

# THE NAME DAY OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS

On Sunday March 11/24, 2019, on the second Sunday of Great Lent, on the commemoration of St. Gregory Palamas, the Patriarchate also celebrated the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, which for reasons related to the Status Quo has been transferred from its actual day of March 9/22, day of the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs who martyred at the frozen lake of Sebastia of Pontus during the reign of the persecutor Emperor Licinius in the year 320 A.D.

For this feast the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth and Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Demetrios of Lydda, Makarios of Qatar, Nectarios of Anthedon, Philoumenos of Pella, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis and the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba. There were also the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank the Elder Kamarasis Reverend Archimandrite Nectarios, Arab-speaking Priests and visiting Priests from other Churches, Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons. The chanting was held by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos in the attendance of a congregation of local faithful and pilgrims.

After the Divine Liturgy there was a Doxology and the return in procession to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

Therein the following addresses were read:

**The address of Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina;**

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Ascending the ladder of the Holy and Great Lent, we are fortified in our spiritual fight with the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs who boldly confessed Christ, and fought the good fight well, winning the crown of divine glory, having defied the glacier of the lake of Sebastia in Pontus in 320 A.D., during the reign of King Licinius.

On the feast of these athletes of Christ today, the commemoration of the holy martyr Theophilos is especially projected in the Church of Jerusalem, because Your Sacred Beatitude bears his name.

In the special honour of the holy martyr Theophilos and of Your Beatitude, we offered the bloodless sacrifice at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and a thanksgiving doxology with the vast participation of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, the members of our Greek-Orthodox flock and a large crowd of noble pilgrims.

Filled with the joy of this double feast and in this historic Hall of the Throne, we gratefully remember those things that Your Beatitude has worked for our Patriarchate and flock.

Initially we commemorate the fact that once again there has been a great effort for the pastoral guidance of our flock in the three areas of the Patriarchate’s jurisdiction, especially in Jordan, in gatherings of Priests for their more efficient pastoral activity. A fruit of Your Beatitude’s actions have also been the special festivities organized by the Royal Family of Jordan, which support the Christians in their peaceful co-existence with their Muslim co-citizens. In the Metropolis of the Patriarchate in Amman, members of the flock

of Jordan have been honoured with the medal of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, as they have been distinguished for their charity donations and the construction of a Church. Moreover, with your characteristic sensitivity favoring the pilgrims who have been flooding the Holy Land recently, Your Beatitude has offered much time for their welcoming in the Patriarchate, for their blessing and guidance, along with the stressing of the benefit through their pilgrimage.

Keeping good relationships with our brotherly Churches, Your Beatitude was invited to officiate the consecration ceremony of the beautiful and very large Cathedral of St. Andrew the First-called in Bucharest, in the Patriarchate of Romania, and participated in the national festivities on the occasion of the 200-year-old anniversary of liberation and unity of Romania.

Practicing the leading role of our Patriarchate among the other Christian Churches, Your Beatitude has mobilized them towards the abolition of laws undermining their properties and the raising of their voices in the protection of the continuously lessening numbers of the Christians of the Holy Land. Aiming at this, Your Beatitude has striven by visiting leaders of countries and of Churches and Presidents of international organizations in order to ensure their solidarity to the efforts of our Patriarchate to preserve the internationally and biblically established Status Quo of the Holy Land and the rights of the Christians on them.

The actions of Your Beatitude for the protection of the rights of our shrines and especially of the renovation of the God-receiving Cave in Bethlehem have been most intensive, simultaneously with the equally important preservation and renovation of the Chapel of Stocks in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the historic Monastery of St. John the Baptist by the baptism site in the River Jordan, where a few days ago Your Beatitude received the President of the State of Israel and leaders of the Christian Churches.

Last but not least, worthy to be mentioned is the project of the modest Christian presence in Qatar, which began during the Patriarchal Office of the late Patriarch Diodoros and was recently completed with the consecration of the beautiful Church of St. Isaac the Syriac, St. George the Great Martyr and St. Makarios, Archbishop of Jerusalem, along with the Episcopal Headquarters and completed parish facilities, for the comfort, support and sanctification of the Orthodox and other Christians who live there.

From all these, Your Beatitude, we the Hagiotaphite Fathers take an example and are encouraged to co-operate with You as the members of the body with its head and among us harmoniously, in order to reflect the witness of unity to the world and that the name of our venerable Brotherhood and of the Holy Church of Jerusalem may be praised and the venerated Name of the Most High may be glorified.

Raising the glass Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the whole Brotherhood, I wish health and strength and protection from on high, so that You may guide the vessel of the Church of Jerusalem steadily and in good course, for the fulfillment of its peace-making, reconciliatory and salvific mission in the Holy Land and in the full body of the Orthodox Church. So be it.”

**The address of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos;**

“Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

The present day, when the memory of the Holy Forty Martyrs is celebrated, takes on special importance, since the

Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the pious congregation, the pilgrims and the Orthodox Community, honoured with the proper splendor the Name-Day of the Head of the Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches, His Holy Beatitude, Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

In attending this celebration with feelings of sincere joy and particular honour, I would like to express the unwavering support of Greece to the Presbyterian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and to extend to You our cordial wishes for health, strength and longevity, in order to continue Your high, national as well as religious mission, which is becoming more and more important and significant in this difficult time.

During its centuries-long journey, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem has played an extremely important historical role and, as a religious centre of the Holy Land, continues to be an inexhaustible source of hope and to point out in all directions from the Holy City, its universal message of salvation, while defending with the dedication and self-denial of the Holy Fathers, the most important holy pilgrimages of Christianity.

The Sacred Institution is a fixed reference point for all Greeks and symbolizes the long-standing presence of Hellenism in the Holy Land, while it is an indissoluble bond of friendship and cooperation with other peoples, and it is the spokesperson for Orthodox Christians in the region, preserving valuable traditions and transmitting, in every direction, the Universal message of Orthodoxy.

Your Beatitude,

In a time of instability, fluidity, and continuous redeployments that seem to favor intolerance, empathy and rivalry, Your multifaceted work, which is governed by sincere mood of mutual understanding and reconciliation, not only in relations with other doctrines and other religions, but also

in the context of the wider peace effort in this much tested area, gives moral stature to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, in the context and defense of the Christian presence in the Middle East, promoting its role as a factor of moderation and stability. With a series of initiatives, You promote the restoration and promotion of the Sacred Shrines of Christianity, while ensuring the preservation of the Status Quo in the Holy Land and the spiritual guidance and prosperity of a flock undergoing significant trials.

Because the challenges of the time and the lurking dangers are many. However, it is certain that those who are treacherous against the Patriarchate struggle in vain. Their efforts strike and will always strike in the hurdle of the power that the Sacred Institution draws from the long history and tradition, from unity, from the deep faith and devotion of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and from its leadership, Your Beatitude, who, with conscious knowledge and perception of the circumstances, with vigor and determination, take care of its present and its future.

Your Beatitude,

The load you have been given is great and the struggle that this involves is long and laborious. It is my deep conviction that with the help of God and the active support of all of us, You will continue Your work and carry on Your high mission.

Many Happy Returns.”

**Addresses were also delivered by representatives of the flock of areas belonging to the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate, representatives of other Orthodox Churches and finally His Beatitude thanked them all with the following words;**

“The Martyrs, O Christ God, esteemed the lake as Paradise and the cold as warmth. The threats of the tyrants did not affright their mind, nor did the noble Saints fear the assaults of torments, since they possessed the Cross as a

divine weapon; for with it, as mighty men, they put the enemy to flight. Wherefore, they have also received the crown of grace” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

“Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious” (Psalm 66:1-2), the Church of Christ cries out through the mouth of Prophet David, on the sacred commemoration of the athletes of Christ and Great Forty Martyrs who martyred in the town of Sebastia. These “wondrous prizewinners with minds staunch with courage, they endured the pains of martyrdom nobly, and having as a divine weapon the Cross they defeated the enemy and gained the crown of grace”, namely the Christian calling through which they abide in the highest, according to their hymn writer.

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem, which honours the sacred memory of the holy forty martyrs, especially of their co-martyr Theophilos whose sacred name is given to our Mediocrity, we came to the place of martyrdom and the three-burial of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where we celebrated the divine and great sacrament of the Eucharist. Moreover, we offered a thanksgiving doxology to the Holy Trinitarian God on the occasion of the sacred commemoration of Martyr Theophilos, surrounded by the sacred members of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, and we prayed along with our Christian congregation, the noble Christians and the visiting pilgrims.

We did all these according to the words of St. Paul: “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20).

This annual commemoration of the holy forty martyrs and their co-martyr Theophilos, which our Holy Church of Jerusalem jubilantly celebrates, does not only refer to our mediocrity, but especially and primarily to the institution of the Patriarchal office, through which it is made clear that the Church of Christ has been founded on the crucified and redeeming blood of Christ and of the holy ones who became co-martyrs of His sacred blood. Therefore the wise Paul says: "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).

The holy martyrs of the love of Christ are those who martyred with their blood for the sake of truth and faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ. For this reason St. Paul advises his disciple Timothy saying: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord; For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7-8).

Today's commemorated holy Forty Martyrs with their co-martyr Theophilos worthily gained the divine glory, having gone through water and fire and became wondrous by our Holy Trinitarian God, towards whom they have boldness and pray for us. "Likewise, the souls of those who have not in vain been chipped for the sake of the witness in Christ in the heavenly altar, minister those who pray asking for the remission of their sins" according to Origen.

The holy martyrs are projected as an example to imitate for the fight they fought in their earthly life in order to become heirs of the kingdom of God. "...we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).



Ecumenios says; "our present life is a fight; a fight against sins and desires and all thoughts who fight against us. For this we strive against and accomplish in the fight".

In this fight of the witness of the love of the gospel of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ are we also called, my dear brothers and sisters, especially during this blessed period of the fast of the Great Lent, having as helpers and protectors the holy forty martyrs, their co-martyr Theophilos and the Most Blessed Theotokos and Mother of God, Ever-Virgin Mary. Let us entreat them so that we may be deemed worthy to the three-day Resurrection of our God and Saviour of our souls.

For this, we pray for all who prayed along with us and honoured this feast, that they may have power from on high, the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, patience and every blessing coming from God.

We warmly thank those who addressed Us, Geronda Secretary-General, Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, Reverend Archimandrite Dometianos, Representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Russia, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Romania, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Archimandrite Raphael who spoke on behalf of the flock in North Jordan, the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, who spoke on behalf of the Holy Archdiocese of Qatar, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the newly founded Community in Beersheba, the Reverend Archimandrite Ignatios, who spoke on behalf of the

Community of Beit Jalla, Reverend Farah Badur, who spoke on behalf of St. James Cathedral, the Managing Director of our Patriarchal School, Reverend Archimandrite Mattheos, the Steward Savvas, who spoke on behalf of the Community of Beit Sahour, Mr. Abu Aeta from Beit Sahour, Mr. Michele Frez from Bethlehem and all who participated in this feast.

To the health of all of you!"

A festal fasting meal followed where the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos was the guest of honour and to which His Beatitude offered the officion of the Archimandrite to Hagiotaphite Hieromonk Martyrios who ministers in Madaba.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF  
ISRAEL VISITS QASER EL YAHUD**

# **SITE BY THE RIVER JORDAN**

On Tuesday morning, March 6/19, 2019, the President of the State of Israel Mr. Reuven Rivlin visited the site of Qaser El Yahud by the river Jordan, escorted by the Minister of Regional Cooperation Mr. Tzachi Hanegbi, Mr. Yacub Salame and Mr. Ceasar Marjie from the Ministry of Religions of Israel and by the Israeli Military Officials of the region, The President also visited the properties of the Christian Churches in the area, which have been de-mined by Halo Trust and the Israeli army, and the nearby Holy Monastery of St. John the Baptist which has recently been restored and renovated by the Patriarchate.

In this Monastery the President was received by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos along with the Heads of the other Churches of Jerusalem and Hegoumen Archimandrite Bartholomew.

The President Mr. Rivlin stressed the importance of the de-mining project of this area, which is a beacon of Christianity and praised the cooperation of the Churches for its accomplishment, as a means that secures the incoming of pilgrims from around the world, and a bridge among Israel, Jordan and Palestine and among Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Departing from the Holy Monastery of St. John the Baptist, His Beatitude visited the Holy Monastery of St. Gerasimos of the Jordan, whose commemoration was celebrated last Sunday (of Orthodoxy) and praised the work of Archimandrite Chrysostom who welcomed Him warmly.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday March 4/17, 2019, the Sunday of Orthodoxy was celebrated by the Patriarchate at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

On this First Sunday of the Holy and Great Lent, the Church celebrates the triumph of the Restoration of the holy Icons by the Emperor Mihail and his mother St. Theodora and by the Patriarch St. Methodios the Confessor, after one and a half centuries of persecution and destruction of the icons by the iconoclasts.

On this feast the Church commemorates the defenders of the holy icons, reverend Patriarchs, Hierarchs, Kings and faithful Christians, as witnesses of the incarnate presence of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth.

## 1. Vespers

This event which has been identified with Orthodoxy and confirmed by the 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synod in 787 A.D. was celebrated by the Church of Jerusalem with Vespers in the evening at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection with the veneration and the incense offering at the Holy Deposition, veneration at the Holy Tomb, veneration at the Horrendous Golgotha, Great Entrance and the Blessing of Bread and incense offering, officiated by our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the participation in prayer of the Archbishops of the Throne, and the members of the Holy Synod, and with the co-celebration by the Hagiotaphite Priests and deacons. The chanting was delivered by the Choir leader Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the service was attended by a large congregation of pilgrims.

## 2. On the Feast Day

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection on the day of the feast, officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Makarios of Qatar, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and Hagiotaphite Priests, with first in rank the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the service was attended by the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and a large crowd of faithful Christians and pilgrims.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by the litany of the Holy Icons three times around the Holy Tomb and around the shrines and concluded with the reading of the Synodikon of Orthodoxy and of Triodion.

Afterward the festal return to the Patriarchate Headquarters took place under the sound of bells tolling, where all present paid their respect to His Beatitude and He addressed them as follows;

“The grace of truth has shone forth upon us; the mysteries darkly prefigured in the times of old have now been openly fulfilled. For behold the Church is clothed in a beauty that surpasses all things earthly” our Father among the Saints Theodore of the Studion says.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

Today our Holy Orthodox Church commemorates the restoration of the holy icons which was done by the memorable and noble Emperor of Constantinople Mihail and his mother Theodora, during the Patriarchal office of St. Methodios the confessor.

The iconoclast heresy, namely the opposition against the veneration of the holy icons, revived the condemned heresy by the Holy Ecumenical Synods of Arianism and Nestorianism, which denied the divinity of the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ who became incarnate through the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

Behold why St. Theodore of the Studion says: "the Church is rejoicing in acceptance of the garment of her nudity". And the garment of the nudity that the Church accepted is the hypostatic unity of God the Word with our human nature which He received by the Holy Spirit, according to St. Cyril of Alexandria.

The great and unexplained mystery of the divine providence, namely the incarnation of God the Word, is the unbreakable foundation of the Christian teaching, especially of our Orthodox faith, as this is witnessed by the Apostles and Evangelists, as St. John the Theologian says; "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth' (John 1:14). And elsewhere he 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" (1 John 1:1).

Truly my dear brothers, today the divine grace was shown in the universe, because Christ the Word, the new Adam, gave his own garment to the Church. "Celebrate, rejoice O Christian people of the Lord, seeing the Church once again illumined by the goodness of the divine form; in which God was clad and became human in order to save us" the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

In other words, the depicting or the description of the incarnate Divine Word refers to his human form and is in his divinity. "God the Word was made poor, and hungered, and thirsted, and these are characteristics of the human nature,

by which he is being described; While He (God the Word) is simple in his divine form and indescribable” St. Theodore of the Studion says. “Who is able to imitate God the invisible and bodiless and indescribable and with no form? For it is the outmost insanity and irreverence to give form to the divine” St. John of Damascus teaches.

Giving heed to the holy ecclesiastical tradition and teaching of the holy Apostles and Fathers, we, my brothers do not venerate neither worship the matter, that is the icon *per se*, but the prototype, that is the image that is being depicted, as St. Basil the Great says: “The honour of the icon goes to the prototype”. We venerate and kiss the holy icons relatively, not in worship, neither as if they are gods, but as images of the archetype. Moreover, through the holy icons the eyes of those who see them are being sanctified and through them [the icons] the mind is lifted up towards the knowledge of God.

Having confessed in thanksgiving this faith at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, let us entreat our God and Saviour that we may be deemed worthy to reach His three-day Resurrection. And let us say along with the hymn writer: “The uncircumscribed Word of the Father became circumscribed, taking flesh from thee, O Theotokos, and He has restored the sullied image of its ancient glory, filling it with the divine beauty. This our salvation we confess in deed and word, and we depict it in the holy icons”. Amen.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE FIRST STASIS OF THE SALUTATIONS OF THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday evening, March 2/15, 2019, the Service of the Akathist and the First Stasis of the Salutations were held at the Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection.

This contrite service of the Canon and the Salutations in the Small Compline were officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, under the chanting of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and Archimandrite Demetrios. Present at the service were local faithful from Jerusalem and pilgrims, and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos. His Beatitude addressed this congregation as follows;

“An Angel, and the chiefest among them, was sent from Heaven to cry: Rejoice! To the Mother of God. Land beholding Thee, O Lord, taking bodily form, he stood in awe, and with his bodiless voice cried aloud to her such things as these: Rejoice, thou through whom joy shall shine forth. Rejoice, though through whom the curse shall be blotted out” , is exclaimed by the composer of this theological hymn which refers to the Annunciation of Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, as well as the unspeakable mystery of the incarnation by the Holy Spirit of God the Logos our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and Pilgrims



The sacred service of the Akathist Hymn or, the Salutations of the Theotokos, is a characteristic feature of the Holy and Great Lent before the feast of Pascha, the feast of the luminous resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And Christ's three-day burial and resurrection from the dead refers to the human nature that He undertook, as St. John the Evangelist says: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

The great and unspeakable mystery of the incarnation of God the Word is not some philosophical theory or making, but a specific historic and indisputable action, which took place in a specific time and place, through the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary as St. Luke the Evangelist says: "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, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:28, 31). "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:34-35).

Archangel Gabriel's words "rejoice thou who art full of grace" refers to two things; first, to the fact that though the voice of this bodiless host, the Angel, namely through the voice of the Holy Spirit, Virgin Mary became a vessel of the divine grace. And this divine grace delivered her from every human sin and this way God the Word, Christ, became incorporated in her in a hypostatic way. Secondly, this "rejoice" from the Angel refers to the fact that the joy of salvation illumined the world. And this is so because the curse was banished, the curse which had bound the first-created couple, Adam and Eve, with the bonds of corruption and death, as Joseph the hymn writer depicts in his writing by saying: "Rejoice, O vessel of

rejoicing, through whom our first mother's curse utterly is dispelled" and "thou art Adam's recovery, rejoice, Virgin Bride of God, though art the death-knell of Hades".

St. John of Damascus calls all nations and all peoples to honour the nativity of the Theotokos Mary because "she gave birth to a treasure of goods that cannot be taken away from the world. Through her the Creator transformed all nature towards its best form amidst the human race. And if man is a combination of mind and matter, and stands between all visible and invisible creation, by His incarnation and union with the human nature, the Creator Word of God became united with the whole creation".

In other words, thanks to the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, the Creator, namely, God the Father transformed all creation to its best form, through the human nature of Christ, which He received through the pure blood of the Theotokos. If therefore, being between the mind and matter, man is the linking bond between all visible and invisible creation, then the Word of God, has become united with all creation since He undertook the human nature.

Behold therefore, why the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is recognized as the most glorious creation of God both in earth and in heaven. And behold why the Most Blessed Theotokos is considered to be the "more honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim".

This hymn of doxology and intercession has been appointed by the Church Fathers to be chanted during the full duration of the Holy and Great Lent because the Theotokos is the par excellence intercessor towards God.

In other words, the Theotokos is the one who intercedes for all people who call upon her in faith. And this is owed to the fact that the Theotokos became a participant and communicant of the divine glory of her Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ,

through the unidentifiable mystery of the divine providence, namely the incarnation of God the Word. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" St. Paul says (Romans, 11:33).

God's love, His infinite mercy and philanthropy call us through St. Paul's preaching, and especially during the period of Great Lent, "to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2: 2-3). And the hidden treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of our God and Saviour are no others than the uncreated light of God's truth, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3) according to St. Paul.

Let us also entreat our God and Saviour Jesus Christ my dear brothers and sisters, so that by the intercessions of our Lady, the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary we may be deemed worthy to go through the period of the Great Lent in repentance and conclude with the luminous resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, hearkening to the words of the hymn writer of the Church; "The fast has come, mother of chastity, accuser of sins, advocate of repentance, life of the angels and salvation of men. Let us cry out ye faithful: O God have mercy upon us". Amen.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE CONSECRATION SERVICE OF**

# THE H. CHURCH OF ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAC & ST. GEORGE THE TROPHY-BEARER IN DOHA

On Friday, February 9/22, 2019, the consecration service of the Holy Church of St. Isaac the Syriac and the Holy Glorious George the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer, along with St. Makarios the Patriarch of Jerusalem was held as described below.

It is befitting to refer to a few things related to the history of this Church, before the consecration details are mentioned.

The memorable Patriarch Diodoros I was the first to visit Qatar in 1990, as it belonged to the border of the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem Patriarchate in the Arabic peninsula. The Patriarch was then received by the Emir of that time, Prince of Qatar Hamed Bin Khalifa Al Thani.

This visit was followed by a delegation under the command of Patriarch Diodoros, with the current Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who was then Archimandrite Theophilos, after the petition of the Ambassador of the U.S.A. at that time, Mr. Patrich Theros, in order to officiate the Services of Easter for the small Greek community, at a hall of the American Embassy, as there was no Holy Church for the Christians in Qatar.

Following this, there were subsequent petitions to the Government of Qatar to provide the construction permit of a Holy Church in Doha, the capital of Qatar, by the Patriarchate.

The Government of Qatar granted this request and offered a piece of land to the Patriarchate in Doha, not as its own

property, but only for the use of the land. The construction of this consecrated Holy Church began in this piece of land. This action of the Patriarchate was set as an example to other Christian denominations who asked and were given land areas in this particular district which was offered to the Patriarchate, and they also built Holy Churches. In this manner, the Patriarchate became the cause for the return of Christianity in Qatar. In the year 2010, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited Qatar, and was received by the Emir Prince of Qatar Mamed Bin Khalifa Al Thani.

The construction project of the Holy Church was being continued with the addition of the Bishop's residence on the opposite side of the Church, by the hard toiling efforts of the Patriarchal Commissioner in Qatar Archimandrite Makarios the Hagiographite, who was ordained Archbishop of Qatar in 2014. With the funding by the Patriarchate and by noble donors, the project reached its completed current form, being in the need of its sanctification with the consecration service. So that the Church will be established in the ages for the worship and the sanctification of the congregation belonging to it, which numbers ten thousand Greek Orthodox faithful Christians from various countries.

The service was held on the aforementioned day according to the Typikon order of the Orthodox Church regarding the Consecration, with the litany of the holy relics of the Holy Martyrs of St. Savvas' Lavra, three times around the Church, the planting of the relics inside the Holy Altar, the smearing of antiminsia and the Church walls with the Holy Myrrh, and with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, which was officiated by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were; the Most Reverend Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Makarios of Qatar, Philoumenos of Pella, Aristovoulos of Madaba, Ioannis from the Church of Serbia, Archimandrite Eudokimos, spiritual

Father of the Holy Lavra of St. Savvas the Sanctified, Fr. George, Priest in Madaba, and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by a choir from Thessalonica under the lead of Mr. Ioannis Hasanides in Greek, and by the parish choir in Arabic. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece, His Excellency Mr. Constantinos Orphanides and the Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus in Qatar, His Excellency Mr. Mihail Zaharioglou, diplomatic representatives of other countries, invited clergy from various Metropolis of the Church of Greece and the Church of Crete, Reverend Abbess Theoxeni and nuns from the Patriarchal H. Monastery of Chrysopigi, of the H. Metropolis of Kydonia and Apokoronou, the full congregation of the people who prayed and glorified God for this gift of the consecration of the Church in the centre of the Arabic peninsula for their sanctification by the celebration of the Church services in it.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation:

“By means of His coming, Christ hath filled all things with His light; our souls are now consecrated, and by His Holy Spirit He hath renewed the world; for a house is founded to the Lord’s praise and glory, wherein Christ our God, for the salvation of mortals, doth consecrate and hallow the hearts of all His faithful flock” the hymn writer of the church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians,

Rejoice O heavens and the earth be exulted, for by the grace of God we the clergy and the people are gathered here today, at the Emirate of the State of Qatar, which is under the canonical spiritual jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, in order to officiate the consecration of this beautiful Holy Church in thanksgiving and doxology, a Church

that has been built in honour of the local Father of ours among the Saints, Isaac the Syriac and of St. George the Great Martyr.

In the sacred history of the Holy Bible we see highlighted the fact that the Lord pointed out the tabernacle of the covenant which Holy Moses placed on earth. The covenant had also ordinances of divine service (Hebrews 9:1), and Solomon built a house for the Lord (Acts 7:47), namely a Temple where there were sacrifice offerings of "beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin" (Hebrews 13:11).

St. John the Evangelist witnesses that "we have radiantly beheld the glory which the Son hath from the Father in the grace of truth. And as many of us as have received Him with faith, to all hath He given the power to become children of God; and we, who were born again not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but have received increase by the Holy Spirit, have raised up this house of prayer and cry out: Do Thy Thyself now establish this house O Lord".

And the House of God, namely the consecrated Church, is inseparable with the worship and veneration of God in spirit and truth; "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24) the Lord says. While prayer is the ascent towards God, or the invocation of God to grant us what is of need, according to St. John of Damascus. And according to St. John of Sinai (of the Ladder), "prayer is, as far as its quantity is concerned, a union between man and God, while as far as its energy is concerned, [prayer is] the food of the soul and enlightenment."

For this reason, we say along with Sophronius the Patriarch of Jerusalem and our predecessor; today the things above co-celebrate with the things below and the things below converse with those above. Today the sacred gathering of the Orthodox

faithful rejoices. Great art Thou O Lord, and marvelous are Thy works, and no words befit the hymn of Thy wonders.

Having willingly being raised up on the horrendous place of Golgotha in Jerusalem, the Lord worked out the salvation of us men on the Cross, renewing all creation; while in this established and sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit and the intercessions of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos, along with the prayers of our Holy Fathers among the Saints Isaac and St. George, this Holy Church, which is in natural and spiritual communion with the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is being granted the enlightenment and renewal of His resurrection from the dead, to all those who worship Him in faith, spirit and truth, and who pray to Him in repentance.

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1), David chants. In this hospitable oasis of the Arab and open to progress Emirate of Qatar, the gates of this consecrated house of God have been opened by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that all of us, either living here or visiting the State, who seek the rest of our souls, may hear the calling of the King of Glory, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ saying: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt. 11:29).

It was precisely this rest of the soul that our Holy Father Isaac sought in the harsh place of the desert, where he became like the tree of righteousness “which bringeth forth his fruit in his season” (Psalm 1:3). This very righteousness is being evangelized by the Rum Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, preaching and witnessing the love without hypocrisy, the philanthropy and the peace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ at all times in all places. “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree... Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth



fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing" (Psalm 92:12-14) the psalmist says.

And the "righteous who is planted in the house of the Lord" are no others than the Saints of the Church, who having become imitators of the kenotic sacrifice of the Love of Christ, bring forth their fruit, in which we rejoice today.

And we say this, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, because the mercy of God has offered Our Mediocrity this blessing, of the consecration of the good work of this Holy House, which has been built from its foundations, it has been decorated and completed by the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, our Hagiotaphite brother. Therefore, let us say along with St. Chrysostom "Lord sanctify those who love the decency of Thy house and the dwelling place of Thy glory" (Divine Liturgy of St. Chrysostom).

Finally, we find it appropriate and a duty, that not only the Church of Jerusalem, but all brotherly Orthodox Churches may thank from the depths of our hearts his Excellency the Ambassador of the United States of America Mr. Patrick Theros and especially His Majesty the Emir of the State of Qatar Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and His Highness his heir and current governor Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. We wish them that the Lord God may grant them health and longevity and governmental power for the good of the State with all its peoples.

Along with the hymn writer let us say: "the Church is like a luminous sky, enlightening all faithful; wherein as we stand let us cry out; establish this house O Lord". Amen

During the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy His Beatitude offered the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, who toiled for the construction of the Holy Church, a set of Bishop's egolpia, wishing him that by the grace of God he may continue the mission of the witness of the love of the

incarnate, crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ, for the spreading of the preaching of the Gospel, which began from the Horrendous Golgotha and the Life-giving Tomb. Archbishop Makarios offered His Beatitude an icon of the complex of the Church and the Archdiocese of Qatar, which has been painted by the nuns of the H. Monastery of Chrysopigi.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a rich meal at the reception hall under the consecrated Holy Church.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE CONSECRATION OF THE HOLY CHURCH OF ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAC AND ST. GEORGE IN DOHA – QATAR**

For the consecration of the Holy Church of St. Isaac the Syriac, St. George the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer and St. Makarios Archbishop of Jerusalem in Doha, Qatar, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos departed from Jerusalem on Thursday morning, February 8/21, 2019 and flew to Qatar from Ben Gurion Airport of Tel-Aviv and via Amman of Jordan. His Beatitude was escorted by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, Archimandrite Eudokimos, who

is the Spiritual Father of the H. Lavra of St. Savvas the Sanctified, and Archdeacon Mark.

His Beatitude arrived in Qatar on Thursday afternoon, February 8/21, 2019. He was welcomed by the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, the Priests of the Archdiocese of Qatar, Priest Demetrios and Priest Stylianos, the associates of the Holy Archdiocese of Qatar, representatives of the Government, such as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and others. His Beatitude then went to the hotel designated for His time in Doha, as an Executive guest of the State of Qatar.

In the evening of the same day there was the formal welcoming reception of His Beatitude at the Holy Church of St. Isaac the Syriac and St. George the Great Martyr, by the Scouts and the full congregation of the Church. There was Great Vespers for the consecration ceremony, with the choir of Thessalonica under the lead of Mr. Ioannis Hasanides in Greek and with the parish choir in Arabic. There was the revelation of the sign of the owners at the forefront of the Holy Church which reads in Greek and in Arabic: "the founding stone of this Church was placed by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010 during the Governmental Office of Father Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, and it was consecrated by Him on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019, with owner the Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar and during the Governmental Office of H.H. Sheikh Tamin Bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Qatar". Present were the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar and other Governmental representatives and a large crowd of people, and His Beatitude address all present as follows;

Your Eminence Archbishop Makarios,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Respected Local Officials,

Dear Fathers,

Beloved Faithful,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

*O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;*

*His steadfast love endures forever!*

*This is the day that the Lord has made;*

*Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

(Ps. 118:1,24)

It is an honour for us to be with you today, and we rejoice with great gladness on the occasion of the consecration of the completed Church of Saint Isaac the Syriac and Saint George here in Doha. We wish to express our gratitude to you, Your Eminence, Archbishop Makarios, for the hard work and dedication that you have invested in the building of this Church, and we wish also to acknowledge and thank all those many people who have been benefactors and who have worked themselves to make the dream of an Orthodox Church in Doha a reality.

There have been many years in the construction, and we can at last give thanks to Almighty God for the faith and steadfastness of so many who have brought this project to a happy conclusion.

On this occasion, we must also observe that the State of Qatar boasts not only exceptional economic progress and development, but also promotes a diverse cultural life. Since 2008, Christians have been able to build churches here on land contributed by the government, and there is an important tradition here of interfaith dialogue. Over the years, many important interfaith conferences and gatherings have been held here, and we welcome to this occasion our friends from other

religious traditions.

The presence of the Churches in the State of Qatar, which allows freedom of worship within the frame of the civil law, is a testimony to the careful government of the Qatari authorities as well as to the wise rule of the present Emir, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and his father, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Father Emir of Qatar. Qatar was the first Gulf State to make history by opening the door to non-Muslim religions. We wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to them for all that they have done to open the way for the building of this church.

The consecration of this church is significant for several important reasons.

First of all, this Church establishes the presence of the Orthodox Church in Qatar on a secure footing. At last the faithful have a permanent Church for worship and for the events of the community. The Rum Orthodox Church and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem have deep roots in this region, and we were witnesses to the emergence of Islamic faith and culture.

In addition to this historical truth, this Orthodox community in Doha is representative of the *oikomene* – the inhabited world – for gathered here are the people from all over the world. Qatar is well known for its international flavor, and this Orthodox community also reflects this international life. Here we see the living out of the vision of the Psalmist, who said;

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it.*

(Psalm 24:1)

But perhaps most significantly the consecration of this Church

that is dedicated to St. Isaac and to Saint George is a testimony that challenges the so-called "clash" of civilizations between Christianity and Islam. Where Christianity and Islam are lived in their true fullness, they have co-existed for centuries in respect and mutual understanding. Indeed, the dedication of this church to Saint George is a sign of this, as both Christians and Muslims share a deep veneration for Saint George.

The Arab peninsula as well as the Arab peoples of the Gulf, like all the regions of the Middle East, share a civilization of common religious and moral values, grounded in the respective Holy Books. These common fundamental religious and moral values have shaped and formed a common human civilization that understands the richness of our multi-ethnic, multi-religious landscape.

All these considerations make the consecration of this Church a historic moment. And if we may be permitted a personal note, it gives us a deep personal satisfaction to preside over this consecration, as we served here in this community 20 years ago, and we came to love and respect the Emirate of Qatar, its leaders, and its people.

On behalf of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy Synod, we take this opportunity to convey the blessings of the Holy Tomb to this community, and to thank all those who have contributed to the building up of this Orthodox community and the completion of this church. We take deep pride in all that you have accomplished, dear Archbishop Makarios, on behalf of our Brotherhood.

May God bless you and our congregation, which is under your spiritual and pastoral care, and may God bless all the people of our beloved Qatar.

Thank you.

The service was followed by a festal meal, offered by the Most

Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar at the reception hall below the Holy Church.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE FEAST OF ST. SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Saturday, February 3/16, 2019, the commemoration of St. Simeon the God-receiver was celebrated, who received the Lord in his arms when He was brought in the Temple of Solomon by His parents on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after His birth in the flesh. This Feast took place at the Holy Monastery dedicated to St. Simeon, which is located in West Jerusalem, and where there is the tomb of the Saint and a part of his holy relics, which was donated by the Roman-Catholic Church of Croatia.

For the commemoration of St. Simeon who officiated the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning of the feast, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, and the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor,

and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Fathers and Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos with the help of Archimandrite Eusevios. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and a large congregation of local faithful and pilgrims from Russia, Romania, Greece and Cyprus.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation:

*“Let the gate of Heaven be opened today; for the beginningless Word of the Father, having received a beginning in time without forsaking His Divinity, is of His own will offered by a Virgin Mother in the Temple of the Law as a babe forty days old. The Elder receiveth Him in his arms, and the servant crieth to the Master: Let me depart; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation. O Thou Who art come into the world to save the race of man, Lord, glory be to Thee.”*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Noble Christians and pilgrims,*

*The indeterminable and superfluous word of God, who was born in the cave of Bethlehem and placed in a manger, has gathered us today in this holy place, where the house of Elder Simeon used to be, in order to celebrate the Meeting of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple, where the Righteous Simeon received Him in his arms.*

*This great event of the entrance of the child Jesus in the Temple of Solomon, brought by His parents, on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after his birth, according to the Law of Moses, is narrated in detail by St. Luke the Evangelist saying; “And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, 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).

Elder Simeon holds a prominent position among the people of the sacred history, namely of the Holy Bible. And this is so, because he was deemed worthy to receive in his arms the child Jesus, our God, from the hands of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

In other words, Simeon is proven to be an irrefutable witness of the incarnation of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. This Simeon, moved by the Grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, not only received in his arms the Son of God, the Christ, but also recognized Him as "the salvation of God", saying "mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people" (Luke 2:30-31).

This experience of Elder Simeon is also co-witnessed by the psalmist by saying "light has risen upon the righteous". The law of God is not only hatred against sin, but also light for the righteous. He uses the word "has risen instead of rising. For every one who is benign and righteous has this divine light risen in his mind and heart" St. Cyril of Alexandria says.

"The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen" (Psalm 98:2) the psalmist says again. The Lord manifested this salvation in a very clear manner before all the nations, He made His righteousness visible to all the people without any discrimination. "[God] offered to all people the spring water of salvation and showed to all nations His righteous Kingdom", St. Theodoritos Kyrou interprets.

Indeed, Elder Simeon came to the altar of the Temple with the power and energy, namely with the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, as Luke the Evangelist witnesses by saying: "and the Holy Ghost was upon him (Simeon)" (Luke 2:25). The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die before having seeing the One Whom the Lord God had anointed as the King and Saviour of the world; "And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:26).

This means that without the Holy Spirit, no one is able to understand the mystery of the divine providence, and even more, the salvific mission of the mystical body of Christ, our Holy Orthodox Church. However, the Holy Spirit does not reveal/disclose the indescribable mysteries of God to men who are not pure at heart nor to those who are lukewarm in faith (Revelation, 3:16). "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" St. James the Brother of God teaches (James 4:8).

"And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against" (Luke 2:34). These prophetic words of Righteous Simeon were fulfilled during the earthly mission of Christ, especially during the peak of His Passion on the Cross and His Resurrection from the dead.

The perfect God and perfect Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the fall of the unfaithful and those in doubt on the one hand, and on the other, He is the Rising of the faithful and those who cast no doubt.

The teaching of the Holy and established theologians as well as great Fathers of our Holy Church has boldly proclaimed that while Christ has two natures, the Divine and the human, He nevertheless is One in hypostasis and in person, "the Father

*and I are one" (John 10:30), the Lord says.*

*And according to St. Cyril of Alexandria, "the sign that shall be spoken against, is the sacred Cross" this is what St. Simeon speaks of. This is also preached by St. Paul, referring to the Sacred Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23-24).*

*Our Holy Church calls us through the mouth of Athanasius the Great to imitate the Righteous Simeon and Prophetess Anna, who were distinguished for their purity, guilelessness, forgiveness, and chastity.*

*Let us entreat St. Simeon, my dear ones, along with the hymn writer and say: "Illuminate my soul and my sense of sight O Lord, so that I may clearly see and proclaim Thee as my God".*

After the Divine Liturgy the Elder and hospitable renovator of the Monastery Hegoumen Archimandrite Theodoritos offered a reception to the Patriarchal entourage and the congregation at the Hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Monastery.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**HIS BEATITUDE MEETS WITH THE  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY AND**

# THE ANGLICAN BISHOP IN JERUSALEM

On Tuesday afternoon, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos held a meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury Most Reverend Justin Welby and his associates, and with the Most Reverend Archbishop and Head of the Anglican Church in Jerusalem Mr. Suheil Dawani, at the seat of the Anglican Church in Amman of Jordan on the occasion of the administrative reforms of the Anglican Church in the Middle East region.

In this meeting His Beatitude was being escorted by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Priest Issa Musleh, the legal adviser of the Patriarchate Mr. Rami Moghrabi and the Manager of the Patriarchate's Office in Amman of Jordan Mrs. Wafaa Ksous.

In this meeting Archbishop Suheil Dawani underlined the cooperation of his Church with the Mother Church of Jerusalem, the cooperation of the Heads of the Christian Churches of Jerusalem for matters related to the Christians of the Holy Land and the sustaining of the Status Quo, for which, one year ago there was the decision of closing down the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In this meeting H.H.B. delivered the following address;

"Your Grace, dear Archbishop Justin,

Your Grace, dear Archbishop Suheil,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for us to be with you for this important meeting of Regional Primates of the Anglican Communion, and we welcome you to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. As you know, His Majesty King Abdullah II is a stalwart defender of the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious character of the Middle East in general and the Holy Land in particular, and the Kingdom remains a model of religious freedom in this region.

As we welcome you, Your Grace, dear Archbishop Justin, we would like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to you once again for your personal support and the support of your staff and colleagues in the ongoing work of ensuring the freedom and the rights of the Churches and Christian Communities of the Holy Land.

In particular, we are grateful to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales for his public support, and to the Dean of Westminster for his role in opening Westminster Abbey last December for a service of witness to the plight of Christians in the Middle East. Such a clear manifestation of solidarity with the Christian communities of the Middle East is a tremendous encouragement to all who labour every day to ensure that our indigenous Christian Communities in the Middle East, some of which go back to the earliest days of the life of the Church, remain alive and vital at a time when the threats against them are real and potentially devastating.

This last year was a particularly difficult one for us. There have been many challenges to the Christian community and to the well-being of our society and the Holy Places, many of which are the result of aspirations for political gain by politicians attempting to strengthen their positions at the expense of our Churches. There have also been further attempts to undermine the Christian presence in the region.

With the ready assistance of our international supporters, including Your Graces, as well as many other governmental and

Church leaders, we have managed to keep these threats at bay. But the pressure remains, and some of these threats have not gone away. They are simply dormant for the moment, and they could rise to the surface again at any time. We must not relax our vigilance, nor our influence on those who have the power to protect the Churches from such threats.

In this regard, we see great hope in the in the work of the International Community of the Holy Sepulchre as an advocate on behalf of the Churches in the Holy Land. ICoHS has the firm support of the Heads of the Churches, and we are grateful to you dear Archbishop Justin, for your enthusiasm for this organization and for the help you have given to those who have established it.

We have experienced a significant blessing in the deeper spirit of unity among the Heads of the Churches and Christian Communities of the Holy Land in the course of the work we have done to protect the Church, and we rejoice in this mutual commitment to a common mission. Our unity of resolve and purpose is strong, and in this regard especially, we wish to express our gratitude to His Grace Archbishop Suheil, whose unwavering leadership has been an indispensable part of the success of this joint work so far. Not only have you, dear Archbishop Suheil, been an absolutely reliable colleague, in your own pastoral zeal for the Anglican Church in your diocese, especially in the rebuilding of your communities, but you have also helped to ensure the ongoing Christian presence here. For all this work, you are recognized beyond your own Communion.

As you meet here in Amman to take counsel for the most effective ways in which to oversee the Anglican Communion in this region, we know that you are all deeply aware of the situation in which we find ourselves. We also note the long-standing, close, and mutually beneficial relationship that has always existed between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Anglican Communion, and this relationship gives us both

strength and encouragement both for the relationship between our two Churches, and for our common spiritual mission in this region.

May God bless you and guide you in all your deliberations, and may God bless all the peoples of our beloved Holy Land and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Thank you”.

The Most Reverend Archbishop of Canterbury said that it is a blessing for him to visit again the countries of the Middle East, he praised His Beatitude, who apart from His other qualities, is distinguished for His valor and within it the reconciliation, which was made obvious by the historic decision to close down the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and then open it again after the intervention of the Prime Minister of Israel Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, who ordered the suspension of the tax measures imposed by the Municipality of Jerusalem against the Churches.

Moreover, he said that the relationship between the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Anglican Church has become stronger during the Patriarchal Office of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **H.H.B. CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY AT BURKIN OF SAMARIA**

On Friday, January 19/ February 1, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the healing of the ten lepers by the Lord (Luke 17:12-19), at the place of their healing north of Nablus of Samaria, where there is a chapel built on the carved rocks, in the natural cave of which the ten lepers lived in isolation as imposed by their surrounding society.

On the morning of the aforementioned day, at this place and in this chapel, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos celebrated the Divine Liturgy, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, the Hegoumen of the Shepherds Archimandrite Ignatios and Arab-speaking Priests, Archdeacon Mark and other deacons, while the service was attended by many faithful who came from the neighbouring towns, parishes, for Toubas, Rafidia and Zababde.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation;

“And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us” (Luke 17:12-13).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and Pilgrims

The infinite mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ led our footsteps today to this holy place of the lepers, known as Burkin, so that we also glorify Him in gratitude, in festivity and thanksgiving.



This holy place of Burkin is not only identified as the place of the healing of the ten lepers, as Luke the Evangelist mentions, but also as the place witnessing that our Lord Jesus Christ as perfect God and perfect man is the One who according to Prophet Isaiah "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17). And elsewhere, Luke the Evangelist says: "But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities" (Luke 5:15).

Today's gospel narrative, my dear brothers and sisters, is not a mere parable, but a fact that happened at a certain place and time. And we say this because this Rum-Orthodox ancient Byzantine Church is built above the cave of the isolation of the ten lepers, in the certain town from which Jesus passed via Samaria and Galilee, heading towards Jerusalem (Luke 1:11).

God's love and infinite mercy are given to every man who puts his trust in Him. The ten lepers cried out loud all together saying; "Jesus Master, have mercy on us" (Luke 17:13). And the loud voice, the lepers' voice, was a voice of entreaty, and a voice of invocation in truth, as St. Theophylaktos interprets: "and while they stood afar from the place, the supplication was drawn near. For He is near to all who call upon Him in truth". And Evangelist Matthew says: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt. 4:23).

The ten lepers ask for the mercy of the Son of God; "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (Luke 17:13) because they trust Christ to whom they assign themselves and their healing. This means that the man, whose "days are as grass" (Psalm 103:15), is not able to rely on himself when he faces serious and painful physical and mental health problems, seeing himself collapsing and coming apart. This very collapsing and torn apart self does he entrust on the mercy and philanthropy of

God, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

"O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit" (Psalm 30:2-3). My Lord and my God, I have cried unto Thee in my sickness and Thou hast healed me. Yes, O Lord, from the gates of Hades Thou hast returned my life, Thou hast saved me for Thou hast not counted me along with the dead who are brought into the grave; this is what Prophet David exclaims, thanking God in gratitude.

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan" (Luke 17:15-16), meaning that he was a foreigner. St. Cyril of Alexandria says that "the Samaritan was a foreigner because he was from the nation of Assyria". This foreigner, the Samaritan, by expressing his thanksgiving and gratitude towards Christ, and by glorifying God, receives on the one hand the resurrection of his being, and on the other, he discovers the salvific power of faith, when he hears the words of Jesus telling him: "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:19).

On the contrary, the ingratitude and ungratefulness of the nine lepers – "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17) according to Jesus' question, returned them to the condition of sin, namely, to the sickness of the soul, or better say, to the leprosy of the soul. And this is so, because ungratefulness is a sin, which ignores the philanthropic and benefactor God and projects the injudiciousness and the egocentrism of man.

Behold my dear ones, why the great and wise Paul advises his disciple Timothy, and not only him, but all of us, saying: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall

come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, and ungrateful" (2 Tim. 3:2)... "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:5).

We, as members of the mystical body of Christ, namely of His Church, enjoy God's benevolence, as well as the healing that was brought forth by the divine Word, Christ, to "all the nature of men stricken by leprosy" as the God-bearing Fathers of the Church teach.

This healing of the physical and mental infirmities of ours is made possible within the Church and by the Church, which is the sanatorium and hospital of all who participate in its liturgical and sacramental life in fear and faith and love, but also in a clear conscience.

Our way of "giving glory and thanksgiving to God" is the order by St. Paul saying: Brothers, "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:8-11). Amen.

After the Divine Liturgy His Beatitude inaugurated the new hall which is going to be the Hegoumeneion, refectory and reception hall and has been built by the Caretaker of the Monastery Monk Vissarion.

At noon Monk Vissarion offered a meal to His Beatitude and the congregation.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE FEAST OF ST. THEODOSIUS THE CENOBIARCH AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, January 11/24, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our Righteous Father Theodosius the Cenobiarch at his Holy Monastery which lies at the desert of Judea, between Beit Sahour and the Monastery of St. Savvas the Sanctified.

St. Theodosius founded this Cenobitic Monastery in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Having arrived at the Holy Land from his hometown Cappadocia, St. Theodosius strove in asceticism at the Monasteries of Palestine, leading a cenobitic, anchorite and hesychastic life.

At this Monastery the monks would receive the necessary training in order to join the Monastery of the Lavra, leading a strictly hesychastic-solitary life, and earning their living by working with hard physical toil, making handicrafts for the sustaining of the poor and keeping charity foundations. Their slogan was “no lazy man should enter here”.

St. Theodosius, along with his co-patriot and fellow ascetic St. Savvas the Sanctified and their monks, played a

significant role in the fight against Monophysitism and the prevailing of the decision of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synod in 451 A.D. regarding the one Hypostasis of our Lord Jesus Christ in two natures, the divine and the human.

This Holy Monastery underwent serious destructions from the various raids and was renovated around 1905 by the Cretan Monks Galaktion and Leontios, around 1950 by the memorable Archbishop Bartholomew of Madaba and in the last forty years it has been preserved and renovated by the Cretan Hegoumen Archimandrite Ierotheos.

The commemoration of St. Theodosius was celebrated at this Monastery with Vespers in the evening, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia and with the Divine Liturgy in the morning, led by His Holy Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra, the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theophylactos of Jordan, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Arab-speaking Priests, Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and monks from the Lavra of St. Savvas, while the services were attended by a large congregation, mainly from the neighbouring town of Beit Sahour and other pilgrims.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation:

“With the streams of thy tears, thou didst cultivate the barrenness of the desert; and by thy sighings from the depths, thou didst bear fruit a hundredfold labours; and thou becamest a luminary, shining with miracles upon the world, O Theodosius our righteous Father. Intercede with Christ our God that our souls be saved” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

## Noble Christians and pilgrims

Our Father Theodosius, who has been shining with miracles, who has cultivated the barrenness of the desert both spiritually and physically, has gathered us all today in his Holy Monastery in order to honour his commemoration.

“Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints” St. John the Evangelist says in his holy revelation (Rev. 15:3).

Precisely this righteous and true way did our Father Theodosius follow and walked on, who was established a Cenobiarch, namely the introducer of the coenobitic manner of asceticism of the Monks, but also a teacher of the desert, namely an educator of the spiritual life in Christ to those who strove in asceticism under his lead, as his hymn writer says; “O righteous Father Theodosius, into all the earth hath the sound of thine achievements gone forth; wherefore thou hast found in the Heavens the reward of thy labours. Thou didst destroy the ranks of the demons; thou didst attain to the orders of the Angels, whose life thou didst emulate without blame. Since thou has boldness with Christ God, pray that peace be granted unto our souls.”

Indeed my dear brothers, St. Theodosius “didst attain to the orders of the Angels, whose life he didst emulate without blame”. This is also confirmed by his Synaxarist who records the many miracles the saint worked during his earthly monastic life.

Our Father Theodosius has set St. John the Baptist as an example to imitate, along with the great ascetics of the desert around the river Jordan, and of those in Palestine in general, Euthymius the great, Savvas the Sanctified and the Great monastic in Antioch, Symeon the stylite “from whom he received the initiation to the virtue that was in him”. His biographer, Cyril of Skythopolis calls Theodosius of

Cappadocia citizen of heaven, the great glory of Palestine, the boasting of the desert, the foothold of the monastic schema, the general and advocate of the right doctrines and the leader and protector of the coenobitic rule. Before he came to the top of the hill where his Holy Monastery lies, elder Logginos who was a member of the Order of the Studious, namely of the current Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, "received to bury blessed Ikelia, who had built the Church of the Seat of Theotokos". Once blessed Ikelia had slept in the Lord, he worked out the providence of the place. In other words, all the monks of the Seat of Theotokos voted for him [Theodosius] to be the Hegoumen of the Seat of Theotokos.

Our Father Theodosius was distinguished as the great citizen of the desert of Palestine because he hearkened to the words of the psalmist saying; "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Psalm 103:17-18).

The Lord's commandments, which we also are encouraged to keep, my dear brothers, are not heavy and unbearable, as our Lord Jesus Christ says: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). And while a man's life is temporary, the mercy of the Lord is eternal; "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth" (Psalm 103:15). The fear of the Lord is a prerequisite in order to attract His infinite mercy. Moreover, a simple thought or remembrance of the divine commandments is not enough; the action should follow. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27) St. Paul orders.

Christ, whom we are called to put on, is no other than the new Adam, who has been illumined by the divine and uncreated light of the Father, namely of the Holy Spirit who descended on Him

in the river Jordan when He was baptized by St. John the Forerunner. This very Christ, the new Adam, for whom "there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11) did our Father Theodosius put on with the garment of the uncreated light.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Paul preaches, is "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:16). It is impossible for mortal eyes to bear and attain to the brightness of the light of the divine glory. "No man shall see the face of God and live". However in the future life those who have come to perfection will see Him. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8), the Lord says.

Today's honoured Father of ours Theodosius reached to the point of the purification of heart as his hymn writer 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 Theodosius, thou didst cast away and care for the flesh". Therefore thou became participant and communicant of the vision of the divine glory and of the kingdom of heaven.

Let us pray to our Holy Father Theodosius, to intercede for us to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who became incarnate through the pure and immaculate blood of the Virgin Mary the Theotokos, was born in Bethlehem and baptized in the Jordan. And let us say along with the hymn writer; "Grace hath appeared to all; enlightenment is come forth; deliverance is present; the world hath been enlightened; ye peoples, be filled with joy". Amen."

At noon, the elder renovator and Hegoumen of the Monastery Archimandrite Ierotheos offered a meal to the Patriarchal entourage and the congregation.



**From Secretariat-General**