

# DOXOLOGY FOR THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY OF 25 MARCH 1821 AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, 12/25 March 2021, the Patriarchate held a Doxology at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 25 March 1821 Revolution.

The Doxology was offered as a thanksgiving to God for His strengthening of our Nation's struggle to be liberated from the four hundred years of slavery to the Ottoman Empire.

After the Doxology, there was a supplication for the repose of the souls of those who fought and gave their lives in this sacred fight, Chieftains, Generals, simple soldiers and national martyrs.

The Doxology was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Hieromonks and Hierodeacons, and the co-prayer of Monks and laity, members of the Church and the Greek Community, along with the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and members of the Consulate.

After the Doxology, at the Great Reception Hall of the Patriarchate, His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“You must guard your faith and consolidate it because when we took the arms, we said first in favour of faith and then in favour of the Homeland!” (From the speech of the Elder of Morias Theodoros Kolokotronis in Pnika, 13 November 1988).

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,  
Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

## Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Today's Anniversary of March 25 is of particular importance, because this year 2021, marks two hundred years since the pinnacle of modern Greek history, that is, the beginning of the Greek Revolution of 1821.

The Revolution of 1821 is undoubtedly a bright milestone not only for the Greek but also for world history. And this, because as Theodoros Kolokortonis says, "When we decided to start the Revolution, we did not think about how many we were, nor that we do not have arms ... but the desire for our freedom fell on all of us like the rain, and our clergy and the leaders ... we all agreed on this goal and made the Revolution".

The "desire of freedom", namely the reason for the existence of freedom which is imprinted in the hearts and minds of the Greeks, is no other than the reason for the existence of freedom in Christ. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1), Saint Paul preaches. This freedom in Christ was impossible to be kept under the power of darkness (Col. 1:13), the barbaric conquest and tyranny of the Ottomans.

We say this because the shaking off of the Ottoman yoke of slavery was not a simple act of heroism and self-sacrifice, but rather an act of imitation of the martyrs of the love of Christ. "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Psalm 66:12).

The revolt of the fighters of Romiosyni was an act of primary motivation, that is, of class and commonwealth. This is also confirmed by the slogan of the national uprising phrased by the Elder of Morias, Theodoros Kolokotronis: "now our fight is for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the homeland", as well as by the great contribution of the Church with both

its upper and lower rank clergy. Hegoumens and simple Monks of many Monasteries became prototypes of a holocaust. They sacrificed themselves watering the tree of freedom with their sacred blood. "Freedom and Romiosyni are twin brothers", the established poet Ioannis Ritsos says.

The Revolution of 1821 demonstrated the idiosyncrasy of the Greeks, which has been forged by the moral and spiritual values of the Greek-Christian frame of mind; a frame of mind that had endured insults and humiliation due to slavery for four centuries, and finally led to the libating blare of Rigas Feraios "freedom or death". As for the Church, which is the incarnation of the Greek-Christian frame of mind, it became "the centre and constituent of national life ... not as a power over the people and organization, but as an inner force and power, enlivening the national body, uniting its members through the common faith and coordinating its actions" according to the speech of memorable Metropolitan Dionysios of Kozani, on the contribution of the Church during the 1821 Revolution.

The 200th Anniversary of the National Rebirth, celebrated this year, should not be considered merely as a remarkable genealogical of historical memory, but rather as an inexhaustible source of enlightening power that illuminates the soul and mind of all who want to come to the knowledge of the truth, or according to Paul, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:12).

Our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and We, according to Saint Paul's words: "as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor. 6:9-10), "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep" (Romans 13:11), went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where we rendered thanksgiving praise and Doxology, as we should, to the Holy Trinitarian God, on the commemoration of the Rebirth of our Noble Nation of the Rum Orthodox. We also prayed for the eternal repose in

the land of the living of the souls of those who fought and gloriously fell for the country, in the sacred fights of the noble nation of the Rum Orthodox and suffered a martyr's death.

For these, let us raise Our glass in a toast and rightfully exclaim:

Long live 25 March 1821!

Long live the noble and Royal nation of the Rum Orthodox!

Long live Hellas!

Long live the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!"

The Consul General also delivered the following address:

"Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend Archbishops,

Reverend Fathers,

Dear Colleagues,

Dear Students,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today marks the 200th anniversary of the leading historical moment in the long course of our Nation, the proclamation of the Revolution of '21, which had as its happy occasion the founding of the modern Greek State and the rebirth of democracy in its cradle.

In every historical period, there is a pole, a historical event that marks it, and becomes a point of reference for all of us later. March 25, 1821, is this milestone in the history of Hellenism, the Balkans, Europe, because the Greeks made the heroic decision to rise up, alone against many, against the

Ottoman tyranny and to claim Freedom with their blood.

It is, therefore, a special honour for the Consul General of the Motherland to address the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Hellenism of the Holy Land, on the occasion of the two hundredth anniversary of the Revolution of 1821, a struggle for altars and hearths, a reference point and symbol for the Greek Nation.

It was spring even two centuries ago when Hellenism took up the sacred arms to claim its freedom. This unsurpassed grandeur of the Greeks' ideal adored as a whole, the ordinary fighters and the Sailors, the Holy Clergy, the merchants and the scribes. "We all have this homeland together, both the wise and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the politicians and the military and the smallest people," wrote the voice of our collective conscience, General Makrygiannis.

The seeds of the Revolution first took root in areas far from present-day Greece, in Russia, and in the Balkans, where free Greeks were active. The course, however, was not easy. The martyrdom of Rigas and his collaborators from all parts of Hellenism: Ioannis Karatzas (31 years old, a scholar from Nicosia), Efstatios Argentis (31 years old, a merchant from Chios), Dimitrios Nikolidis (32 years old, a doctor from Ioannina), Antonios Koronios (27 years old, a merchant from Chios), Theocharis Georgios Tourountzias (22 years old, a merchant from Siatista), Ioannis Emmanouil (24 years old, a medical student from Kastoria) and Panagiotis Emmanouil (22 years old, Ioannis'brother), in the Neboisa Tower, a riverside fortress in Belgrade, [their martyrdom] inspired the founding of the Friendly Society in Odessa, which spread the seeds of the Revolution.

The vision and expectations of the pioneers of the Revolution, the known and unknown heroes who sacrificed their lives under conditions unimaginable to us today, inspired the enslaved Hellenism and all lovers of freedom around the world, creating

the philhellenic movement which shocked Europe and America. It is worth mentioning the case of Haiti, which was the first country to officially recognize our Revolution, sending 100 volunteers and a shipment of 25 tons of coffee to Adamantios Korais to be sold in Paris and the profit to be used to buy weapons for the Revolution.

There are countless examples of heroism and sacrifice above duty during our National Uprising.

Let us consider indicatively the battle of the Hierolochites in the battle of Dragatsani, one of the most moving moments in Greek history, in February 1821, when the Hierolochites sacrificed themselves to one, always faithful to their oath. A valuable exhibit in the Historical Museum of Athens is the black uniform of a Hierolochitis of Dragatsani where the blood with which the fighter grafted the tree of our freedom has been imprinted.

So, we rightly repeat for them the lyrics of our great poet Andreas Kalvos:

*“Ας μη βρέξει ποτέ το σύννεφον  
και ο άνεμος σκληρός,  
ας μην σκορπίσει  
το χώμα το μακάριον  
που σας σκεπάζει”*

Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend Archbishops,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year 2021 revives our hopes for the decomposition of the

current infectious disease. At the same time, for us Greeks everywhere, it is charged with an additional powerful historical symbolism.

The 200th anniversary of our National Rebirth invites us to reflect on the successes and challenges of our National life, and to arm ourselves with courage and perseverance to respond to modern challenges based on the legacy bequeathed to us by the struggle of heroic protagonists of our freedom.

Our National Anniversaries are not just an opportunity to celebrate the past, but they are key points that bring back to our minds the events that forged and shaped the collective historical memory of Greeks everywhere. The vision and values that inspired our freedom fighters can only inspire and guide our action today. Values that acquire an additional sense of timeliness for Hellenism, which is called today as then to defend its national dignity and survival.

For the Holy Land, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, as an integral part of our Orthodox faith and Hellenism, has been and remains a point of reference, guardian of the moral and spiritual values of Greek and Orthodox witness (martyria) in the Holy Land as a source of life and hope.

Today's anniversary underscores the unwavering willingness of Greeks everywhere to uphold our freedom, independence and national pride, knowing full well that the price of freedom is always high and that our country is blessed because there are always those who will willingly pay for this price.

With these thoughts, I invite everyone to exclaim;

Long live March 25, 1821!

Long live Greece!"

---

# SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

Sunday 8/21 March 2021 was celebrated as the Sunday of Orthodoxy by the Patriarchate, the victory of the restoration of the holy icons, as established by the Triodion of the Church according to the 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synod (AD 787) with the contribution of Empress Theodora, her son Mihail and of Patriarch Methodios of Constantinople.

## 1. Vespers

This feast was celebrated by the Patriarchate as 'Parresia' (boldness) according to the Status Quo, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with Great Vespers on Saturday afternoon. The ninth hour was read at the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen before the Patriarchal Entourage was welcomed at the Holy Deposition of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with the incense offering procedure. This was followed by the veneration of the All-holy Tomb and the Horrendous Golgotha by the Archbishops and the members of the Holy Synod, the incense offering around the Shrines, the Great Entrance and the Blessing of Bread. The Service was led in prayer by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-prayer of the Archbishops in the Holy Altar, the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon on the right and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the left, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and a few Nuns due to covid-19 restrictions.

## 2. On the Feast Day

On Sunday of Orthodoxy, the Divine Liturgy was officiated at

the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences: Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Philoumenos of Pela and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Nectarios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon on the right and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the left, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and a few Nuns and faithful Christians.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a procession with the holy icons three times around the Sacred Edicule and then around the shrines and concluded with the reading of the Synodical memorial service in Greek and in Arabic of those who venerate the holy icons and the anathema of their opposers.

Bells tolling, the Patriarchal Entourage and the congregation returned to the Patriarchate Reception Hall, where His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“Celebrate, rejoice the people of Christ, seeing the Church shining by the form of the divine beauty; which God put upon Himself as man, in order to save us,” Saint Theodore of the Studion says. (Triodion, Sunday of Orthodoxy, Matins, Ode 7, Troparion 3).

Beloved Brethren,

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Noble Christians

Today the Holy Church of the Orthodox Christians celebrates the restoration of the holy icons by the memorable Sovereigns of Constantinople Mihail and Theodora his mother, along with the Holy Patriarch of Constantinople and Confessor Methodios.

This event of the restoration of the holy icons is a historic landmark in Church life. Because, after the passing of just over three centuries of the formation of the doctrine regarding the Divine Providence, which is the beyond nature union of the divine with the human nature in our Lord Jesus Christ, the weeds of Nestorianism sprang forth, along with their derivatives, Monophysitism and Monothelitism.

The icons depict the incarnation of God the Word in essence, as Saint Theodore of the Studion says: "The uncircumscribed Word of the Father became circumscribed, taking flesh from thee, O Theotokos, and He has restored the sullied image to its ancient glory, filling it with the divine beauty. This our salvation we confess in deed and word, and we depict in it the holy icons" (Kontakion of Sunday of Orthodoxy).

The restoration of the icons is a confession of our salvation in Christ, through Christ. The restoration, or rather the veneration of the holy icons does not refer to their material part, but to the depicted person or Biblical event; "We do not offer worship to the material thing. The honour of the icon is attributed to the prototype", Saint John Damascene teaches, referring to the words of the Great Church Father, Saint Basil.

In other words, the honour we offer to the icons is attributed to the person depicted, the prototype. This truth was proclaimed by the God-bearing Fathers of the Church in the Ecumenical Synod of Nice, where they decided that those who kiss the icon and honourably worship it receive sanctification. "Those of us who offer our worship only to God, also have the hope of receiving the sanctification from all those material things that are dedicated to Him, whether they are a divine type of the Holy Cross, the Holy Gospel, the sacred icons, or the sacred utensils, and we kiss and embrace them" (Mansi 13,269,309).

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him

in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). However, honourably, we also venerate all the created things through which God worked our salvation, as for example, the manger, the Cave, the place of the Crucifixion and of the three-day Burial and Resurrection, as well as everything that is dedicated to God. “Not for their nature, but because they are vessels of the Divine energy...and angels, and people and every material creation that has become a vessel of the Divine energy, and has served for my salvation, I respect and venerate for the Divine energy that exists in them” Saint John Damascene teaches in precision (PG. 94, 1353).

By the Divine Grace, surrounded by the reverend members of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, Archbishops, Hieromonks and Deacons, we have celebrated the great sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and held a procession with the holy icons and the Sacred Cross at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, proclaiming thus the redeeming glory of the impeccable Orthodox Faith. Moreover, we prayed before the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb for the unity of the Orthodox Churches and for the liberation of humanity from the deadly infectious covid-19 disease.

We wish you many happy returns and a blessed Easter. Amen.”

**From Secretariat-General**

---

**THE FIRST STASIS OF THE  
AKATHIST AT THE CHURCH OF THE**

# HOLY SEPULCHRE

On Friday evening of the first week of Lent, 6/19 March 2021, the Service of the Salutations of our Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

This included the Small Compline and then the Canon of the Akathist was chanted by Hierodeacon Simeon on the right and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the left. His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos recited the first stasis of the Salutations and at the end of the Service addressed the faithful as follows:

“All creatures were sore amazed at thy divine and great glory, Maid, O pure Virgin, who hast not known wedlock; for thou didst hold in thy womb the God of all, and gavest birth to the timeless Son, Who doth grant salvation unto all them that acclaim thy name” (Heirmos of the Akathist, Ode five). (And in simple words; the whole creation remained in ecstasy because of your divine glory. Because, You, Virgin, who did not have the experience of marriage, conceived God in Your womb, Who dominates over all things, and bore the timeless Son, Who gives salvation as a present to all those who praise You). These are the words of the hymnographer of Theotokos, Saint John Damascene.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The God-bearing Church Fathers established that every week of the Great Lent we would exclaim the “Rejoice” of Archangel Gabriel, namely the Salutations to the Theotokos and Mother of God the Word, the Most Blessed and Ever-Virgin Mary.

In Theotokos Mary of Nazareth, we praise, bless and glorify the message of the unspeakable mystery of the divine providence, namely the incarnation of God the Word, our Lord

Jesus Christ. This mystery of the “reconciliation of men to God” (Romans 5:10), as Saint Andrew of Crete says, is what we celebrate, the union of God with man, the deification of the human nature that He took upon Himself, the ascension into the heavens.”

Behold why the hymnographer through Archangel Gabriel’s mouth exclaims to the Theotokos: “Rejoice, thou through whom joy shall shine forth. Rejoice, thou through whom the curse shall be blotted out. Rejoice, thou the Restoration of fallen Adam. Rejoice, thou the redemption of the tears of Eve”(Beginning of the Salutations). And again why “all creatures were sore amazed at they divine and great glory, Maid, O pure Virgin”.

The Most Holy and Ever-Virgin Mary is the One who through Her obedience to the Will of God, “behold the maid of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to Thy will” (Luke 1:38), liberated the fallen Adam from the curse, through his recall, and Eve from her tears.

In other words, the curse and the consequence of the fall and disobedience of Adam introduced humankind to the death of sin, as Saint Paul says: “as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). “By his [Adam’s] fall”, Saint Chrysostom says, “even those who did not eat from the wood [of life] became mortals, just like him”.

The Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, by the birth of God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ through Her pure flesh, became the Mother of Life, and Christ is the Life. “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:25-26) the Lord says. Behold therefore why the hymnographer exclaims “O pure Virgin, who hast not known wedlock; for thou didst hold in thy womb the God of all, and gavest birth to the timeless Son, Who doth grant salvation unto all them that acclaim thy name”.

Because the timeless Son and Word of God received our human nature from the Virgin Mary and reshaped it in Himself, Christ grants salvation as a gift to all those who praise in honour the Theotokos, His Mother. “Thy womb bore God for us, fashioned in our shape. O Theotokos, pray to Him as the Creator of all, that we may be justified through thine intercessions” (Triodion, Wednesday of the first week, Great Compline, Ode 6, Theotokion) Saint Andrew of Crete says in his hymn.

Indeed my dear brethren, the whole creation, the logical and illogical nature is sore amazed before the majesty and incomprehensible mystery of the Ever-Virgin Mary. That is why the hymnographer cries out loud: “Rejoice, thou Initiate of the ineffable counsel. Rejoice, thou Faith in that which demandeth silence” (Salutations).

In other words, the Theotokos became a communicant of the “ineffable counsel of God” on the one hand and a prototype of obedience in faith on the other. “Faith is sustained only by obedience. And when God orders [us] to obey, there is no need for explanations” Saint John of Damascene says.

We are also called to this, to the obedience of our Orthodox faith, and to our participation in the Holy Pascha through fasting and repentance. Along with the hymnographer, let us entreat the Most Blessed Theotokos and Mother of God and say: “I have lost the beauty and glory with which I was first created; and now I lie naked and ashamed” (Triodion, Wednesday of the first week, Great Compline, Ode B: 4). O Theotokos the hope and protection of those who sing thy praises, take from me the heavy yoke of sin, and pure Lady, accept me in repentance” (Triodion, Wednesday of the first week, Great Compline, Ode 1, Theotokion). Amen! Have a blessed period of the Great Lent.”

The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras with the Consulate staff and

his family.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# **THE FEAST OF SAINT GERASIMUS OF THE JORDAN AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Thursday of the 1<sup>st</sup> Week of Lent, 5/18 March 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated by transference the commemoration of our Holy Father Gerasimus of the Jordan at his Holy Monastery, in the desert of the river Jordan, at a short distance from the river's estuaries towards the Dead Sea, on the West Bank.

This Monastery was founded by Saint Gerasimus when he came to the Holy Land from his hometown Lycia of Asia Minor, at the time of the Monophysites' turbulences in AD 451.

For a short while Saint Gerasimus was influenced by the Monophysites' groups, but Saint Euthymius the Great returned him to the Orthodox faith and since then they co-operated and Saint Gerasimus became an enlightened spiritual guide in this Monastery. The Monastery was a Coenobium and a Lavra at the same time with thousands of Monks and laity, and the Saint was granted by God the gifts of healing, wonder-working and clairvoyance, as well as the grace to tame wild animals, a fact that is depicted in his icon with the lion.

In this Monastery the Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts was celebrated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with co-celebrants their Eminences;

Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba and Hierodeacon Simeon. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and only a few faithful due to covid-19 restrictions.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“The righteous man shall flourish like a palm tree, and like a cedar in Lebanon shall he be multiplied” (Psalm 91:11), the Psalmist says.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The Jordan desert is rejoicing because the holy commemoration of the Righteous man of God, our God-bearing Father Gerasimus the anchorite, who came from Lycia, has flourished today. The Monastery bearing his name is also rejoicing, the Lavra of old, where the Grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all, in order to glorify God in Eucharist, the One who has glorified those who glorify Him.

Paying heed to the Lord’s words: “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35); “And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37); Saint Gerasimus retreated to the deeper desert of Thebes and then to the blessed desert of the Jordan, where “he shone like a luminary and sowed the seeds of reverence” Saint Cyril of Scythopolis says.

Having become an imitator “of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises [of the Kingdom]” (Hebrews

6:12), Saint Gerasimus was established as a famous habitant of the Jordan and co-citizen of the Great ascetics, Euthymius the Great, Savvas the Sanctified, Saints Martyrios and Theoktistos and many other anchorites of the Judea desert, who followed the advice of King-Prophet David: "Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face evermore. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth" (Psalm 105:4-5).

Contemporary to him writers, who were also eye-witnesses to his manner of living, present God-bearing Gerasimus not only as "a lover of the things beyond this world", but also as "a charity treasury" and "a temple of meekness". In addition to other mortifications of the human passions, the Saint would pass the whole Great Lent without any food but the Holy Communion, for which reason he attained to the height of the vision of the divine glory, as his hymnographer says: "The ladder of divine virtue, thou didst scale with ardour, and thou didst attain to the height of divine noetic vision, receiving reflections pure and clear revealing the divine mysteries of Christ. Hence we honour thee with piety, as we cry, Gerasimus, thou God-bearer: Glory to Christ, Who hath given thee strength. Glory to Him Who hath crowned thee. Glory to Him Who worketh healings for all through thee" (Minaion, March 4, Matins, Sessional Hymn, tone 1).

The noetic vision our Holy Father Gerasimus attained, is no other than the vision of the glory of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who asked His Father not only for those who believed in Him but also for those who would believe in Him through their words [the Disciples' preaching] "... [24] that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:20-24).

Interpreting these words of the Lord, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "the vision of Christ's glory will neither be granted to the profane and the sinners, nor to those who

defile the divine Law, but only to the holy and the benign. And we know this because Prophet Isaiah says: "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord" (Isaiah 26:10). And in His Gospel preaching, Christ says: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). And who are those who are able to have a pure heart? Without doubt, those who through their union with God, which is made through the Son by the Holy Spirit, have refrained from any kind of love of the flesh, and abhorred worldly desires to the highest level possible. They have refused their lives and submitted them to the will of the Holy Spirit, following Christ's manner of living in purity and in all other manners. Saint Paul was one of them, who in his utmost purity did not hesitate to say: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

To our question, in what manner do the Holy and the meek, the pure in heart achieve their union with God, or better say, their deification, the established Church Father Cyril replies: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17:23). For the Son becomes one with us, in flesh, as a man, joined to us with a mystical blessing; and spiritually, as God with the energy and grace of the Holy Spirit, which regenerates the spirit in us towards a new life and makes us communicants of His divine nature". The link of our unity with God the Father is always the Son, our Holy Father Cyril remarks. "We complete our unity with God the Father through the intercessor Christ".

It is precisely this divine completion in Christ, through the intercessor Christ, that Saint Gerasimus achieved, through his ascetic striving of fasting, abstinence, unceasing prayer and defeating hordes of demons, as his hymnographer says: "with the assaults of thy prayers, thou didst valiantly pierce the hordes of demons, through with wounds, O Gerasimus, and didst

praise Christ the Son of God” (Matins, Ode 5, Troparion 3).

Today’s festive commemoration of our Holy Father Gerasimus in his Monastery, in this first week of Lent, and amidst the pandemic plague of covid-19, urges us, my dear brethren, through Saint Paul’s advice: “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others [who do not know Christ]; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:6-8). And this is so, because as the hymnographer says: “The wealth of the grace of the Holy Spirit is offered unto all who gather it by the labours of abstinence” (Matins, Ode 9, Troparion 2).

Let us entreat our Holy Father Gerasimus and say along with the hymnographer: “He that became flesh of Thine all-holy blood, O immaculate Lady, Himself purgeth us of defilements of the flesh through fasting and labours, giving us strength by Thine unceasing entreaties, O Virgin Theotokos” (Matins, Ode 8, Theotokion). So that in repentance, humility and patience we may reach the luminous Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and be co-resurrected with Him. To Him belongs the glory and the might unto the ages. Amen.”

After the Divine Liturgy, the hardworking and hospitable Hegoumen Archimandrite Chrysostom hosted a fasting meal for the Patriarchal Entourage and the congregation.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS III AT A PASTORAL TELE- COMMUNICATION WITH THE FLOCK OF JORDAN**

On Tuesday, 24 February /9 March 2021, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos had a pastoral telecommunication through zoom with His Eminence Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis and the Clergy of Jordan.

The opening of the teleconference was done by His Beatitude with the following address:

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12); Saint Paul advises his disciple Timothy and through him, every single one of the Pastors of Christ’s Church.

Beloved Brethren in Christ and Reverend Fathers,

By the grace of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, we have entered the preliminary period of the Great Lent, leading to the Holy Pascha. This is linked to the Book ‘Triodion’ of the Church, where, in a form of advising hymns, we hear the redeeming and divine words of the Holy Scriptures, along with the words of the Holy Fathers, the great and God-inspired teachers and theologians of the Church.

The Book of “Triodion” and the preliminary stage of Lent begins with the known Gospel parables of the Lord about “The Publican and the Pharisee” and of “The Prodigal Son”. Denoted in these parables are the basic virtues of the Christian

faith, 'humility' and 'repentance', which guide man to the light of Christ's truth.

To the reasonable question, 'what is humility?' the holy writers of the New Testament answer referring to the Prophet Isaiah who says: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he, not his mouth... In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away" (Acts 8:32-33, Isaiah 53:7-8). In other words, the righteousness of Christ was elevated through His humility, as Saint Paul preaches: "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit" (1 Tim. 3:16).

And according to Saint John of the Ladder, humility, which is revealed in a mystic way and abolishes the passions, is "the anonymous grace of the soul, which can be named only by those who have experienced it. It is an unspeakable wealth, the name of God, a gift of God, since He says: 'Learn not by an Angel, nor by any man, but by me', meaning, by my habitation in you, and my illumination and energy within you, "for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:29).

As for the question; "what is repentance?", the Holy writers answer again through the Lord's words: "And Jesus answering said unto them [the Pharisees], They that are whole need, not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32). Interpreting these words, Saint Theophylactos says: "I have not come to call the righteous, namely, us who justify ourselves on our own, but I have come to call the sinners, so that they will not remain in sin, but are led to repentance".

According to Saint Chrysostom, repentance is the medicine to our salvation. Repentance is not only preached by words but confirmed by actions, washing away the filth of irreverence". Let us also hear the words of Saint John of the Ladder: "Repentance is the renewal of baptism. Repentance is an

agreement with God for a new life. Repentance is the buyer of humility. Repentance is the thought of self-condemnation; carelessness for all things and care for the salvation of ourselves. Repentance is the daughter of hope and the renunciation of despair. To be repentant means to be a convict free from shame".

From the above, it is shown that through repentance, the Prodigal Son became the buyer of the Publican's humility, while through his humility, the Publican became the buyer of the Prodigal Son's repentance.

Beloved Fathers and Brethren, your Priestly Assembly under our Bishop and Patriarchal Representative in Amman, and through him, under Our Mediocrity, is not a simple gathering, but "a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:12), of the unity in Christ of our Holy Church and of our good works, as the Bible says: "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king" (1 Peter 2: 12-17).

Precisely because God's will is our freedom, which we gained through our baptism, the God-inspired Church Fathers established the period of the Holy Lent, in order to prevent us from despair and indolence. "Despair leads us to worse things than indolence," Saint Chrysostom says. And despair makes man a slave of his sin and discourages him from following the path of freedom, namely the Pascha of his co-

resurrection with Christ. "For even Christ, our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7), Saint Paul preaches. Again, Saint Paul urges us: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col.3:1-3).

Dear holy Fathers and Brethren, the infinite mercy of God and the Grace of the Holy Spirit have made us workers in the vineyard and ministers of the ark of salvation, which is His Church, in order to "rule well, and be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward" (1 Tim. 5:17-18). This is also our Priesthood's mission, as shepherds of logical sheep, so that we may "shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15), applying the words of the Gospel and fighting the good fight of our Orthodox faith, and confessing Christ, Crucified and Resurrected from the dead, especially at the current crucial time of the Covid-19 pandemic plague.

Let us entreat the physician of our souls and bodies, our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, that through the intercessions of our Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, we may be deemed worthy to go through the period of the Blessed Great Lent, in fasting, repentance and humility, and be granted the vision of the glory of the Unweaning Light of the luminous Resurrection of our Saviour Christ; the might of His Kingdom be blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen!"

Further to this communication, Archbishop Christophoros and the Clergy informed His Beatitude on the matters of the flock of Jordan, under the shadow of the covid-19 pandemic, and received His instructions on overcoming the difficulties and achieving spiritual progress and social improvement of the services helping the flock. Instructions both spiritual and

material, for the benefit of the souls of the faithful, especially now, at the beginning of the beneficial fast of the Great Lent.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS CELEBRATES THE D. LITURGY AT ST ONUPHRIOS' MONASTERY**

On Meat fare Sunday, 22 February / 7 March, 2021, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of Saint Onuphrius' Monastery.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the Sunday of the commemoration of the Last Judgement of God, according to the Gospel narrative of the Second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Monastery of Saint Onuphrius is located opposite Silouan's pool, at the potter's field, which was bought by the Jews with the thirty pieces of silver that Judas returned to them, when he repented his action of betrayal; this field was bought for the burial of the foreigners.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences the Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth and Joachim of Helenoupolis, the Hagiotaphite Archimandrites Nectarios and Mattheos and Archdeacon Mark.

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

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?... And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:37-40).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The Gospel narrative of this Sunday of the Last Judgement refers to the Second Coming of the Lord and the Last Judgement: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matt. 25:31-33) the Lord says.

Interpreting these words, Zigavinos says: “Therefore [the Lord] narrates all things regarding His Second coming to invoke fear and correction to those who hear Him”. And Saint Chrysostom says: “Now they are not excommunicated ones, but all people are mixed together; however, their division then will be with exact precision”. And Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: “The sheep denote the chorea of the reverend faithful, who are loaded with the fruits of righteousness, just like the sheep are loaded with their wool”.

Referring to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, Saint Peter says: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:10-13).

The Chief of the Apostles Peter urges us to keep ourselves clean from the world in all our communication in it, as well as to train ourselves in reverence and every virtue. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Peter 3:11). And again, Saint Peter advices thus: "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14).

In these fatherly words of Saint Peter we distinguish God's righteousness, as well as His judgement, as Saint John the Evangelist also testifies: "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:26-27). And Jesus says: "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30).

Indeed, the judgement of our Lord Jesus Christ is just, because it stems from His righteousness, His holiness, as the Apostle Peter says to his fellow Jews: "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just" (Acts 3:14). In other words, those who denied Christ and His redeeming truth, will be judged by Him, as Saint Paul preaches: "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:12). "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17).

Moreover, those who believe in the truth, in the "Sun of

righteousness", Christ, should "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). And this is because, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" (James 2:14), Saint James the Brother of God says.

Faith in the Living God, my dear brothers and sisters, cannot be confirmed without the divine righteousness, which is the final judgement of the people's actions, as Jesus Christ Himself said: "Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? ... And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:37-40).

The least of Christ's brethren are Christ Himself, who put upon Himself our human flesh and suffered death on the Cross for our salvation. Saint Paul preaches: "so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death... For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection... Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Romans 6:3-6, 8). "and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16) Saint John advices. This means that the genuine Christians are distinguished by sincere manifestations of affection and sympathy through works, toils and sacrifices of selfless love. This way, my brethren, as Saint Gregory the Theologian preaches, "it is Christ we visit, it is Christ we heal, it is Christ we feed, it is Christ we clothe, it is Christ we meet, it is Christ we honour... but because the Master of all wants mercy and not sacrifice, and as compassion is better than myriads of well fed sheep, let us offer Him that, for the poor and the meek today, so that when we are freed from this life, they will receive us in the eternal tabernacles, in Him, Christ our Lord, to Whom belongs the glory unto the ages".

And let us say along with the hymnographer: “As I ponder the fearful day of Thy judgement and ineffable glory, I am altogether full of fear, O Lord, and trembling in terror I cry: Righteous Master, who alone are most merciful, accept me in repentance, by the intercessions of the Theotokos”. Amen.”

After the Divine Liturgy, the good keeper of the Monastery Reverend Abbess Paissia hosted a modest reception for His Beatitude and entourage.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# **THE FEAST OF SAINT SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Tuesday, 3/16 February 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of Saint Simeon the God-receiver.

On this feast, the Church and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates the co-operation of Saint Simeon in the mission of God’s Providence for our salvation. Saint Simeon was a righteous and holy man, who lived on the borderline between the Old and the New Testament and was informed by the Holy Spirit that “he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ” (Luke 2:26).

This prophecy of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled when the Lord’s parents brought Him for his sanctification when He was forty days old to the Temple of Solomon. Then Simeon rejoiced in recognizing the infant in his arms to be “the salvation” of the Lord and cried out: “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant

depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32).

This feast was officiated at the Holy Monastery of Saint Simeon by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants their Eminences the Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the representative of MISSIA of the Moscow Patriarchate, Hegoumen Archimandrite Alexander, Archdeacon Mark, the Hierodeacons Simeon, Eulogios, Marcellus and other Fathers.

The chanting was delivered by Mr Vasilios Gostopoulos and the Patriarchal School students, and the service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and quite a few faithful.

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

"The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God" (Psalm 98: 2-3) the psalmist proclaims.

Noble Christians,

The Holy Church of Christ, hearkening to David's words: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise" (Psalm 98:4), has gathered all of us in this Holy place where the tomb of Saint Simeon the God-receiver is preserved, in order to celebrate both his commemoration and contribution to the historic event of the meeting with the new infant, our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Altar of God, in the Temple of Solomon.

“When the Elder had seen with his eyes the salvation that came from God unto the peoples he cried to Thee: O Christ, Thou art my God” (Katavasia, Ode six); and in simple words: Lord when the Elder Simeon saw with his own eyes the Saviour that had come for all the nations, he cried with a loud voice: “Christ, You are my God, Who was born from God the Father”, and Cosmas the melodist says according to the testimony of Saint Luke the Evangelist: “And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord... Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:27-32).

According to the interpretation of the inspired Church Fathers, “the salvation of God” who Elder Simeon’s eyes beheld, is no other than Christ. “Salvation he called the incarnation of the Only Begotten”, Saint Theophylaktos says; “born for the salvation of the people”, Zigavinos adds. “It is customary for the Bible to call the Christ of God as salvation”, Saint Basil the Great notes. And being the salvation means His incarnate presence according to Saint Athanasios. “He had prepared [the salvation] of Christ from the beginning of the world and it was revealed to us in the last ages” Saint Cyril of Alexandria comments, and quotes Apostle Peter: “ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:18-20).

It is made clear thus, that the “salvation of God” is the Word of God “Who for our salvation, in the last days, dwelt in the womb of the Holy Virgin and through her He was born in the flesh without any alteration” according to Saint John

Damascene.

The righteous Simeon did not only confess that the infant in his arms is Christ, the Saviour of the world but also became a seer of the unapproachable and uncreated light, of the divinity of Christ, as Saint Basil the Great teaches clearly: "Anna was announcing, Simeon held in his arms a small infant the great God, worshipping Him; they did not despise the vision but glorified the greatness of His divinity. For the Divine Power was visible like light through glass threads through the human body, shining through those who had the eyes of the heart purified".

It is noteworthy that indeed it was said to Simeon that "he should not see death before he would see the Christ of the Lord" (Luke 2:26). But Saint Simeon never ceased keeping the eyes of his heart purified. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"(Matt 5:8) the Lord says. "The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out" (Proverbs 13: 9) the wise Solomon says.

Elder Simeon is distinguished among the great personalities and the Prophets of the Old Testament because he was deemed worthy to worship "the great God as a small infant", namely Christ, while the other Prophets foretold God the Word, Christ, Who would become incarnate through the Virgin. And the preserved incorrupt relics of Saint Simeon is a great witness of the Grace and the glory he received by God, as the psalmist says: "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart" (Psalm 97:11). "The noetic and divine light shines in the mind and heart of everyone who is pure and righteous," Saint Cyril of Alexandria says.

And the divine light that dawns in the righteous ones is no other than the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, through which Simeon the God-receiver prophesized to Mary: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a

sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35).

Interpreting these words, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "Emanuel is set by God the Father as the foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isaiah 28:16), "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever, it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:44). And referring to the Mother of Christ, Zigavinos says: "He called 'a sword' the honourable and sharp pain that pierced the Theotokos' heart when her Son was crucified. Simeon prophesied about this deep pain." And Saint Cyril clarifies this by saying: "Like by a sword, the Virgin was pierced and wounded when she saw the One who was born from her in the flesh to be crucified".

Let us entreat today's honoured righteous Simeon the God-receiver, so that we who believe in God the Word who was born by the Holy Virgin in the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ, will not be put to shame, but by his prayers, we may be worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven. And let us say along with the hymnographer: "He who is full is emptied out; He who is before eternity receiveth a beginning; the word taketh on the grossness of matter; the Artificer is fashioned; the Uncontainable, assuming a body, is contained in thy womb, O Virgin, graced of God" (Minaion, Feb.3, Ode 1, Theotokion). Amen".

After the Divine Liturgy, the Elder Hegoumen and renovator of the shrine Archimandrite Theodoritos hosted a reception for the Patriarchal Entourage and the congregation at the Hegoumeneion.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS CELEBRATES THE D. LITURGY ON SARANTARION MOUNT**

On Sunday 25 January / 7 February 2021, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy on the commemoration of our Holy Father Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople, at the Holy Monastery of Sarantaron Mount.

This Mount is dominant over the city of Jericho, with its foot at the waters of Prophet Elisha. According to the faith of our Church, the Lord was guided by the Spirit on this Mount after His baptism in the River Jordan, where He accepted to be tempted by the demon according to the Holy Evangelists (Matthew Ch. 4, Mark Ch. 1, Luke Ch. 4), and He conquered every temptation after forty-day fasting, setting an example for us to fight and conquer our temptations.

This Divine Liturgy was also celebrated on the commemoration of the fact that many Fathers, great ascetics and other monks followed the Lord's example, and used to retreat to the desert after the Feast of Theophany, living in asceticism until Palm Sunday, when they returned to their Monasteries, chanting: "today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us..."

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences; Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The chanting was delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, and only a few monks attended the Service.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of the Holy Spirit, which came down in the form of a dove and stood above Jesus Christ when He was baptized in the Jordan, has gathered us in his holy place, where Jesus was guided by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil, in order to celebrate the bloodless sacrifice and glorify His Holy Name.

According to the true witness of the Evangelists, after His baptism and the temptations, Jesus “departed into Galilee... he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:12-17).

These words: “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17) are still being preached by the Holy Church of Christ, addressing every man who seeks the light of truth, namely of Christ, Who said: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Interpreting these words, Saint Chrysostom says: “He talks about light and darkness in a noetic manner; meaning that one does not remain in fallacy and in sin”. And Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: “The one who follows Christ does not remain in the darkness at all, but will gain the light of life”. The one that hears my teaching, the Lord says, will not walk in darkness, but will be led to the light of life, namely to the

revelation of the mysteries regarding Me, which will lead to the eternal life.

The approaching of the Kingdom of Heaven is no other than the revelation of the divine providence to the world, "and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:9-10).

In other words, Christ, according to Origen, is the "Self-Kingdom". "For He [Christ] is the King of heavens, and just as He is the self-wisdom, self-righteousness, and self-truth, likewise, He is the self-kingdom". This means that the Kingdom of Christ, who is the head of the Church body, is present, and therefore at hand, near us in the Church; and through both the earthly and the heavenly Church, or better say, "the militant and triumphant". "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off" (Jeremiah 23:23)? And according to the psalmist: "Thou art near, O Lord; and all thy commandments are truth" (Ps. 119:151).

Our entrance and participation in the body of the Church [of Christ] through the holy baptism, denotes our familiarity to the Kingdom of God according to the testimony of Luke the Evangelist; "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21).

Interpreting these words of the Lord, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "it is in our self-will and in our power to take it [the kingdom]; it is, therefore, imperative for every man to have the justification in Christ through faith, namely to enrich and adorn himself with every virtue in order to gain the kingdom of heaven". And in more detail; it is up to your

own will and power to gain the kingdom. Because every man who achieves the righteousness through faith in Christ, and is adorned with all virtues, is therefore deemed worthy of the kingdom of heaven. And Saint Theophylaktos says: "It is only then that God reigns within us when no worldly thing possesses our souls, but we live in a manner beyond this world for all things".

Moreover, Saint Mark, the ascetic says on this matter: "it is necessary to have the grace of the Holy Spirit acting in the heart, and according to this analogy one may enter the kingdom of heaven". Commenting on these words, Metropolitan Joel of Edessa says: "this means that the one who has the grace of the Holy Spirit working in his heart, has entered the Kingdom of God according to the degree of cultivating this. In other words, the one who does the will of God cleanses his mind and heart, distances himself from sin, lives in God, while he still is on earth".

And we have this example from the Saints of our Church. And we say this because the worldly life of the Saints is the life that reveals Christ Himself, His Kingdom. Filled with divine love, the Saints of the Church of Christ are those who paid heed to Saint Paul's voice: "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23). "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

As for us, my dear brethren, let us entreat God the Word and our Saviour, who was made incarnate through the Virgin Mary and appeared to us, to deem us worthy of His Kingdom, saying: "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven". Amen."

After the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen Archimandrite Onuphrios hosted a reception for the Patriarchal Entourage.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# HIS BEATITUDE'S SPEECH IN RECOGNITION OF NEW LATIN PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

Your Beatitude,

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

Saint Paul writes in the First Letter to Timothy

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

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

During your time as Custos, and continuing after your appointment as Apostolic Administrator, the co-operation that

has been built between our Brotherhoods and our communities has produced tangible fruits that have been crucial in helping us all deal with the common issues that we are facing in defending the Christian presence in the Holy Land and safeguarding the integrity of the holy places for the whole world.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of the mutual trust that has grown up among us. Never before has the co-operation between our communities proved so effective and productive in our common mission. We cannot forget the instrumental role that you played in the joint effort in the restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

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

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

The Divine Eucharist is at the heart of the mission of the Church, and we must never lose our attentiveness to the path to the union of the Churches for which we pray in every

liturgy that will restore to us the common Chalice, when once again we shall be able to be con-celebrants together at the altar. We are aware that we can never be complacent. We must deepen our communication with each other, and sustain this spirit in all that we do.

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

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

Thank you.

---

## **THE FEAST OF SAINT THEODOSIOS THE CENOBIARCH AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Sunday, 11/24 January 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of our Holy Father Theodosios the Cenobiarch.

On this feast, the whole Church, and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates Saint Theodosios, according to the synaxarion and other sources. The Church commemorates that Saint Theodosios came to the Holy Land from his hometown Mogaristos of Cappadocia around AD 450.

Having initially striven in ascesis at the Holy Monastery of

Ikelia, near Jerusalem, he retreated to the desert of Judea and founded the Holy Monastery that bears his name to the present day, as a Coenobion. He received there the beginner monks, who were trained in obedience, common life and the work of handcrafts, and they provided for the poor and the needy. After this training, the monks would receive the blessing to enter a stricter form of asceticism at the monastic Lavra, such as that of Saint Savvas. Saint Theodosios became a Hegoumen / Exarch of the Coenobitic life in Palestine, while Saint Savvas had the same position for the life in the Lavra. Both Saints, Theodosios and Savvas, were from the same country, contemporaries, and co-operated in the fight against Monophysitism, and the establishment of the Doctrine of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synod in Chalcedon in AD 451, regarding the indivisible coexistence of the two natures of Christ, the divine and the human, in one hypostasis.

This Monastery is located at the place where the Wise Men from Persia stayed overnight on their return via a different route to their country. The Monastery has proven to be stronger than the destructions from various conquerors and the wear of time. It was renovated by the Cretan Monks Galaktion and Leontios in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, later on in the same century by the blessed Archbishop Bartholomew of Madaba, and recently by the Elder Hegoumen Archimandrite Ierotheos, who built a new extension at the Monastery, completed the frescoes in the Church and protected the property of the Patriarchate in the surrounding to the Monastery area.

Due to covid-19 restrictions, an All-night Vigil was officiated at the Monastery by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Archbishops; Aristarhos of Constantina and Theodosios of Sebastia, Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, Priest Yusef and Priest George from Beit Jala, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Simeon. The chanting was delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, the spiritual

father of the Monastery of Saint Savvas, Archimandrite Eudokimos and the Monks of the Monastery.

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

“Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour” (Ps. 15:1-3) the psalmist proclaims.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

Today, at the time of Epiphany, when Christ appeared to us in the river Jordan and illumined the world, the feast of our Holy and God-bearing Father Theodosios has also shone; therefore, both the clergy and the people have gathered in the place of his asceticism to glorify in Doxology our Holy Trinitarian God and honour the Saint.

Our Holy Father Theodosios, who cultivated the arid land of this desert of Judea, became worthy of dwelling in both the earthly and the heavenly dwelling places of the Lord, keeping all of God’s commandments, as Saint Basil the Great says: “One should not only do what is right, but also work inspired by a righteous disposition, according to: ‘That which is altogether just shalt thou follow’ (Deuteronomy 16:20)”. In other words, Saint Theodosios combined in himself all the virtues that distinguish the righteous and holy man of God.

This is also expressed clearly in the hymns that Saint Theophanes wrote for him: “O righteous Father Theodosios, thou God-bearing Saint, with fervour thou didst struggle in this brief temporal life in hymnody and vigils and constant fasting. To thy disciples thou becamest a rule; the grace of

the All-holy Spirit found thy stainless soul, in thee as brilliant and immaculate light, by whose mighty power, thou wast adorned in splendour to glorify Christ unceasingly, a single Son in two natures, both God and man, who at the hand of the Forerunner John was baptized, receiving witness from the voice of God the Father" (Minaion Vespers Sticheron 1).

And Cyril of Scythopolis, Saint Theodosios' biographer calls him "blessed and citizen of heaven, the great glory of Palestine and the desert, the boast of the monastic schema, the stronghold of the true doctrines, the colonel and fighter, and the guide of the coenobitic rule".

When our Holy Father Theodosios came to the Holy Land, he encountered the great Fathers of the time, Euthymios the Great, Savvas the Sanctified and the Holy Abbas Markianos who lived in a Coenobion in Bethlehem, and who had said to him: "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt. 5:14). In you too, everything that is hidden will God make visible and denoted". There was also a reverend Elder named Loginos of Cappadocia, who belonged in the Order of the Studious ones, of the Holy Sepulchre, who encouraged him to go to the Monastery of Ikelia by the Seat of Theotokos, where he served as a Steward after her death.

Our Holy Father Theodosios excelled so much in the asceticism of the true Orthodox faith, that his hymnographer says: "Though by nature a man, O Father, thou wast seen to be a fellow citizen of the Angels. For, while living like a fleshless being upon the earth, O wise Theodosios, thou didst cast away all the care for the flesh; therefore, thou hearest from us: Rejoice, for from thy youth thou didst follow after Christ; Rejoice, for thou didst wither the pleasures of the flesh" (Minaion Matins, Oikos).

Indeed, the citizen of the desert Theodosios did cast away the cares of the flesh and withered its pleasures, hearkening to Saint Paul's voice: "For to be carnally minded is death, but

to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:6-8).

Indeed, our Father Theodosios, who followed Christ from his early youth, has become a fellow citizen of the Angels. And this is because "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14), Saint Paul preaches. Interpreting these words, Saint Chrysostom says: "He didn't say: 'as many as receive God's Spirit'; but 'as many as are led by the Spirit', showing that in this manner does [the Spirit] want to be the Master of our lives, just like the captain of the ship or the charioteer of the pair of horses". And Saint Paul says: "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17).

In other words, the crown of the victory of the Spirit over the Law, or rather, over the thinking of the flesh, is the liberty in Christ, as Saint Paul says: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). And this liberty in Christ is accomplished through the free will of man, on the one hand, in combination with the working of the Divine grace on the other.

Behold, therefore, why the hymnographer says: "forcing thyself on in martyric zeal with the blood of thy volition, and thou wast shown to be an unbloody Martyr of true religion" (Minaion Ode 9, Troparion 1). The Holy Church of Jerusalem boasts, because not only did it establish Martyrs of blood for Christ, but also unbloody Martyrs for the mystery of reverence, namely, of the keeping of God's commandments. "Martyrs are not only those who received death for their faith in Christ but also those who died for the keeping of His commandments," Evagrius says.

This bloodless martyr of the love for Christ's commandments, the ladder of virtues and the beauty of the ascetics of the

desert of Palestine, Theodosios the God-bearer, let us entreat, along with the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, to pray to our Lord Jesus Christ, who was baptized in the River Jordan by Saint John, to grant our souls His great mercy and peace in our region and in the whole world. Amen. Many happy returns, free from the coronavirus plague.”

After the Vigil, the Hegoumen Archimandrite Ierotheos, who is suffering from poor health, offered a modest reception to His Beatitude, through his helpers.

**From Secretariat-General**