

# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS OFFICIATES THE DIVINE LITURGY AT THE CHURCH OF THE DELEGATION OF THE PATRIARCHATE OF ROMANIA**

On Wednesday, April 25 /May 8, 2019, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of St. George in West Jerusalem, for the commemoration of the Holy and Glorious George the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were the Archbishops: Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, along with Archimandrite Ieronymos, the representative of the Patriarchate of Romania Archimandrite Theophilos and his helper Archimandrite John, Archimandrite Dometian and Archimandrite Athanasios of the Russian Missia, other Priests, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Hader, and Deacon Ephraim from the Patriarchate of Romania. The chanting was delivered by a Church singer from Romania and the Nuns of the Delegation in Romanian and Greek, as the service was attended mainly by a Romanian speaking congregation.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude read the following Sermon;

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth

from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning". "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 15:26-27, 16:1-2) the Lord says.

Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos

Representative of H.H.B. the Patriarch of Romania Daniel at the Church of Jerusalem,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and visiting pilgrims

Today the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has shone forth, along with the commemoration of the Holy and glorious George the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer. Therefore we are gathered in this Holy Church, dedicated to the Saint, in order to glorify in Eucharist the Holy Trinitarian God and the Resurrected Christ and our God. Moreover, in order to declare the unity in Christ of the brotherly Orthodox Christian Churches, namely of the Venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem with the Patriarchate of Romania, and bear witness to the faith of the martyr of blood of Christ, George the Trophy-bearer.

The luminous Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ was preceded by the impassive for His divinity Passion, His martyr's death on the Cross. The faithful martyr George became a communicant of this very impassive passion and of the resurrection of Christ, as well as a member of the Kingdom of Heaven. "For George's desire [for God] conquered his human nature, convincing him to head through death to the object of his desire, Christ our God and Saviour of our souls" the hymn writer says.

George's persecutors and murderers thought that they were being offering worship to God, as the Lord said to His disciples: "the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2). It is a fact that many times the work of the devil was carried out under the garment of the deacon of God and of His Holy Church, and many times the most tumultuous opponents of the healthy teaching of Christ (1 Tim. 1:10) sat "at the Temple of God" (2 Thes. 2:4). Nevertheless the victory of truth was triumphant, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses in his book of revelation: "And they [the faithful martyrs of Christ] overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them" (Rev. 12:11-12).

Behold why the Church of Christ sings through the mouth of the hymn writer; "For meet it is that the Heavens should rejoice and that the earth should be glad, and that the whole world, both visible and invisible, should keep the feast; for Christ our everlasting joy hath risen".

The martyrdom of Christ's friend George has a special place in the chorea of the martyrs of the Church. And this is so because it does not belong to the historic time of death and corruption, but to the time of "another life, the eternal one" according to St. John Damascene – namely to the time of the death and the life-giving resurrection of our Saviour Christ.

The great and wise St. Paul calls upon the living witness of the martyrs of love and truth, namely of Christ, "I am the truth" (John 14:6) to the faithful members of the Church, so that we should face the struggle that is before us in patience. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the

author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

St. George is not only distinguished as being one of "so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1) of the Church, but also from the ecumenical honour he receives, and especially in our contemporary era of the anti-biblical and anti-Christian Orthodox faith of ours.

And we say this, because as a representative of "the cloud of witnesses", of the love and truth and righteousness of Christ, and ecumenically recognized, as well as being honoured by other doctrines and religions, St. George calls us and our brotherly Orthodox Churches, today in his annual festive commemoration, through St. Paul's command: "I 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" (Ephes. 4:1,3) and through the unity of faith, for which St. John Damascene says in his hymn; "Your martyrs, O Lord, have been confirmed by faith and strengthened by hope. By the love of your cross they have been fortified in spirit and so have they overcome the anguish of suffering. They have obtained the crowns and together with the angels they pray for our souls".

Let us entreat St. George the Great Martyr to intercede the incarnate for our sake crucified and resurrected Christ, our God and Saviour, along with the Ever-Virgin and Most Blessed Theotokos Mary to grant us life eternal and peace to the world and in our region.

Many Happy Returns! Christ is Risen!

After the Divine Liturgy the Hegoumen and representative of the Romanian Patriarchate Archimandrite Theophilos offered a

festal meal to the Patriarchal entourage and others.

During the meal His Beatitude addressed those present as follows;

Archimandrite Theophilos, dear Father,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved faithful of this Romanian congregation in Jerusalem,

Dear Pilgrims,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Christ is Risen!

Hristos a inviat!

We greet you in the joy of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we give thanks to Almighty God for this blessed occasion on which we have celebrated the Divine Liturgy with you in this Church of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Jerusalem.

Our gathering today is a visible sign of the common *martyria* of the Orthodox Church which the Church lives here as well as around the world. The Orthodox Church enjoys a cohesion of faith and life that is more important in our own day than ever before, especially in a world in which the predominant experience is one of division and enmity between peoples. The unity of the Church is a divine encouragement in our divided society.

We learn so much from the Great and Holy Martyr George, who holds genuinely ecumenical significance. For he is revered not just by the Orthodox Church, but also by non-Orthodox Christians, and even by non-Christians. Saint George lived in a different cultural and social context, in which there was so

much division and difficulty, but he managed to keep the unity of the faith as well as the unity of the Church.

As we sing in one of our services, the martyrs of the Lord, they were united spiritually with the love of your cross, and so they banished completely the tyranny of the enemy.

In the same way our beloved Orthodox Church must be a witness, inspired by Saint George, to the unity of the faith and the unity of the Church. Our unity is our strength, and the only way to withstand the assaults of our contemporary enemy. As Saint Paul tells us, our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Ephes. 6:12).

We guard the unity of the faith and of the Church with the witness of our conscience, again as St. Paul says: Indeed, this is our boast, the testimony of our conscience: we have behaved in the world with frankness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God – and all the more toward you (2 Cor. 1:12). Just as the faith cannot be divided, neither can the conscience, and so we do everything in our power to ensure that we serve the unity of the Body of Christ, again as St. Paul says in the Letter to the Ephesians; making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3).

Our unity in the bond of peace, is at the heart of our life as the Orthodox Church, and we know that any kind of schism or division is a wound at the very depth of our common life. So on this blessed occasion, we take this opportunity to renew our commitment to the unity of the Church in spirit and in truth.

May the incarnate Logos, who is risen from the dead, warm our hearts and enlighten our minds, that we may ever serve the

unity of our beloved Orthodox Church. May God bless you, dear Archimandrite Theophilos, and your community, and May God bless the peoples of our beloved Romania and our beloved Holy Land.

Christ is risen!

Hristos a inviat!

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE FEAST OF THE LORD'S MIRACLE IN KANA**

On Thomas Sunday, April 22/ May 5, 2019, the Greek Orthodox Community of Kana in Galilee celebrated according to its order the commemoration of the Lord's miracle of turning the water into wine that happened in the ancient small town of Kana for the pleasure of the wedding guests, a wedding that the Lord Himself blessed being there with His Mother as guests too.

The Divine Liturgy for this feast was officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Methodios of Tabor, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, the Hegoumen of Tabor Archimandrite Hilarion, Archimandrite Sophronios and Archimandrite Modestos, under the chanting of the Kana Choir and with the participation of many Orthodox faithful of this parish and pilgrims.

His Beatitude addressed this congregation as follows;

“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Kana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him” (John 2:11) St. John the Evangelist says.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The uncreated and unwaning Light of the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour has gathered all of us in this Holy place of Kana of Galilee, where the wedding to which the Mother of Jesus was present, and also “both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage” (John 2:2), in order to thank, glorify and bless the resurrected Christ unto the ages.

Two things happened with the participation of Christ at the wedding of his friend Simon of Kana, who was also called Zelotes (Luke 6:15); firstly, the sacrament of marriage took place and the woman was being set free from the curse of the Mosaic Law as St. Cyril of Alexandria preaches by saying: “the sacred marriage was sanctified and therefore the curse of the woman was lifted; for the children will not be born in sorrow any more, and this is so because the beginning of birth has been blessed by Christ”. Secondly, He turned the water into wine, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses by saying: “When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;)” (John 2:9).

In this wedding Jesus revealed His glory, namely His divinity, for the first time. Moreover, He revealed that the God the Word came down from heaven to earth, in order to receive upon Himself the human nature by the way of the Bridegroom, considering the humanity is called the bride and Christ the Bridegroom, according to St. Cyril of Alexandria.

In other words, the wedding in Kana is the exemplar of the



spiritual wedding of Christ the Bridegroom with the Church-Bride, as St. John witnesses in his book of Revelation by saying: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (Rev. 19:7-9). And in more detail, let us be glad and rejoice, and let us attribute all the glory to Him, because the time of the wedding of the lamb has arrived, of the spiritual and eternal Bridegroom Jesus Christ, and His wife, the spiritual Bride, the Church, has made herself beautiful with ornaments. And she has been given a pure crimson garment by God, which symbolizes the royal grace and holiness. Because the garment in crimson colour are the virtues of the saints of the triumphant Church, of the new Jerusalem, the eternal Bride of Christ. And the Angel said to me; Write; blessed are those who have been invited to the dinner of the wedding of the Lamb, who will participate at the eternal joy and beatitude; These words which confirm the beatitude of the faithful through their union with Christ, are true, they are the words of God.

As far as the miracle of the turning of water into wine is concerned, this is not only the revelation of the glory of Jesus, but also the exemplar of the new drink in Christ which we are called to drink as the hymn writer says: "Come let us drink a new drink, not one marvellously brought forth from a barren rock, but the Source of incorruption, which springeth forth from the grave of Christ, in Whom we are established".

We, my dear brothers and sisters, being named after the name of Christ, which is above all names, (Philip. 2:9), henceforth drink from the "new drink" which gushes out from the Life-giving Tomb of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who is the

unceasing spring, the spring of incorruption; a spring which offers us the rebirth of the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And we ask ourselves, what exactly is the "new drink"? It is the sacred and living blood of Christ, "which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). It is our participation in the Eucharistic dinner of the Lord's body and blood, in which we foretaste the eternal life and our resurrection. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:54) the Lord says. Interpreting these words, St. Cyril of Alexandria says: "marvel at approaching St. John the Evangelist who said: "and the Word became flesh" (John 1:14); not therefore that He became "in flesh", but that He became "flesh" in order to declare the union. And each of the two remains as it is in nature, one of the two is Christ, and the Word is united with the same flesh in a manner unspeakable and beyond human comprehension".

Jesus, my dear ones, and His glorious resurrection, are the foundation of the Christian faith as St. Paul preaches by saying: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). And elsewhere he says: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15:14).

Moreover, Apostle Thomas the Twin confirms through his faithful unfaithfulness the resurrection of Christ as St. John the Evangelist says: "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:27-29).

“A sacred Pascha hath been shown forth to us today; a new and holy Pascha, a mystic Pascha...a Pascha that hath opened unto us the gates of Paradise” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims. And this is because today is the second Sunday since Pascha, and we celebrate the inauguration of Christ’s resurrection.

And this inauguration refers to our liberated human nature in Christ through Christ, from the corruption of the death of sin, a human nature that has been deified in His resurrection and this way it is henceforth able to participate in the unwaning day of the Kingdom of the Lord. “But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt. 26:29).

Let us entreat the Mother of our God and Saviour Christ, the Most blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, along with the bridegroom and Apostle Simon of Kana, to intercede for us to our Saviour Jesus Christ, the resurrected from the dead, to deem us worthy to participate at the Dinner of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Many Happy Returns! Christ is Risen!

After the Divine Liturgy there was a procession three times around the Church and the Gospel narrative of the miracle in the wedding of Kana.

After these, the teenagers of the parish danced traditional Palestinian dances at the courtyard of the Church and finally the hospitable Hegoumen Archimandrite Chrysostom offered a meal, during which His Beatitude addressed all present as follows;

“O great and most sacred Pascha, Christ; O wisdom and Word and Power of God! Grant that we partake of Thee fully in the unwaning day of Thy Kingdom” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Today's feast of the Wedding in Kana of Galilee is also a feast of the historic town of Kana, which is steadfastly joined with the spiritual jurisdiction of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Needless to say, that the people of this town, both Christians and Muslims co-exist in harmony and social cohesion.

We personally had had the indeed blessed opportunity to serve in this holy shrine as a Hegoumen and spiritual guide, a fact that linked us both with the holy place and its people.

Our company with you today is not only a pastoral one. It has a special meaning to us. And this is so because among the people present today, I recognize the new generation – without of course ignoring the older one – which [the new generation] has been nurtured with the traditions of Romiosyni and the love of the land of their parents and forefathers.

We have to admit that the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate is the one who on the one hand has protected and preserved the holiness and the universality of this place throughout the ages. On the other hand, it has been the guarantee of the preservation of the religious and traditional identity of the Christians who live here.

And today's Paschal Feast is a steadfast proof and witness of this fact. Therefore we conclude our speech with the words of the hymn writer of the Church, St. John Damascene, who says: "It is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant for the festival and let us embrace one another. Let us say O Brethren even to those that hate us; Let us forgive all things on the Resurrection; and thus let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, by death hath He trampled down death, and on those in the graves hath He bestowed life". Amen.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# CERTIFICATE AWARDS AT THE PATRIARCHATE SCHOOLS IN JORDAN

On Wednesday evening of the Bright Week, April 18/ May 1, 2019, the ceremony of the School leaving certificates of the Patriarchate Schools in Jordan, namely "Patriarch Diodoros" of Madaba, Fuheis and Zarka, took place at the reception hall of the Cultural Centre in Amman.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos honoured the ceremony with His presence, as He came from Jerusalem escorted by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis and the Dean Priest Issa Mousleh.

The well organized ceremony began with the national anthem of Jordan.

The entrance of the 144 graduates of the four Schools followed, at the presence of the Manageress of the Schools of Jordan Mrs. Souheira Betjali, the School Teachers, the parents and other relatives of the graduates, and then there was the welcoming speech by the Priest Sotirios Halassa.

The Manageress of the Schools Mrs. Suheira Betjali spoke as well, and referred to the contribution of the Patriarchate and the work of the teachers for the creation of a high standard educational work at the Schools of the Patriarchate.

A song by a Zarka School teacher followed, as well as addresses in the Arabic, English and French languages by the students-representatives of the Schools and performances of

ethnic dances and songs. Near the end of all the above, His Beatitude's address followed, read by Fr. Issa Musleh.

Having concluded, the ceremony ended with the handing over to each of the students their school leaving certificates by His Beatitude and the Manageress of the Schools, with the wishes to have every success in their lives and a good career.

On this occasion, the Manageress of the Schools Mrs. Suheira Betjali offered His Beatitude a very nice omoforo and epitrahilio and the ceremony ended with the national anthem of Jordan.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **PASCHAL VISITS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Tuesday, April 17/30, 2019, the Heads of the Christian Doctrines visited us at the Patriarchate, first the Franciscan Brotherhood – Custody of the Holy Land, then all other Churches and Communities, the Latin Patriarchate, the Eastern Churches, Syrians, Copts, Ethiopians, Protestants, Lutherans and others.

His Beatitude addressed the Custody of the Franciscan Brotherhood as follows;

*“Your Paternity, dear Father Francesco,  
Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Beloved Members of the our Respective Brotherhoods,*

*Dear Fathers,*

*Christ is risen!*

*We welcome you, dear Father Francesco, and your Brothers, to our Patriarchate and we thank you for your greetings to us in this joyous season of light and life. This is the time of rejoicing, as we sing;*

*Rejoice, O peoples, and be glad.*

*An angel sat upon the stone of the tomb;*

*He himself proclaimed the glad tidings unto us saying:*

*Christ is risen from the dead, the Saviour of the world, and he has filled all things with fragrance.*

*Rejoice, O peoples, and be glad.*

*(From Matins of Bright Week)*

*As we keep this Paschal celebration, we do so in a world that has seen, in the last six weeks, the evidence of hatred and violence against a synagogue, churches, and mosques in three different countries. This rash of violence against places of worship at the holiest time of the year for the three Abrahamic traditions is a cause of deep concern, and in the light of the resurrection we are compelled to affirm our condemnation of all violence against religious groups. Attacks on places of worship are particularly grievous, and there can be no justification for such acts of brutality against those who have gathered for worship.*

*For according to the Gospel of Saint John, we read this warning. "Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think by doing so they are offering worship to God" (John, 16:2).*

*The cycle of the great feasts here in Jerusalem and the Holy Land are a reminder to the world that everyone is embraced here. The great feast of Easter is not a cultural phenomenon of one group, but a declaration that light and freedom come from the empty tomb, and that life does not stop here: there is an eternal dimension to life and the human person.*

*Easter is the great inclusive feast par excellence. It is not*

*a private matter, but it has a deeper meaning and a deeper mission to reveal the fundamental unity of the human family in a common destiny.*

*The feast of Easter, is therefore, the answer of God to the violence and despair of the world. For by raising our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, God the Father has brought to an end the enmity that divides the human family.*

*This Holy City, and we who live and minister here, along with the countless pilgrims who have been with us for this holy season, are living evidence of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. By our diakonia and our witness, the world may see and know the new life that is born at Easter – a new life that is open to all without distinction. For as we read in the Gospel of Matthew, our Lord Jesus Christ says;*

*“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Matt. 18:20).*

*May God grant to you dear Father Francesco, the members of your community, and the communities that you serve, the joy of this new life.*

*Christ is risen!*

*Thank you”.*

His Beatitude addressed the Heads of the other Churches as per below;

*“Your Beatitudes,*

*Your Excellences,*

*Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Dear Fathers,*

*Christ is risen!*

*We greet you in this joyful season of Easter, and we thank you for your greetings. This is a time of universal celebration, and we sing these words this week at Vespers in the Orthodox Church;*



*Going down to those in Hades,  
Christ proclaimed the glad tidings, saying:  
Take courage, I have conquered now;  
I am the resurrection;  
Having destroyed the gates of death,  
I shall lead you up.*

*(From Vespers, Bright Monday)*

*As those to whom the pastoral leadership of the Churches and Christian Communities of the Holy Land have been entrusted, we must never lose hold of the courage that comes to us through the resurrection. This is especially important as we see an increase in acts of violence against so many religious groups, but especially against Christians. Such acts of violence and persecution are not confined to certain countries only; Christians face real challenges everywhere.*

*What are the real challenges? The fact that we testify to the truth of the Gospel. As we read in St. John's Gospel, our Lord Jesus Christ says, "Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice". And Pilate asked Him "What is truth" (John 18:37-38). We have evidence of this truth.*

*Our witness – our martyrria – here in the Holy Land is to this courage that our Lord Jesus Christ gives to us by his resurrection. This is the courage to proclaim a message of peace, reconciliation, mutual respect, and the universal embrace of Jerusalem, where all of humanity finds a home. Fear-mongering, violence, and persecution are the tools of the frightened: love is the response of the courageous.*

*We live in a world in which the true reasons for faith and belief are distorted and used in a negative way. Radical religious groups use faith for their own ends, rather than for the true freedom that comes from God, and our mission here is to remain faithful to the message of the Gospel that guarantees light and freedom to the human family, for our Lord says, "I am the way, and the truth and the life" (John 14:6).*

*The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is, at its heart, the ultimate act of a compassionate God who fully sympathizes with our human condition. As we read in the Letter to the*

*Hebrews, "we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). This is the true significance both for the incarnation and the resurrection, which is itself the crown of creation.*

*Let this holy and bright celebration of Pascha renew us in courage, so that we may be steadfast in our mission in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land. And may it renew us in our commitment to speak with a united voice and with mutual respect and harmony.*

*May God bless you all and the communities you serve, and may the uncreated light of the eternal Logos, that shines from the tomb, always warm our hearts and illumine our minds.*

*Christ is risen!*

*Thank you".*

**From Secretariat-General**

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

On Holy Tuesday morning, April 10/23, 2019, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood visited the Franciscan Brotherhood on the occasion of their Easter Feast and then the Latin Patriarchate.

His Beatitude addressed the Franciscans as follows;

*"Your Paternity, dear Father Francesco,*

*Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Beloved Members of our Respective Brotherhood,*

*Dear Fathers,*

*We greet you warmly today as you celebrate the Easter Feast, and we pray that God will give you the joy of the resurrection. Let us recall the words of Saint John Damascene that we sing in our Orthodox tradition:*

*Let us purify our senses and we shall behold Christ,  
radiant with the unapproachable light of the resurrection,*

*and we shall clearly hear him say:*

*Rejoice! As we sing the triumphant hymn.*

*(Troparia from the Canon of Pascha)*

*Our common mission to be guardians and servants of the Holy Places is never more visible than it is during this festal season, when we welcome so many pilgrims to Jerusalem and the Holy Land for our celebrations of the Holy Week and Easter. The hopes of the world are also turned in our direction, even as we have news of the brutal bombing of churches in Sri Lanka last Sunday. We cannot deny that persecution against Christians is rising around the world, and this only increases the longing of Christians to be united in spirit and in prayer with the Holy Places where the history of our salvation has unfolded.*

*The Holy Places are also an undeniable testimony to the foundation of our faith, which is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, as St. Paul says;*

*“If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain...But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have*

died.”

(1 Cor. 15:14,20)

*Our unity of purpose and our close co-operation in this common mission has never been more crucial. It is a source of deep satisfaction to us that our co-operation has born such great fruit in recent years, and has proved to be the guarantee in protecting our rights and safeguarding our mission. The deepening of this unity of purpose and co-operation must always be at the forefront of our attention.*

*In the great influx of pilgrims every day, we see and hear a profound longing for the deep spiritual springs of life, consolation, and hope. Pilgrims come to the Holy Land not to escape from their everyday reality, but to draw from the Holy Places a fresh inspiration and sense of God’s presence, so that they may return home and live more focused and attentive Christian lives.*

*Such strengthening of the spiritual lives of pilgrims is so important in a world in which we see a disturbing increase in the persecution of Christians. There are two kinds of persecution, of course. There is the obvious persecution, of the kind we see all too often – the persecution of blood, where Christians are killed because of their faith and witness. We join with the world in condemning such acts of violence.*

*But there are other forms of persecution, and we think especially of the persecution of conscience, where often in countries that boast of freedom and democracy, Christian values are attacked, ridiculed, or held in open contempt, so that Christians are unable to express their views openly in contributing to the building up of a just society.*

*For all our sisters and brothers around the world who live and worship under pressure, the Holy Places have always been the sweetest inspiration. The Holy Places are also the protection*

*and security of our local Christian communities both in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East. We have all heard the moving testimonies of pilgrims who come the Holy Land fearful, exhausted, and in despair, and who leave us filled with new hope because here they have experienced the diving energy that flows from this land of the divine-human encounter.*

*Máïoc the pilgrims who leave us renewed and strengthened in their Christian lives be our inspiration to be faithful to our own mission. And may our local Christian communities be renewed by the hope that we are given in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*May God bless you, dear Father Francesco, and the members of your Brotherhood, as well as the communities that you serve, and may the joy of the Easter Feast be your firm foundation.*

*Christ is risen!*

*Thank you".*

**At the Latin Patriarchate His Beatitude delivered the following address:**

*"Your Excellency, dear Archbishop Pizzaballa,*

*Your Eminences,*

*Your Graces,*

*Dear Fathers,*

*Christos Anesti!*

*As you celebrate the great Feast of Easter, Your Excellency, along with your clergy and your communities throughout the*

*Holy Land, we greet you with the joy of the Easter Feast. The uncreated Light of life shines from the Holy Tomb, and we sing;*

*How life-giving, how much more beautiful than paradise,  
and truly more resplendent than any royal palace,  
proved your grave,  
the source of our resurrection, O Christ.*

*(From the Paschal Hours)*

*In this Paschal season we give thanks to Almighty God for the privilege that we have been given of the pastoral care of the Christian communities that live in the Holy Land, and who call this region our home. It is to those who live here to whom both the blessing and the burden of sustaining the Christian presence in the Holy Land has been entrusted by divine providence, and this is, as we have known through the ages, no easy mission.*

*Our local communities face many challenges as we work to maintain a vital and prosperous Christian presence here, and our close co-operation is a crucial element in helping our communities to thrive.*

*But we are sustained, as the First Letter of Saint John says, by “what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life” (1 John 1:1). For the Holy Land is the place of this divine-human encounter, that has given life to the world. Our local communities are living witnesses to this encounter.*

*We know, too, that the life of the Christian communities of the Holy Land is an inspiration to the rest of the world, and our mission reaches beyond our particular borders. We know that our diakonia here is not for ourselves alone, but for the whole world.*

*The world comes to the Holy Land to see the physical evidence of our sacred history, and goes away with an inner spiritual renewal. The world comes to us to gaze on stones, and goes away having glimpsed heaven. The world comes to us to walk on dusty pathways, and goes away having partaken in a heavenly pilgrimage. The world comes to us to venerate the Holy Tomb, and goes away having received from it the divine energy and the light of resurrection.*

*As we sing in the Easter service,  
Come let us drink a new drink,  
not one marvellously brought forth from barren rock,  
but the Source of incorruption,  
which springs forth from the grave of Christ,  
in whom we are established.*

*(Heirmos Ode Three from the Canon of Pascha)*

*Here the thirsty comes, and meets communities of other thirsty souls, and there is a vision of the age that is to come. This is the land of the divine energy that helps us to understand our lives, especially in these challenging times.*

*May God bless you, Your Excellency, along with your clergy and your communities, and may we, who share a common mission in our beloved Holy Land, share a common joy in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Christos Anesti!*

*Thank you".*

**From Secretariat-General**

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# LAZARUS SATURDAY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, April 7/20, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of Lazarus' Saturday, as the commemoration of the event of the resurrection from the dead of the four-day dead Lazarus, friend of our Lord. This event was celebrated:

1. In Bethany, where the event took place.

At the Holy Monastery of Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios and Priests from other Churches, under the chanting of Archimandrite Demetrios and Byzantine choir singers from the Church of Cyprus. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and members of the Greek Consulate, as well as a large congregation of pilgrims.

His Beatitude preached the Divine Word to this congregation as follows;

“O Lord, Thy voice destroyed the dominion of hell and the world of Thy power raised from the tomb with him that had been four days dead; and Lazarus became the first-fruits of the regeneration of the world. All things are possible to Thee, O Lord and King of all. Bestow upon Thy servants cleansing and great mercy”.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,



## Noble Christians and pilgrims

Having concluded the beneficial to the soul Great Lent, we came today to this holy place, the town of Bethany, the hometown of Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary, in order to proclaim in Eucharist and Doxology, on the one hand the Common Resurrection before the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Christ, which was confirmed by the resurrection from the dead of His friend, the righteous Lazarus, and on the other hand, the triumphant entry of Christ in Jerusalem.

Lazarus' resurrection in Bethany, as well as the triumphant entry of our Saviour Jesus Christ in Jerusalem, are two important events of the great mystery of the Divine Providence, which are steadfastly bound together, as the hymn writer says; "Giving us before Thy Passion an assurance of the general resurrection, Thou hast raised Lazarus from the dead, O Christ our God. Therefore, like the children, we also carry tokens of victory, and cry to Thee, the Conqueror of death: Hosanna in the highest; blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord".

"Christ performed this wondrous event of Lazarus' resurrection as a foretelling of the resurrection from the dead of the whole humankind" according to St. Cyril of Alexandria, which will take place during the Second Coming of Christ. Moreover, Lazarus' resurrection took place so that the Son of God would be glorified, as St. John the Evangelist says; "When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness [of Lazarus] is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (John 11:4).

Interpreting these words, Amonios says: "For it was not so much for glory and wonder to raise Lazarus from his sickness, as it was to raise him from the dead". In other words, Christ's Resurrection is the peak of the life in Christ, namely of the believers in Crucified and Resurrected Christ as St. Paul preaches; "And if Christ be not risen, then is our

preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15:14).

Christ's resurrection, my dear brothers and sisters, refers primarily and mainly to the human nature of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. This means that we are called to be co-resurrected in Christ with Christ. "Jesus said, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25). And in more detail, I am the resurrection and the life. I have the power to resurrect because I am the source of life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies in the flesh, yet he will live, because, despite the heavenly and spiritual life I will transmit to his soul from this time forth, in due course, he will also be risen from the dead by me, even in the flesh.

Because Lazarus' resurrection is the preamble of the common resurrection of all people, for this reason Christ rose Lazarus from the dead after four days of his death, in order to show with this manner the common resurrection from the four elements that constitute the human body, namely, the earth, the soil, the air, the water and the fire, according to St. Cyril of Alexandria who interprets the words of Martha, Lazarus' sister; " Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days" (John 11:39).

In other words the natural death denotes undeniably the corruption that the created bodily form of man undergoes, in contrast to the death in Christ, which is the death of incorruption, namely the death of deliverance from the death of the bondage, namely of the corruption of sin. The death of deliverance is the death of eternal life and beatitude. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:26) the Lord says.

Commenting on the above words of the Lord, St. Cyril of Alexandria says: "The one that believes in Him (Christ) has eternal life in the time to come, in beatitude and complete incorruption".

St. John the Evangelist says "then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead" (John 12:1). "On the next day, much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him and cried, Hosanna: blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord" (John 12: 12-13).

Those people did this, becoming eye witnesses of the miracle of Lazarus' resurrection from the dead, as St. Cyril of Alexandria says: "being more adept to believing the large crowds welcomed Christ praising Him with palm tree branches as the one who conquered death".

This very Christ who conquered death are we also called to welcome, my dear brothers and sisters, with the spiritual palm tree branches of faith and repentance, if we actually want to become communicants and partakers of the deliverance from the corruption of sin.

And along with the hymn writer of the Church let us say: "Before Thine own death, O Christ, Thou hast raised from hell Lazarus that was four days dead, and hast shaken the dominion of death. Through this one man whom Thou hast loved, Thou hast foretold the deliverance of all men from corruption. We therefore worship Thine almighty power and cry: Blessed art Thou, O Saviour, have mercy upon us".

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a procession to Lazarus' Tomb, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, who read at the Tomb the Gospel narrative of Lazarus' Resurrection according to St. John.

Afterward there was a visit of the Episcopal Entourage at the Municipality of Bethany and lunch offered by the Abbess of the Monastery of Bethany, Nun Eupraxia.

## 2. At the Mount of Olives

Likewise the event of Lazarus' resurrection was celebrated on the Mount of Olives, due to its proximity to Bethany. In the evening there was Vespers at the Shrine of the Lord's Ascension with the Service of Compline and a procession towards the Church of the Men of Galilee (Galili Viri), officiated by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia, where the morning Gospel was read, at the presence of His Beatitude. Finally there procession returned to the Ascension Shrine.

In the morning the Divine Liturgy was officiated by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia, under the chanting of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the choir of St. James Cathedral, at the presence of local Christians and pilgrims.

**From Secretariat-General**

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

On Sunday April 1/14, 2019, 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Great Lent, and day of the commemoration of our Righteous Mother Mary of Egypt,

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of the Annunciation in Sarantaron Mount. His Beatitude's entourage were the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Hegoumen of the H. Monastery of St. John the Baptist by the River Jordan Archimandrite Bartholomew, the Hegoumen of the H. Monastery of St. Gerasimos of the Jordan Archimandrite Chrysostom, the Choir singer Archimandrite Demetrios, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Sophrony, while He was welcomed by Archimandrite Gerasimos, who is the Hegoumen and renovator of this Monastery and of the renovator of the Monastery of St. John the Baptist by the River Jordan.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude addressed all present with the following Sermon;

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13-14) Paul, the great Apostle of the nations, preaches.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us in this Holy place, on the high mountain where our Lord Jesus Christ fasted for forty days and was tempted by the devil, in order to worship the Living God on the one hand, and to partake of the Holy and sacred mysteries of the precious body and life-giving blood of our God and Saviour Christ.

Today, the fifth Sunday of the Great Lent, our Holy Church commemorates our Righteous Mother Mary of Egypt, who having lived in an indecent manner for seventeen years, she then

decided to change her life and turn to God in repentance. For this reason she retreated to the deepest desert of the Jordan river, where she led a very harsh life for forty years, surpassing her human nature, in unceasing prayer and having Christ as an example “who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, [and] purge[s] our conscience from dead works” (Hebrews 9:14).

And according to St. Paul, it is the blood of Christ that can purge our conscience from dead works, meaning the works of sin, which infect consciousness and cause necrosis to the humans.

In other words, the purging of our consciousness is accomplished with the working of Christ’s blood in us, without which [the blood] the worship of the Living God is impossible. Theophylaktos says; “the one who is manifesting dead works does not worship the True Living God, but [worships] the works, and deifies them. In that manner the man who loves food deifies his stomach, and similarly the greedy man commits idolatry”. And St. Chrysostom says; “the one who does dead works does not serve the Living God”. And this is so because the sin darkens the mind, infects the consciousness and alienates man from God. Only when our soul is pure and our consciousness cleansed from sin can we worship the true God and our Lord in a manner pleasing to Him, as St. Paul says: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:28).

Through the redeeming blood of the cross our Lord Jesus Christ banished the death of sin and granted us the possibility of salvation eternally, namely the deliverance from the bondage of sin. Therefore St. Paul advises us; “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).

Being the mystical body and the head of His Church, our Lord

Jesus Christ gave His disciples and Apostles power by saying; "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose so ever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose so ever sins ye retain, they are retained (John 20:22-23). Moreover, the Church is considered to be the representation of Noah's ark, "wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" as St. Peter says (1 Peter 3:20-21).

In other words, the salvation through Noah's ark, prefigured the salvation through the font and the baptism. And baptism is not only the cleansing of the flesh from impurity, but also a fervent supplication to God, that He may give us a clean consciousness, free from any compunction. And the baptism saves us by the power of the resurrection of Christ.

Baptism, my dear brothers and sisters, is no other than the fundamental mystery of repentance, according to the Lord's preaching; "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:13). And the Christians in Jerusalem glorified God while listening to St. Peter's preaching who said: "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). St. Paul also urges his disciple Timothy by saying; "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

Also prophet Ezekiel says that God is a God of mercy, and every sinner can be saved if he repents. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but

that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezekiel 33:11).

Invoking this very kindness and philanthropy and the infinite mercy of God, St. Paul says; "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:5-6). And the "washing of regeneration" is the mystery of repentance through which man washes his soul and cleanses his consciousness. St. John the Evangelist says, "But if we walk in the light [of God] the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Of this washing of regeneration, namely of the mystery of repentance but also of the precious blood of Christ, did Saint Mary of Egypt partake, a Saint who through her harsh striving and of course through the power of the Precious Cross, washed away the crimes of sin and granted to us the fruits of repentance; therefore, we entreat her along with the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary to have pity on us and deliver us from every impurity of our passions. Amen.

Many Happy returns and a blessed Easter!"

During this visit the expert scientists from the University of Athens and the University of Thessalonica began the first stage of their project for the fixation of the rock of Sarantaron Mount and of the Church within it.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Great Lent, March 25/April 7, 2019, according to the mobile cycle of Triodion feasts, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Annunciation according to the stable cycle of the feasts in the book of Minaion.

This feast was celebrated at the place where the Annunciation took place, at the town of Nazareth in Galilee. In this town, according to St. Luke the Evangelist (Luke 1:26-37) the Archangel Gabriel visited Virgin Mary and addressed her with the words "Rejoice thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee" and announced that "the Holy Spirit will come down on her and the power of God will overshadow her, and she will bear in flesh the Son of God". The Angel's words became a fact and Mary then said "behold the maiden of the Lord let it be done unto me according to thy word". Then as it is written in the Akathist, "along with the bodiless voice the Lord took a bodily form" and "the Word became flesh" and Mary became a chosen vessel of God and Theotokos [Mother of God].

This supernatural event of God's Providence for the salvation of humankind was celebrated at the place it actually happened, in Nazareth, on the aforementioned day, with the Festal Divine Liturgy that was celebrated at the historic Church of the Annunciation of the Patriarchate.

The Divine Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Methodios of Tabor, and Hagiotaphite Hieromonks,

with first in rank Archimandrite Ieronymos, and many Arab-speaking Priests from the Galilee district and visiting Priests from other Churches, Archdeacon Mark and other deacons. The chanting was delivered by the choir of the parish of the shrine of Nazareth. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the full congregation of the local faithful of Nazareth and its outskirts and pilgrims from various Orthodox countries.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation;

“And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:26-38).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

Today the Holy Church of Christ has gathered us all in this sacred place of the Biblical town of Nazareth in order to celebrate in thanksgiving and doxology the feast of the outmost philanthropy of God, that of the Annunciation of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

This event was foretold by Propher Isaiah; “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). And the psalmist proclaims for this reason: “O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his

salvation from day to day” (Psalm 96:1-2).

The question and surprise of Virgin Mary towards Archangel Gabriel: “How shall this be for I know no man?” (Luke 1:34) is a question of every human logic mind, because the beyond word and thought mystery of God’s Will is made understood only through faith to the unspeakable plan of what St. Paul says: “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: 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, the salvific plan of God for humankind was fulfilled by the full of grace and blessed Virgin Mary; a humankind which had been under the influence of the bondage of the corruption of death, of sin. St. Paul says; “but when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4-5).

Interpreting these words, Ecumenios says; “He didn’t say through a woman...but from a woman, showing that he had received the Lord in her and that He was a fruit of her womb”. And Eusevios of Emesa says: “Because sin was created by a woman, the Saviour came from a woman”. “Rejoice, thou through whom joy shall shine forth; rejoice, thou through whom the curse shall be blotted out” the writer of the hymn of the Annunciation proclaims. “Rejoice, O most blessed Maiden, who hast alone kept the seal of purity as in thy womb thou receives the Word and Lord, Who is ere eternity, that He as God might save the race of man from error and deception”.

The salutation, “rejoice though who art full of glory” of the Archangel Gabriel to Virgin Mary refers to two things; firstly, to the fact that through the bodiless voice of the

Angel, namely through the coming of the Holy Spirit and the overshadowing of the power of the Most High on her, Virgin Mary became a vessel of the Divine Grace. And the Divine Grace delivered her from every sin and in this manner the hypostatic God the Word, Christ, was incorporated in her and “the mortal nature withstood union with the Godhead”.

Secondly, the “rejoice” of the Angel refers to the fact that the joy of salvation shone upon the world. And this is so because the curse was banished, the curse which kept the forefather Adam and the foremother Eve bound with the bondage of corruption and sin, as Joseph the hymn writer says; “rejoice [Theotokos] O vessel of rejoicing, through whom our first mother’s curse utterly is dispelled” and “thou art Adam’s recovery, rejoice, O All-blameless one, thou art the death-knell of Hades”.

Today my dear brothers, the Holy Church of Christ evangelizes the recreation of the whole world through Theotokos Mary, namely the revelation of the true light in one hypostasis, as the Bible says: “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” (Isaiah 9:2/Matt. 4:16). This event is witnessed by the Holy Apostles and Evangelists not only with philosophical terms and metaphysic confirmations but with the uncreated enlightenment of the power of the Holy Spirit. “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16) St. Peter says. While St. John the Evangelist says: “ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us” (1 John 1:1,3).

Behold why the hymn writer says; “Let creation be glad, let

nature dance for joy; today is revealed the mystery that is from eternity, and the Son of God becometh Son of man. God becometh man that He might make Adam God”.

This revealed mystery to Theotokos Mary, which is from eternity, is being witnessed and ministered liturgically and in sacrifice to the point of blood by the “dwelling place of God”, the Mother of Churches Jerusalem, the first created monastic order of the Studious Ones, namely the Order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

Our contemporary challenges of lawlessness and apostasy in the world confirm the preaching of St. Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit; “Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:21-22).

The deliverance from the bondage of corruption to the freedom of the glory of our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is being announced to us also today, by the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. Therefore, let us say along with the Archangel Gabriel to Virgin-Mary: “Rejoice O thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee” (Luke 1:28), intercede your Son and God for those who fervently honour thee, grant our souls and our region peace and the great mercy. Amen. Have many happy returns and a blessed Pascha.”

After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy a festal meal was offered to the Patriarchal entourage and many others by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, where His Beatitude addressed all present as follows;

“Evangelize earth a great joy, heavens praise the glory of God”

Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Distinguished Members of the Community of Nazareth,

Dear Guests,

Today the Holy Church of our Fathers celebrates in great festivity the Holy Feast of the Annunciation of Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary; the people of Nazareth also co-celebrate with us.

This festal event holds a special significance for both the Christian community and the other citizens of Nazareth.

And we say this, because the feast of the Annunciation of Theotokos Mary is the annunciation of the philanthropy and the love of God towards all men, His supreme creation.

“God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16). “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John 4:20).

This gospel of God’s love is being ministered throughout the centuries by the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem through its monastic order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, which has never ceased to care for the safeguarding of the All-holy Shrines and for the Christian presence and witness in the Holy Land. The history of the preservation of the All-holy Shrines as well as the history of the preservation and pastoring of our Christian flock and of its identity is the most tangible and true witness of the sacred mission of the Roman Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Today we find ourselves in the pleasant position to make known to you that our common efforts and the close co-operation with the members of your community in Nazareth has given forth its

fruits. And these fruits are the completion of the project of the Patriarchal School in the area of Kaser Al-Mutran. The project of the School is on its final stage.

We take the opportunity in the joy of this blessed feast to thank those who honoured with their presence the feast of the Annunciation of Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary in Nazareth.

We would also like to express our warmest thanks to our beloved brothers and sisters in the Metropolis of Nazareth and to our dear Priests as well as to all those who serve in the Holy Church of Christ. Many Happy Returns. Have a blessed period of the remaining Great Lent and a Happy Pascha! Amen.”

The feast of the Annunciation was likewise celebrated at the Shrine of the Tomb of Theotokos in Gethsemane with the Divine Liturgy which was led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia, in the presence of the Hegoumen Most Reverend Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela, at the Holy Church of the Transfiguration of the Lord in Ramallah, led by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis and at the Holy Church of the Annunciation in Rafidia with the Divine Liturgy that was led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE SUNDAY OF THE ADORATION**

# OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On March 18/31, 2019, The Patriarchate celebrated the Sunday of the Adoration of the Precious and Life-giving Cross, for the encouragement of the faithful, so that they may continue the difficult period of the fast towards the Holy Pascha.

## 1. Vespers

Great Vespers of Parresia was held at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrant the Archbishops in the Holy Altar and the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and deacons, at the chanting of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos. The service was attended by a congregation of local faithful and pilgrims.

At the end of Vespers the Patriarchal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

## 2. On the day of the feast

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Life-giving Tomb of the Lord, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants Archbishops of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Emanuel of France, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Amphilohios of Andrianoupolis, the Archbishops of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Demetrios of Lydda, Nectarios of Anthedon, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis. Also Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis



Archimandrite Nectarios, under the chanting of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and Archimandrite Demetrios. Present at the service was the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, along with a large congregation.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a litany, three times around the All-holy Tomb and around the shrines, with the veneration of the Precious Cross with the Precious Wood.

The return at the Patriarchate Headquarters followed, where His Beatitude addressed all present as follows;

“In paradise of old the tree stripped me bare; for by giving me its fruit to eat, the enemy brought in death. But now the Tree of the Cross that clothes men with the garment of life has been set up on earth, and the whole world is filled with boundless joy. Beholding it venerated, O ye people, let us with one accord raise in faith our cry to God: His house is full of glory” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Today my beloved brothers and sisters, day of the veneration of the precious cross, we came to the place of skull, in Golgotha, where our Lord Jesus Christ offered for us His salvific Passion but also His life-giving resurrection and by the Eucharistic Divine Doxology we became participants and communicants of the joy and the power of the wood of life, of the Cross.

“The Lord said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34). Whosoever wants to become my disciple and follow me as my student, let him stop every friendship and relation with the corrupt by sin self of his and let him steadfastly decide to suffer for my sake not only sorrow and trials but also death on the cross, and then he may follow me, imitating my example.

Christ demands self-denial of those who wish to follow Him,

because His birth, life and death were a continuous act of self-denial and self-kenosis, as St. Paul preaches by saying: "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philip. 2:7-8).

In other words, Christ's Cross is not only the symbol per se, but also the incarnation of Christ's kenosis, namely of His self-denial and outmost humility. The preaching of the Cross is the foundation of the faith and the spring of the salvific power of the believers in Christ crucified and resurrected. Therefore St. Paul says; "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). This means that our faith should not be founded on the noetic wisdom of the people, but on the steadfast power of God; "your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" St. Paul says again (1 Cor. 2:5).

Behold why our Holy Church, by the inspiration of the Holy Fathers, placed the veneration of the Holy Cross in the middle of the fasting period of the Great Lent; "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" (Ephes. 6:14) St. Paul orders. And the breastplate of righteousness is no other than the Sacred and Life-giving Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

This Cross of Christ's righteousness did the martyrs of Christ's love follow, as well as all the Saints. This very Precious Cross of Christ, or better say, the unexplored mystery of the Cross, are we called to study as good soldiers of Christ, to study and live according to the word of the Cross and have it as a manner of thinking and living. We should do this so that the true light may guide our footsteps

to the eternal life of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And along with St. John of Damascus let us say; “this [Cross is] the resurrection of the dead, the support of those who stand, the walking stick of the ill...salvation of soul and body, it drives away all evil, creates all good things, it is the refutation of sin, the resurrection plant, the wood of eternal life. May those of us who venerate it be granted our share in the crucified [and resurrected] Christ. Amen. Have a good Easter.”

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **DOXOLOGY ON THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY OF MARCH 25 1821**

On Monday, March 12/25, 2019, a Doxology was held on the occasion of the National anniversary of March 25 1821 at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where there was a special prayer for the repose of the souls of the Fathers of our Nation who fell heroically during the years of the Ottoman Tyranny and finally a thanksgiving prayer for the liberation of the Nation.

The Doxology was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Archbishops of the Throne, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons, at the

presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the Ecclesiastical Byzantine Choir "St. John Koukouzelis" under the lead of Mr. Emanuel Daskalakis, while the service was attended by many Orthodox Faithful and members of the Greek Community of Jerusalem. At the end of the Service the Patriarchal entourage and all people returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters in the Reception Hall.

There, His Beatitude addressed all present as follows;

"Do not be afraid of the darkness! The freedom like the foggy star, will bring the night to dawn" says poet John Polemis.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Full of national boasting in Christ today we celebrate the historic anniversary of the liberation of our pious nation from the long-term slavery of the Ottoman sovereignty. Today we celebrate the anniversary of our National Rebirth.

The truly heroic Revolution of 1821 is a milestone in world history. And that's because a small group of determined fighters, with the blessings of the Bishop Palaion Patron Germanos, raised the honest banner of the Revolution and gave the sacred oath "Freedom or Death", "now is the struggle for all".

This nationalistic motto echoed as an ecumenical commandment in all the centres of the enslaved Romiosyne, which hearkening to the words of the psalmist: "The Lord being mindful of us, hath helped us" (Psalm 113: 20) rushed in the sacred fight

with all the forces of its rebellious children, "for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the homeland", "there is no sweeter thing than homeland and religion," General Makrygiannis will write in his memoirs.

The participation of the Church in the struggle for the regeneration of the nation was decisive. Leading ecclesiastical figures such as the Metropolitan Palaion Patron Germanos, Gregory Papaflessas, Athanasius Diakos, Bishop Isaiah Salonon, members of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and many Priests named and anonymous, became not only the animators of the Ottoman barbaric yoke of slavery, but also examples of self-sacrifice, namely martyrs of blood, in favor of freedom, which God gave to man, as St. Paul preaches by saying, "and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor 3:17) and elsewhere: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage "(Galatians 5: 1).

In other words, the great and distinguished fighters of 1821 understood the notion of freedom and of the Homeland biblically and not in a worldly manner. "Faith to the crucified and resurrected Christ" and "freedom of the homeland" constitute the cohesive force of preserving the Greek-Orthodox tradition and the identity of the pious nation of the Romans and the Christian nation of the Greeks. This, moreover, is borne out by the lyrics of our National Poet Dionysios Solomos in the "Hymn to Freedom", which he considers "to be drawn out of the sacred bones of the Greeks".

The Revolution of 1821 has clearly demonstrated that determination to self-sacrifice for the defense of sacred and moral values, such as freedom and homeland, is fully enforced. This is because the one who sacrifices his life wins it forever, and tyrannical sovereignty subsides in front of the moral splendor that manifests decisively and sacrificing.

The unparalleled heroism and admirable sacrificial to the

point of blood attitude of the fighters of 1821 would be good to be a source of inspiration for all of us in the face of the impending challenges of the so-called "New Age" or "New Order" in order to preserve natural laws and moral biblical values. "When the Gentiles, who have not the law, do not have the law, they have a law to themselves" St. Paul says (Romans 2:14).

Our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, willingly and as owed, participates in this annual anniversary of the sacred commemoration of the rebirth of our Nation, and came down to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with all its members in order to offer thanksgiving praise and doxology to our God Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who was crucified and resurrected for us, for the benefit He granted to our Nation. We also offered interceding prayers for the eternal repose of the souls of those who fell heroically and gloriously in the sacred struggle of our noble nation for the nation of the Roman Orthodox people.

For all these, allow Us to raise our glass and exclaim in honour:

Long live March 25 1281!

Long live the noble and royal nation of the Roman Orthodox people!

Long live Hellas!

Long live our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!

And the Greek Consul General as follows;

"Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend Archbishops,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are glad that today we celebrate at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem the Nation's Revolution of 1821, and remember the nation's most glorious page of the modern history with national pride. We honor those who fought with courage, heroism and self-denial and managed, through an unequal and long struggle that demanded unspeakable sacrifices to end the four dark ages of a foreign tyrannical yoke.

On this day, we must remember the elements that made the 1821 liberation struggle distinct for both Greek and world history and which are of utmost relevance to us today. Those elements that are a lesson for all modern Greeks. Three of these elements are: The common vision of Freedom, the unity of the nation, and the courage in the face of far superior enemies and enormous objective difficulties.

The common vision was that of the free Homeland, in particular the creation of a model state, based on the principles of democracy and justice, which takes care of all its citizens, with no discriminations. This vision, especially promoted for its time, made the struggle righteous and morally imperious, enhancing the determination and vigor of the fighters and winning the sympathy of thousands of Friends of Greece who strengthened it in a variety of ways.

National unity and unity of soul were indispensable to the outcome of the Revolution, as in every common struggle. The adversary tried to divide the fighters, instigating internal quarrels, aiming to hurt faith in the just struggle, neutralize the vigor and bend the resistance of the fighters. The unity was conquered by difficulties and after civil breaks that delayed the successful outcome of the Revolution. The lesson for all, then and now, is that without unity and unity of soul, the common purpose and national laws are in danger of

losing their meaning and value.

The boldness of the fighters who defied the mighty power of the oppressor and the negative international circumstances and declared the liberation struggle, carrying it for more than eight years on land and sea, is the characteristic of the Greeks that has repeatedly pushed them to the forefront history. A prudent, computational assessment of circumstances would entail continuing national subordination and abandoning the national vision of freedom and national pride. As General Makrigiannis put it, "when the few decide to die, and when they make that decision, they lose a few times and many win."

Today we do not forget the crucial role played by the Church in achieving the national goal, while maintaining the identity of the Greeks in the long and gloomy years of the Ottoman domination. The Church was the ark of the salvation of the Nation and the guardian of our values, preserving the language, the Christian Faith and the hope of the Resurrection of the Nation. Thus, as the fighters themselves proclaimed, the struggle of the national rebirth became "for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the Homeland."

Greece does not forget the great offer of expatriate Greeks in the struggle of national rebirth and always feels grateful for it. The Friends, beginning with large urban centers in Europe, enthralled with enthusiasm and self-denial with their rebellious brothers, played a significant role in shaping the common vision of freedom and in the initial plans of the Revolution and contributed to the creation of the Philhellenic current.

March 25, 1821 remains for us all the foundation stone of our national entity and the leading station of the modern history of the Nation. The heroism, self-denial and determination of the Revolutionist fighters, and those inspired by them, to seek a free, fair and democratic Homeland, inspire us, but at the same time make us commit ourselves to being worthy of them



and, like them, to rise to the height of the circumstances and to get everyone involved to overcome obstacles, however insurmountable they may seem to be.

Long live 25 March 1821!

Long live Greece!"