

To this never-setting light, namely the Kingdom of Heaven, did also Saint Methodios Archbishop of Constantinople dwell, the co-celebrant to Saint Elisha, just like all the saints and righteous of God, who "loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them" (Revelation 12:11-12), Saint John the Theologian says.

Let us pray, my dear brethren, to our God and Father of lights, that through the intercessions of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and of the righteous Prophet Elisha, we may be deemed worthy to dwell in the never-setting light of Christ's glory. Amen. Many happy returns".

After the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude read a prayer for the grapes and other fruit. At noon the good caretaker of the Monastery Archimandrite Philoumenos hosted a meal.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF OUR HOLY FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS ONUPHRIUS

On Saturday 12/25 June 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of Saint Onuphrius the Egyptian.

On this day the Church commemorates that Saint Onuphrius lived initially in a Coenobitic Monastery in Hermoupolis. Then, imitating the Prophet Elijah and Saint John the Baptist, he retreated to the deepest desert and lived in strict asceticism for sixty years (without seeing any other man). At the end of his life, he met with Saint Pafnutios. When the Saint slept in the Lord, "his shed collapsed, the palm tree withered and the spring of water from which he used to drink dried up".

The commemoration of Saint Onuphrius was celebrated at the Holy Monastery dedicated to him near Siloan's pool, at the Potter's field which the Pharisees bought with the thirty silver coins Judas returned to them, "to bury the foreigners".

In this ancient Monastery which was renovated by Hagiotaphite Fathers in the 19th and 20th centuries, the Service of Vespers was held by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, and the Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Hieromonks from the Monastery Oblous from the Metropolis of Patra. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacons Simeon and Dositheos. The service was attended by monks, nuns and faithful Christians from Jerusalem, along with pilgrims from Greece.

His Beatitude delivered the following sermon before the Holy Communion:

“But the righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them. Therefore, they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm, he will shield them” (Wisdom of Solomon, 5:15-16), the wise Solomon says.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us today in this historic and biblical place, “the potter’s field...[which is known as]the field of blood, unto this day” (Matt. 27:7-8), where the Monastery of Saint Onuphrius lies, so that we may celebrate his holy commemoration in reverence.

Our Holy Father Onuphrius came from Egypt. When he heard about the ascetic manner of living in the desert that the Prophet Elijah had kept, as well as that of Saint John the Baptist, he retreated to the desert and remained there for sixty years, without seeing any person at all during this time, as his Synaxarist writes, referring to the witness of Saint Pafnutius, who met Saint Onuphrius in the deepest desert.

Our Holy Father Onuphrius belongs to the chora of the holy and righteous who dwell in the kingdom of heaven, as the wise Solomon says: “But the righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them” (Wisdom of Solomon, 5:15). Moreover, this is also claimed by his hymnographer; “wholly mingled with God through love, thou becamest a partaker of His Kingdom; and thou hast received the enjoyment of its delight the torrent of life, the choir of them that keep festival, and the joy that ageeth not, O thrice-blessed Onuphrius” (Matins, Ode 9, Troparion 2).

Referring to the leader and integrator of our faith Jesus Christ (cf. Hebrews 12:2) and paying heed to the Lord’s advice, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his

righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33), our father Onuphrius set his heart in seeking the kingdom of God with all his mind and might. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday" (Psalm 37:5-6).

Indeed, the application of the Lord's commandments in both words and actions, made Saint Onuphrius prominent, while his righteousness, namely his holiness, became a shining ray of light, as Saint Athanasius says. By the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, the knowledge of God made our Father Onuphrius holy and reverend, as Saint Clement of Alexandria says: "The one who is known to God is righteous and holy".

In other words, Saint Onuphrius "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and [he was] renewed in the spirit of [his] mind" (cf. Eph. 4:22-23), according to Saint Paul's advice. That is why his hymnographer says, "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 dwell also in us, that with them we may sing to God: Alleluia" (Matins, Oikos).

Referring to the holy and righteous man of God, Saint Clement of Alexandria says: "The whole life of the holy and righteous is a holy feast. For example, his sacrifices are prayers and praises and before his meals, his studies are those of the scriptures, psalms and praises, during the meals and before his sleep and during the night, again prayers. Through them he unites himself with the divine chorea, unceasingly keeping his mind attached to the divine vision".

Through his ascetic striving in the desert, namely the continuous commemoration of the divine name and the unceasing prayer and worship, according to the words, to "serve God

without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74-75). Our Father Onuphrius attained the continuous vision of God's glory, just like the Holy Apostles on Mount Tabor on the day of the Transfiguration of our Lord.

In other words, blessed Onuphrius united himself with the "divine chorea", becoming a fellow citizen of the Angels and of the righteous and the Saints, but also a communicant and co-inheritor of the divine glory.

My dear brethren, we who celebrate the holy commemoration of our Holy Father Onuphrius are called to study thoroughly his virtues, because in this Saint, as well as in all other Saints, the true light was revealed, that is, the redeeming truth of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Let us entreat our Holy Father Onuphrius who has boldness before the Lord, so that along with the intercessions of our Most-Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, may pray for the salvation of our souls. Amen! Many happy returns!"

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a procession to the tomb of Saint Iouvenalios, the first Patriarch of Jerusalem, the tomb of the renovator of the Monastery Hieromonk Cyril, and then a Trisagion was read for the repose of the souls of the Founders of the Monastery and of Nun Seraphima. The procession concluded with the prayer for the fruit.

At the end of the Liturgy, the renovator of the Monastery Reverend Nun Paisia hosted a reception for His Beatitude at the Hegoumeneion.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY OF THE RUSSIAN MISSIA

On Monday, May 31/ June 13 2022, the feast of the Holy Spirit was celebrated at the Church of the Holy Trinity of the Russian MISSIA of the Moscow Patriarchate, which is located in the New City of Jerusalem not far away from New Gate.

In this marvellous Church, the Divine Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with their Eminences, the Archbishop of Constantina Aristarchos, the Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the Head of the Russian MISSIA Archimandrite Alexander, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by the Church choir of the Nuns who serve at this Church, in the presence of a noble congregation of Russian and Arab-speaking faithful Christians.

His Beatitude delivered the following sermon to this congregation:

“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 Lord said to His Disciples.

Your Grace, Archimandrite Alexander, Representative in Jerusalem of H.H. Beatitude to the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Cyril,

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The Grace of the Comforter Spirit has gathered us all in the Holy Church in Jerusalem of the Ecclesiastical MISSIA of the

brotherly Church of Russia, to co-celebrate in Eucharist the All-holy and life-giving and Almighty Spirit, the One Person of the Triune God, Who is of one essence and glory with the Father and the Son.

According to Saint Gregory the Theologian, today “we celebrate Pentecost and the coming of the Spirit, and the time appointed for the promise and the fulfilment of hope. How great is the mystery! It is both exceeding great and most venerable” (Vespers, Sticheron 1).

Indeed, the fulfilment of the disciples by the Holy Spirit when they were gathered in the Upper Room is a great and most respected mystery (Acts 2:1-2). And this, on the one hand, because the Disciples “were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4), and on the other, because this Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who holds together the whole institution of the Church. According to the Lord’s word, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). And this “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” Saint Gregory theologises (Sunday of Pentecost, Matins, Praises, Troparion 2).

According to Saint Paul, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23). Referring to the various spiritual gifts, the wise Paul says: “All these [gifts] worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have

been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:11-13).

This one body in which we have been baptized, my dear brethren, is no other than the body of the Church, namely the body of Christ, in which we have been grafted through the gift and the communion of the Holy Spirit and we have put on the new man (ref. Col. 3:10). That is why Saint Cyril of Alexandria says regarding the Lord's word "it is better for you that I may go" (ref. John): "it is necessary for us to become communicants and partakers of the divine nature of the Word, or rather, to leave our own life and be transformed into another in newness of life which will be pleasing to God. However, this was impossible for us in any other way, but with the communion and participation in the Holy Spirit. And the most appropriate time for the sending down of the Holy Spirit to us was the time after the departure of our Saviour Christ".

The power of the Holy Spirit is the one which holds together the whole institution of the Church as the hymnographer says: "The Holy Spirit provideth all things; He gushed forth prophesy; 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" (Vespers, Sticheron 3).

Indeed, the Holy Spirit went down on the Apostles and made their hearts pure and installed in their deepest soul "a right spirit" which is the Holy Spirit, as Isychios interprets it. According to Origen, "at first the heart is made pure and immediately afterwards the Spirit is installed in the depths". As the psalmist says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

This right spirit is no other than the Spirit in unity and peace in Christ. This is the Spirit that sustains the unity among the faithful and the body of the Church according to Saint Paul's advice: "I, therefore, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called...Endeavouring to

keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:1-4). Likewise, Saint Ignatios the God-bearer urges the Christians of Philadelphia; "love unity, abstain from divisions; become imitators of Christ, as He became an imitator of His Father".

It is noteworthy also, that by the power of the Holy Spirit the Apostles spoke of the marvels of God in tongues, the languages of all the nations that lived in Jerusalem on the great day of Pentecost (ref. Acts 2:1-11).

The local Churches are called to project these wonders of God, namely "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3), as we live in a world of confusion and lawlessness and apostasy, paying heed to the hymnographer's voice: "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 tongues was wrought for punishment, but now the concord of tongues hath been inaugurated for the salvation of our souls" (Pentecost Vespers, Aposticha, Glory).

Let us, my dear brethren, as "children of the Church, full of light", entreat the Theotokos "who lent flesh to the Word", that by her intercessions the Spirit of Truth may dwell in us. And let us say along with the hymnographer: "Draw nigh unto us, draw nigh, Thou Who art everywhere present, and even as Thou art ever with Thine Apostles, so do Thou also unite to Thyself us who long for Thee, O Compassionate One, that being united with Thee, we may praise and glorify Thine All-holy Spirit" (Oikos). Amen. Many happy returns".

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a meal at the hotel Sergei near the MISSIA. His Beatitude delivered the following address there:

“Dear Father Alexander,

Mr Ambassador,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Beloved Monastics,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Today we have been blessed to celebrate once again the Divine Liturgy on the Monday of the Holy Spirit in this great church dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

As we have sung joyfully today:

When the Most High came down and confounded tongues of men,

He divined the nations.

When he dispensed the tongues of fire, he called all to unity,

And with one voice we glorify the Most Holy Spirit.

(Kontakion of the Feast)

So we rejoice in the unity to which we have been called in our beloved Orthodox Church.

We come to this feast today with the words of the Psalmist in our hearts:

Create in me a clean heart O God,

And put a new and right spirit within me.

(Ps. 50[51]:10)

We are commanded to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the

bond of peace, precisely because there is one body and one Spirit (Eph. 4:30).

As we gather here, we do so in the full realization of the challenges that we face in our world and in our Church. These challenges should come as no surprise to us because even in the scriptures we are given warnings.

In the Gospel of Saint Luke, we read that there will be *on the earth distress among nations, violence, fear and distress of every kind* (cf. Luke 20:20-28). Nor is the Church safe from such dangers, as Saint Paul warns that there should be *no divisions* (the Greek word is "schisms") *within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another* (1 Cor. 12:25).

We know full well that the truth is also of what Saint Paul goes on to say: *If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together* (1 Cor. 12:26).

But on this joyous celebration of the Holy Spirit, we are reminded of the freedom that is the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Church: Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor. 3:17). This is the freedom that is the guarantee of our peace and our unity, a freedom that is not just for the Church, but for all mankind. As the hymnographer reminds us at Pentecost the Most High called *all into unity*.

In our world today, people of religious faith, and especially Christians, are in many places under pressure. Globalization threatens the uniqueness of cultures, societies, and religious traditions. The Church of Jerusalem, as the Mother of all the Churches, gives her life for the unity of the Church, and down the ages, the Patriarchate has been the guardian and the guarantee of the Christian values of the Scriptures and the Holy Tradition. Just as our Lord Jesus Christ longed to gather the children of Jerusalem together as a mother hen gathers her

chicks under her wings, so the Church of Jerusalem has gathered her children for protection and succour (cf. Matt. 23:37).

At the first Pentecost, the people heard the disciples speak to them of the great deeds of God (Acts 2:11). This is the role of the mission of the Church of Jerusalem, to be a witness of the great deeds of God, and to embody in our life the freedom and the unity that are God's gifts to the Church and to the human family.

May God grant us all the Heavenly Comforter, the Spirit of truth, the treasury blessings which fill all things, so that we may reflect more clearly the freedom and unity to which we are called.

Thank you".

From Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY AT THE COMMUNITY TUR'AN OF GALILEE

On Sunday, May 23/ June 5, 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council in Nice, under the order of Constantine the Great, where they refuted Arius and established the doctrine of the One Essence of the Son with the Father as read in the Creed.

This feast was celebrated in all the Churches of the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate and at the Holy Church of Saint George the Trophy Bearer in the Community Tur'an of Galilee, near the town of Cana. The Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Dean Priest of the Community Fr Spyridon, Fr Simeon and other Arab-speaking and Russian Priests. The chanting was delivered by Archimandrite Artemios, the Hegoumen of Haifa, in Greek and the parish choir in Arabic. The Liturgy was attended by the Orthodox congregation of this parish which the Hagiotaphite Archimandrites Timotheos and Hilarion served in the past.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon in Greek and in Arabic and offered an icon to be kept in the Church:

“Making careful inquiry, with the Divine Spirit’s guidance, and joining together all knowledge of things spiritual, as the scribes of God, the august Fathers wrote that most blessed Symbol, the august Creed of our holy faith, wherein they clearly teach that, with His Begetter, the Word of God is also co-beginningless and is consubstantial with Him in truth. For these godly-minded all-glorious, and truly blessed Saints openly followed with fervent faith all that the Apostles taught” (Matins, Troparion 1 of the Fathers, Praises) the hymnographer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The Grace of the All-holy Spirit has guided our footsteps to your town Tur'an of Galilee, to co-celebrate today, on the seventh Sunday after Pascha the First Ecumenical Council of Nice, of the three-hundred and eighteen God-bearing Fathers in AD 325.

These God-bearing Fathers, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and through the hands of the Apostles, who bore the Spirit, became genuine descendants of Christ's Disciples and Apostles and Shepherds and Teachers of the Church as the most genuine servants of Christ, and followers of the Apostle's teachings, as the hymnographer says.

Today's Gospel narrative according to the Evangelist John refers to the Episcopal prayer that the Lord prays to God the Father for His disciples, saying: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:11-13).

In His prayer, our Lord Jesus Christ asks God the Father that His disciples may remain united in Him as well as with each other in the bond of love according to the prototype of the union of Christ the Son and Word of God with His Father. On the other hand, He asks His Father that the Disciples may have in them the perfect joy that He feels, as He returns to God the Father. Interpreting the Lord's word, "that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13), Saint Cyril of Alexandria wonders: "what is that fulfilled joy? To know and believe not only that Christ was human for us, but that He was human in everything among us except sin, and that He is the true God".

The Holy Church of Christ honours especially the God-bearing and Spirit-bearing Fathers because they fought like the Apostles of Christ for the unity of the faith, namely the steadfastness of the faith, and of course, for the unity of the Church, whose the whole institution is composed by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Fathers of the Church, my dear brethren, are those who set the doctrine of the one Triune God, one Trinity, of the same essence and divinity, and gave to the Church the mystery of Theology, which is the Holy Trinity, as the hymnographer of the Church says: "Let us acclaim today those mystical trumpets of the Spirit, namely the God-bearing Fathers, who, in the midst of the Church, sang a harmonious song of Theology, teaching that the Trinity is one, identical in essence and Godhead; they are the refuters of Arius and the foremost warriors of the Orthodox. And they ever intercede with the Lord that our souls find mercy" (Glory of Vespers).

The Fathers that convened the First Ecumenical Council in Nice in AD 325 refuted, as it is known, the heretic Arius, because along with those who had the same beliefs as him, he "erred concerning the truth" (ref. 2 Tim. 2:18). Therefore, we, my dear ones, are called to the same thing as the Holy Fathers, according to Saint Paul, so that we carefully follow his God-inspired words to his disciple: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker" (2 Tim. 2:15-17).

Indeed, my brethren, it is just like a canker that the irreverent messages of the "so-called" New Order are brought forth, the messages of the Globalization. The aim of the New Order is the denial of the principles and redeeming morals of the Gospel, namely the denial of Christ and His Name. "God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9). However, we should not be afraid, because our Lord Jesus Christ promised His Disciples before departing from them and ascending into the heavens: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18). I will not leave you alone, I will come in a short while to you through the other Comforter, namely the Spirit of Truth, which will abide in you and unite you with me as

members of mine.

Behold, therefore, why the Lord asks God the Father “that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves” (John 17:13). Christ is the joy of the Church and also the joy of those who love Him and commune with His precious Body and Blood. That is why He says, “enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt. 25:23). And according to Saint Paul, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace” (Gal. 5:22).

This joy of the Holy Spirit did the Most Blessed Mother of God enjoy when the Saviour fulfilled the mystery that had been hidden for centuries at His Ascension in the Heavens, as the hymnographer says: “for it was meet that she who, as should also partake of the surpassing joy of the glorification of Thy flesh, O Master, whereof we also have partaken through Thine Ascension to the Heavens, and we glorify Thy great mercy toward us” (Both Now, Aposticha Vespers). Moreover, “following the divine doctrines (of the Fathers) and believing with assurance, we worship, in one Godhead, the Father, Son and All-holy Spirit, the Trinity one in essence” (Glory, Aposticha of Vespers). Amen! Many happy returns.”

At the meal His Beatitude again addressed all present as follows:

“Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen” (Deuteronomy 10: 2021), the Holy Bible writes.

Honourable President and Respected members of the Ecclesiastical Committee,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Brethren,

Today's celebration of the Holy Fathers who convened the First Ecumenical Council in Nice in AD 325, which was under the order of the pious Emperor of the Rum Orthodox Christians Constantine the Great, has special importance for us Christians who live in the Holy Land and for the wider Middle East.

We say this because indeed the historical and great event of the First Ecumenical Council of the Church signified the precision of the Orthodox faith on the one hand, and on the other, it shaped the cultural and national-religious identity of the faithful members of the Church.

The First Ecumenical Council in Nice is the one that handed over to the Orthodox Church the name "Roumiye" and to the citizens of the Empire the title "Rum". And this is because the Church is the body of Christ and bears His name, "which is above all other name" (Phil. 2:9), and it had a super national character according to Saint Paul's teaching: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26-28).

This very unadulterated apostolic tradition of the faith which was kept by the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, as well as the spiritual grandeur of the cultural heritage of Romiosyni is carried out by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of all Churches.

The unceasing and living historical presence of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem throughout the centuries is the irrefutable witness of the Christian presence in the Holy Land and of the sacred institution of the Church which has been founded by the redeeming blood of Christ.

The God-bearing Fathers who gathered from all parts of the

earth in Nice gave the doctrine of our Orthodox faith and Theology, namely the doctrine of the Holy Trinity through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and not through contemplative reasonings and philosophical inventions, as Saint Gregory the Theologian says: “we theologise with the simplicity of the fishermen’s faith”.

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem, my dear brethren, is not only the point of reference for us Christians, but also the guarantee of our existence according to the Lord’s word: “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).

Let our boast then be the God of our Fathers and the Church of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who was Ascended into the Heavens and has not been separated from us. Many happy and blessed returns. Amen!”

At noon the Community hosted a meal for His Beatitude and the members of His Entourage.

After the meal the couple Abu Rami and Im-Rami honoured at their house the Patriarchal Entourage with a variety of delicacies.

From Secretariat-General

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE GOD-CROWNED SOVEREIGNS AND EQUAL

TO THE APOSTLES CONSTANTINE AND HELEN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, May 21/ June 3, 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy glorious God-crowned and equal to the Apostles Constantine and Helen.

On this feast the Church celebrates that after Constantine the Great accepted the Holy Baptism, and received the sign that appeared in the sky for him with the Cross writing "be victorious with this" and made it an emblem for his army, he defeated the followers of Maxentius and recognized Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Country. His mother Helen came to Jerusalem and discovered the Holy Cross and the places of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, inaugurating Constantine's Rum-Christian era from AD 326-336.

This feast was celebrated at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen of the Brotherhood, with Great Vespers on Thursday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Friday morning, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with the ministering Priests of the Church, with first in rank the Typikon Keeper Archimandrite Alexios. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, representatives from the Patriarchates of Moscow and Romania, many pilgrims and local faithful.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Patriarchal Entourage headed to the Patriarchate Reception Hall via the Central Monastery gate and received the small loaves of bread that had been prepared by the baker Nun Seraphima.

There 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 he was 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 Evangelos Vlioras,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Noble Christians

Today the Holy Church of Christ, and especially the Church of Jerusalem most joyfully celebrates the sacred commemoration of the Holy glorious God-crowned and great sovereigns Constantine and Helen, who became equal to Christ’s Apostles and Fathers of Romiosyni, as well as founders of the beautiful Monasteries and magnificent Churches around the shrines of the Holy Land, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, among others.

Constantine the Great received the calling from the Lord and the knowledge from the Holy Spirit and significantly contributed to the recognition not only of the Christian faith as the official religion of the Empire but also the support of the institution of God’s Church.

Two primary events point out the contribution of Constantine the Great in his grandiose work for the Church; First, the invitation of the distinguished Church Fathers at the First Ecumenical Council of Nice in AD 325, which condiment the heresy of Arianism. Second, the pilgrimage of his mother Helen to the Holy Land and the greatest of her achievements, the discovery of the wood of the Precious Cross, along with the establishment of the Order of the Studios (“Spoudaioi” in Greek, referring to those who endeavoured in studying the teachings of Christ), namely of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

Let us hear at this point the words written in a letter by Constantine the Great to the Persian King Sepori about the care of the people of God: "By keeping the divine faith I earn the light of truth. Guided by the light of truth I gain consciousness of the divine faith" (Eusebius on Constantine the Great, Book 4, ch.9). And in another letter to the Bishop Makarios of Jerusalem about the construction of the Holy Sepulchre, he writes: "It is righteous to beautify the value of the most marvellous place in the world".

Needless to say, the Christian character of the Holy Land and of Jerusalem is entirely attributed to the God-inspired initiative and actions of the Holy Sovereigns Constantine and Helen.

Honouring all these gratefully, our Holy Church of Jerusalem, for their commemoration held the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy at the Monastic Church dedicated to them, rendering thus a thanksgiving Doxology to the Holy Triune God.

And let us say along with the hymnographer, Constantine most respected, along with your pious mother Helen, pray to Christ our God to grant remission of sins to those who celebrate your holy commemoration. Amen. Many Happy returns!

At noon there was a festal monastic meal.

From Secretariat-General

MEETING OF HIS BAETITUDE

PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS III WITH A DELEGATION FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, along with Latin Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Melkite Greek Catholic Bishop Yasser Ayyash, and Rev. Don Binder on behalf of the Episcopal Diocese, met on Wednesday evening, June 1, with a delegation from the European Union, and took turns discussing the reality of the hardships Christians endure on daily basis in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

During the meeting which was held at the Imperial Hotel in Jerusalem, and was followed by a dinner, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III delivered the following speech:

*“Respected Members of the European Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Experts in the MENA Region,
Beloved Fellow Heads of the Churches,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We welcome you warmly to the Imperial Hotel and to the historic pilgrims’ gateway to the Holy Sepulchre in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

We are deeply encouraged by your visit, and we wish to commend you on your desire to consult with the Heads of the Churches and Christian Communities of the Holy Land, especially at this time when the integrity of

this region and the future of the Christian presence here are uncertain as at no other period in our lifetime.

For centuries this Holy City and the Holy Land, and indeed the entire region of the Middle East has been the home to a great civilisation. This region of the divine-human encounter has woven a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious tapestry of peoples that is at the heart of our collective identity. This rich heritage, in which Jews, Christians, and Muslims have grown and lived side by side for generations, is being undermined by a fresh and destructive radicalism on the part of those who wish to see this great tapestry picked apart.

The challenges that we face are serious and pernicious, for they strike at the heart of our uniqueness. As is well known, we face the provocations of radical groups that seek to make this city and this region exclusively their own. We are meeting this evening in the great focal point of this conflict, which is the Imperial Hotel, which is next door to the Petra Hotels, which are the target of Israeli radical groups to make permanent changes in the Christian Quarter of this Quarter. Furthermore, another entrance to the Christian Quarter, the New Gate, which also leads to the Holy Sepulchre, is under the same pressure and condition. The consequences of their intention are incalculable and will change the character of this City forever, to the detriment of the Christian presence. Our mission is always to keep the Holy City open to all, without distinction or discrimination.

We face other challenges, including the consequences of the ongoing pandemic, the economic situation, the

restrictions that Christians are facing from the political situation, and the lack of opportunity for our young people to aspire to a better future.

We have only one mission; to ensure the integrity of the Christian character of the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and to do all that we can to enable the Christian presence in this region to remain here and flourish. We believe that our historic experience as those who have built this multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society together with our Jewish and Muslim sisters and brothers who also understand the reality of our region, has the capacity to maintain this identity on which centuries of common life have been built.

This mission is not just for ourselves alone. This historic identity of the Holy Land is of enduring importance to our world. Here are the seeds of a genuine, stable, and strong diverse society that can be a model for others. And because of the religious significance of this region for the three Abrahamic traditions, which make up the majority of the religions of the world, the future of our world is directly related to the future of this region.

The Heads of the Churches have always been ready, and continue to stand ready, to work with the European Union and your respective governments, as well as with all sides of our society in this region, for lasting solutions to the challenges that we face, so that the unique witness of this land of the divine-human encounter, which brings hope to the countless millions of people every day, might be an example of encouragement to all.

Once again, we thank you for your visit to us, and

with eagerness, we look forward to working in close collaboration with you.

Thank you”.

From Secretariat-General







