

# **THE UNDERTAKING OF DUTY OF THE ARCHBISHOP ARISTOVOULOS OF MADABA AT HIS H. ARCHDIOCESE**

On Sunday June 25/July 8, 2018, the recently elected and ordained Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba undertook his duty at his Archdiocese.

The ceremony was completed through the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of the Dormition in Madaba, which has been recently built by Archimandrite Innokentios. As it is known, inside the Church of the Patriarchate dedicated to St. George in Madaba, there is the mosaic map of the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. which depicts the geographical positioning of Palestine as it was at the time of Jesus Christ's Presence on earth.

The Divine Liturgy for the undertaking of duty of the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba as the Patriarchal Representative in Madaba was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia, the Most Reverend Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom Archimandrite Ieronymos, the Priests of the Shrine of Madaba Fr. Nikolaos and Fr. Joseph and Deacon George. The service was attended by the Christian congregation of Madaba in great jubilation.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this Congregation;

*"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also*

suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21) according to St. Peter's epistle to the Christians.

Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba,

The Holy and Sacred Synod has elected you Bishop of the Holy Archdiocese of Madaba in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan after the Patriarchal proposal and by a unanimous regular voting. And the almighty grace of the Holy Spirit which heals the infirmities and fulfils all things has ordained you at the Episcopal Office by the hands of Our Mediocrity and Our co-celebrant Archbishops at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the Holy City of the Great King.

You have joined the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood since your early youth, being in communion with the root and the quality of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ's vineyard, as He said; "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). And indeed, without the Bishop who is according to the type of Christ, as the Apostolic Church Fathers say, one can do nothing. "Where the Bishop is, therein let the crowd also be; just like wherever Christ is, there the Catholic Church is" St. Ignatios the God-bearer teaches (BEP, vol. 2 p.281). "The one that is placed as a Bishop is believed to be at Christ's place" (BEP. Vol.1 p.97) St. Klimis of Rome says.

In other words, the Bishop is the guarantee of the Apostolic succession and especially the succession of St. James the Brother of God, the first Hierarch of the Church.

Beloved Brother in Christ, Archbishop of Madaba

Your ministry at the All-holy Shrines in self-denial, your visible care for our Christian Congregation in Beit Jalla, your work in founding the House of Prayer for our Russian-speaking congregation in Ber Sheba, your continuous visits to

the prisoners along other pastoral activities of yours, together with your preaching of Christ, and more especially your scientific training in Byzantine singing – as David says – “I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being” (Psalm 104:33), and of course your studies in Theology, are the things that led you to becoming Archbishop of this God-saved historical and biblical county of Madaba.

“Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God” (Psalm 50:23), the psalm writer says. To this very ministry of offering sacrificial praise, in other words, of honest reverence, lies the sui genesis path of salvation. “It is befitting not only to praise God and offer the sacrifice of praise, but also to live in a likewise manner” St. Theodoritos Kyrou says.

Most Reverend Archbishop of Madaba, you have been called to this mission of care for the salvation of the souls of the sheep of the logical flock. Therefore, act as a shepherd in a good and God-pleasing manner to the flock that has been entrusted to you and teach the congregation of the Church in meek and friendly words, and bear witness to Christ’s witness, namely the Gospel of Christ’s pertaining to the Crucifixion and kenotic love.

Our Holy Order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood boasts with the “glory of the things that pertain to God” (Romans 15:17), because having being the minister of God’s Gospel, it bore God-pleasing fruit through the renovation and maintenance of the Holy Church of St. George, known as the Church of the mosaic map. The Hagiotaphite Brotherhood has also built from the foundations the Bishop’s residence and Hegoumeneion, a Guest House of the Community Church and a building complex with a School in Hanina, a chapel with a block of flats in Ma’in and especially it founded the prototype School “Patriarch Diodoros” in Madaba, under the initiative and the

*tireless work of our beloved brother Reverend Archimandrite Innokentios, who has offered himself in the pastoral care of our Greek-Orthodox Community and the people of Madaba without receiving any money for himself; he has also cultivated the Apostolic and Fatherly tradition of our Orthodox faith.*

*Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba,*

*“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (2 Tim. 1:14). “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), St. Paul orders. In other words, God has given us a spirit of love and wisdom in order to govern ourselves and others in prudence and reason; with the word “others” we mean the co-celebrant Priests and deacons, as well as the faithful people.*

*As for the yoke of obedience and the burden of the pastoral duties that you undertake are concerned, they refer to the leader and perfectionist of our faith, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:2) and His Church. For which the Lord says: “For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:30).*

*The hospitable people of Madaba, the pious Christian congregation of the Church, as well as the honourable members of the Church committee, welcome Us today in respect and family love, and more over the local civil authorities, the police and military forces, which are under the wise command of our respected King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Custodian of the Islamic and Christian Shrines in the Holy City of Jerusalem, His Majesty Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein, Who we thank in deep respect, and we pray to our Lord God to protect, invigorate and grant Him and the Royal Family health, longevity, for the goodness of the peaceful and harmonious co-existence of all the citizens of this country.*

*To you Holy Brother and Pastor of this God-saved town we pray that the grace of the Holy Spirit that was made manifest in*

*the river Jordan in the form of a dove upon the Beloved Son of God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, may enlighten your mind and guide your steps towards the working of His commandments, by the intercessions of the All-holy Most Blessed and Ever-Virgin Mary, our Lady Theotokos, and of your patron Saint Aristovoulos the Apostle, one of the Seventy Apostles, as well as of today's commemorated Saint Fevronia the Great Martyr. Amen.*

*"Receive this Staff to shepherd the flock of Christ entrusted to you. To the obedient let it be a help and a support. With it, lead the disobedient and the wayward to admonishment and instruction."*

After the Holy Communion and His Beatitude's blessing there was a reception at the Reception Hall of the Church and later on lunch at the Guest House of the Monastery of Madaba, offered by the Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba and the Community Council of the town. During the meal His Beatitude addressed the Archbishop of Madaba as follows;

*"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28) St. Paul commands.*

*Most Reverend Holy Brothers in Christ Archbishops,*

*Reverend Clergy and Care takers of the Church,*

*Honourable guests,*

*Our Holy Greek-Orthodox Church of Jerusalem rejoices and is glad on the undertaking of duty of the new Shepherd in the historical town of Madaba, its Archbishop Aristovoulos.*

*As the Shepherd of the Mother of all Churches, Jerusalem, and successor of St. James the Apostle and Brother of God, We hearken to the words of St. Paul: "Take heed therefore unto*

*yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28); so we have come to the decision, along with the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod to the reconstitution of the Archdiocese of Madaba.*

*Today, your town of Madaba with its outskirts is distinguished for the rapid development in the political and social fields, in business, tourism and especially in education. This is witnessed by the establishment and operation of many Universities, Academic Centres and Schools.*

*Needless to say that the contribution of the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate and of its reverend community at the Academic field of education has been sealed by the indeed meritorious initiative and actions of the Hagiotaphite Brother of Ours, Reverend Archimandrite Innokentios, to whom We are grateful.*

*The pastoral care of the members of Our Church and especially in the Archdiocese of Madaba and its spiritual jurisdiction refers to the evangelic words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26) as well as to the words: "That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke 4:4).*

*This Gospel message, my dear Brothers, is a message of love, peace, reconciliation and harmonious co-existence with all our fellow men and fellow citizens, without any cultural discrimination and especially without any religious discrimination. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). And in another place: "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16).*

*All the citizens and all the religious communities in the*

*Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan enjoy this practical divine love and peaceful co-existence. Therefore we consider it again our duty to express our heartfelt thanks to the Reverend King of the Hashemite Kingdom of our dearest Jordan, and wish Him every sovereign strength from God, health and longevity in this blessed country.*

*And to the undertaker of his pastoral and Episcopal duties Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, we wish that the grace of the Holy Spirit may make him worthy of his mission in the spiritual vineyard of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, through the intercessions of the Most Blessed Theotokos Mary and of the Holy Great Martyr and Trophy Bearer George. Amen.*

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE UNDERTAKING OF DUTY OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF KYRIAKOYPOLIS AS PATRIARCHAL REPRESENTATIVE IN AMMAN**

The service for the undertaking of duty of the recently elected and ordained Most Reverend Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis as Patriarchal Representative in Amman took place on Saturday June 17/30, 2018, according to the decision of the Holy Synod. This was done through a Divine Liturgy

which was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos at the Holy Church of the Meeting of the Lord in Amman. The Church was built by the memorable Patriarch Diodoros. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were the Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia, the visiting Metropolitan Chrysostom of Kyrinia from the Church of Cyprus, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Secretary-General, the also recently elected and ordained Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, all the Arab-speaking Priests of the Patriarchate in Jordan, Deacon Evlogios, and other Deacons. The service was attended by the Minister of public works and housing Mr. Sami Halasa and other governmental members. The choir was formed by Fr. Alexander and Fadi who sang in Arabic and Greek before a full congregation who cheered in great joy. His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness”(Col. 3:12-14); St. Paul preaches.

Most Reverend Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis,

The Holy and Sacred Synod with Us, by the divine inspiration in a regular voting, has promoted you to the great office of Prelacy. And through Our mediocrity, the Divine Grace has ordained you Archbishop of the Holy Archdiocese of Kyriakoupolis and appointed you Patriarchal Representative in Amman and its outskirts, after the voluntary resignation of our dearest brother Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia.



“The Holy Ghost (which brings together the whole constitution of the Church) hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28); St. Paul preaches. Most Reverend Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis, you have been called unto this ministry of pasturing the noble Christian congregation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Biblical Jordan, which is under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Venerable Greek-Orthodox Jerusalem Patriarchate.

Your calling is to keep the Holy Apostles’ tradition which was taught of God, and to preach the sacrificial and kenotic one. Especially in our time, when there are wars and turbulence around the world and in particular in our tested region.

Since your childhood, your joining in the body of the monastic order of the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, which has been preserving the shrines of the sacred history in the Holy Land and the Holy City of Jerusalem throughout the centuries, has fostered and “nourished you up in the words of faith and of good doctrine” (1 Tim. 4:6), in other words, in the doctrines of our pure Orthodox faith and tradition. While your ministering care for the Church and its faithful members, by the good co-operation of your predecessor Most Reverend Metropolitan of Philadelphia, and the highlighting of the Holy Nunnery in Dibin as a practical manifestation of your obedience in the assignments of the Church, in other words, of your spiritual Status and the decisions of our Holy and Sacred Synod, have made you, Archbishop of Kyriakoupolis, a pastor of the logical sheep of Christ in the blessed Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The mission of the Bishop as a descendant of the Holy Apostles is primarily met with the Will of our God and Saviour “who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). Because of this, the spiritual and moral responsibility of the Bishop as a Pastor is great indeed, especially in our era of globalization, with the

prevailing of apostasy and iniquity. Towards this, the first among the Apostles, Peter, advises the Pastors saying: "shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears [Christ], you will receive the unfading crown of glory" (1 Peter 5:2-4). And he becomes more particular; "Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble"(1 Peter 5:5).

Most Reverend Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis,

"The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17). "Behold, now is the favourable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). And "the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few" (Matt. 9:37). We pray the Lord that He may send those few labourers to His harvest. Undertake this ministry of the labourer at the Lord's vineyard and become Christophoros [Christ bearer] in both words and actions, having as a harvest tool the love of Christ, which "does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth" (1 Cor. 13:5-6).

May the unifying power of God's love and also the peace, reconciliation and unity among all our fellow-men and fellow-citizens, without any discrimination, be – according to Paul – "the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day" (Ephes. 6:13), in other words, when the temptation hits you with force.

Both the faithful people of God and the respected Royal and Civil authorities of the country, look up to your new ministry with joy and hope, holy brother. It is the ministry of the

Representative of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the descendant of St. James the Brother of God and of Patriarch Sophronios, who cultivated the strong brotherly bonds between the Royal Hashemite Dynasty and the Greek-Orthodox Jerusalem Patriarchate.

Along with the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and all our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Clergy, We pray the Holy Trinitarian God, so that the Holy Spirit, Whose divinity was made manifest in the River Jordan upon our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, may guide your footsteps towards the working of His commandments, by the intercessions of His Most Holy Mother, our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, with the prayers of the Holy Martyr Christophoros and the Holy Martyrs Isavros and those with him who we commemorate today.

For all these, we beseech and pray to our Almighty God, for the health and strengthening and preservation of the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Custodian of the Islamic and Christian Shrines in the Holy City of Jerusalem, His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Al-Hussein and His Royal family. Amen.”

On Saturday evening there was a reception in honour of the new Representative by the Community of Amman at the Greek-Orthodox club. His Beatitude delivered the following address there:

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1Cor. 3:9-11); this is what Apostle Paul commands of the preachers of the Gospel, the Pastors of the Church.

Beloved Friends, Brothers and Sisters,

Holy Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We thank God the Father, Who has deemed us worthy, the humble ones in the flesh, to become abettors in His work, namely the Church, which is His mystical body in the world (Acts 1:25).

Having received this ministry and mission, We have never ceased caring for our reverend Christian congregation on either side of the river Jordan.

A proof of this is the existing unceasing Christian presence in the Holy Land throughout the centuries, which needless to say, includes our much respected Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, under the wise and powerful rule of His Majesty the King Abdullah II Bin Al-Hussein.

The mission of the Church is centred primarily in the Lord's words: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. 9:12-13).

The mission of this witness of the light of Christ's truth and love, is being evangelized by the Mother of all Churches, the Roman-Orthodox Jerusalem Patriarchate, which undeniably is worldwide recognized as the guarantee not only of the Christians in the Middle East, but also the assurance and seal of their identity as a Community. And this is so, because the Christians' benchmark in our region are the Holy Shrines, with first in rank the All-Holy and Life-giving Tomb of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which is located in the centre of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

St. John the Evangelist says; "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19). In other words, we mind over the things that are of God, while the world minds over the things that are of the world. "And to

be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:6).

This divine and ecclesiastical mind has led Us and the Holy and Sacred Synod to the appointment of our Patriarchal Representative in Amman, Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis, as well as the appointment of the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba as a pastor, along with his post of the Patriarchal Representative in North Jordan, based in the town of Irbet.

Allow me, my dear ones, to highlight that the dialogue of love and peace is according to God's mind, unlike the contradiction and confrontation which are according to the mind of the world.

Finally, we take this blessed opportunity to deeply express our heartfelt thanks to His Majesty the most respected King of the Hashemite Kingdom, Abdullah II Bin Al-Husseini, as well as the Chief Advisor of the King on Religious, Christian and Cultural Affairs, His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad, our most dear friend, whose practical interest in favour of the Christian presence here is known to all.

And to Our beloved brother and co-celebrant Most Reverend Archbishop of Kyriakoupolis and Patriarchal Representative in Amman and its outskirts, We wish every success from God. Thank you."

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE FEAST OF SAINT ONUPHRIOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, June 12/25, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our Father among the Saints Onuphrios of Egypt, at the his Holy Monastery which is located at a short distance from the Biblical Siloam pool in East Jerusalem.

This district is also named "The potter's field", because it on the field that the Lords' of the Jews bought with the thirty silver coins Judas the traitor returned to them when he regretted his crime. They wanted to use the field for "the burial of the foreigners". For this reason the Monastery is build above caves carved in rocks that were used as tombs. One of these tombs belongs to the first Patriarch of Jerusalem St. Iouvenalios (451 A.D.).

At the Holy Church of this Monastery, Vespers was held in the evening, and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the morning of the Feast, led by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the Archimandrites Ignatios and Kalistos, Archdeacon Mark and Hieromonks and Deacons from the Holy Metropolis of Patra from the Church of Greece. The hymns were delivered by the Reverend Archimandrites Eusevios,( who is also the Choir leader of the Central Monastery of the Patriarchate), and Demetrios, while the service was attended by nuns, and noble pilgrims.

His Eminence read the Sermon of the day on behalf of His Beatitude as follows;

"Godly-wise Father Onuphrios, in spirit thou didst become great Elias' follower, for thou dweltest far removed from the

turbulence of the world; thou didst deny all the yearnings of the flesh and didst abide in the barren wilderness, where, with exceeding joy, thou, O blessed man, didst soar aloft in soul to the Heavens where thou truly hadst thy citizenship". The Hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The Grace of the Holy Spirit that has dwelled in our Father among the Saints Onuphrios has gathered us all in this sacred shrine of the potter's field, where the Holy Monastery dedicated to the Saint lies, in order to celebrate the great sacrament of the Eucharist, the bloodless sacrifice to our Trinitarian God.

Our Father among the Saints Onuphrios, who came from Egypt, became a citizen of the kingdom of heaven and conversed with the Angels. He managed this after he had heard of the lives of zealot Prophet Elijah and of St. John the Baptist and Forerunner. Our Father Onuphrios became imitator of these Holy prophets and Hermits, retreating to the inner desert where he lived for sixty years, "having seen no man in all these years" according to his synaxarist.

By his escape in the inner desert, our Holy Father became "an emigrant from this world of confusion" and "disclaimer of the passions of the flesh" hearkening to the words of St. Paul saying: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

So arduous and great was the asceticism of our Holy Father in the dry desert, that "he didst soar aloft in soul to the Heavens where He hadst his citizenship" according to the hymn writer. St. Onuphrios accomplished this hearkening to the words of David and Paul. St. Paul says; "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

And in more detail; do not marvel that we suffer persecution and sorrows. For reasonably thinking, I am convinced that what we suffer and endure in this current time cannot be compared to the glory which is destined to be revealed and given to us.

And Prophet David sings; "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more" (Psalm 103:15-16). The days of man, David says, are like the fresh and temporary grass. Just like the flowers of the fields, man flourishes for a little while. When the hot wind blows over the flower, it is destroyed and the flower is no more, leaving no trace behind of its former presence. Likewise, man goes away and never comes back, and he is forgotten.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, our Holy Church, the faithful members of its body, are rejoicing today on the glorious commemoration of our Father among the Saints Onuphrios. And this is so, because our Holy Father "from Heaven didst receive gifts transcending the mind of man, piously imparting them unto those, who longed for tokens of his ascetic feats;" according to the hymn writer.

And we ask ourselves, what are the attributes of St. Onuphrios' asceticism? They are the fact that our Holy Father became a vessel of the grace of the Holy Spirit, he became son of God, as St. Paul preaches; "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). This means that all those who are governed by God's Spirit are sons of God.

In other words, God's Spirit is the One Who should lead all the actions and deeds of our lives, as St. Ekoumenios says; "They will make [the Spirit of God] charioteer and leader for all their lives. And according to the Church Father Theodoritos Kyros "The regal Spirit" is the spirit, the mind, which rules and thus leads and helps man to overcome his



passions and weaknesses. Wherever the "Spirit of God" blows, namely the Spirit of the Lord, there freedom lies, as St. Paul preaches; "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17). Our Father Onuphrios became participant of this liberty of the Spirit of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The exceptional character of the ascetic of the desert St. Onuphrios of Egypt, is not only an example to imitate, but also an exhortation to all the faithful and those who honour his commemoration, to protect themselves from the "spirit of error" (1 John 4:6), which unfortunately dominates the minds and hearts of many of our Christian brethren, as St. Jude preaches by saying; "How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost; Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 18-21).

Let us therefore entreat our Holy Father Onuphrios and our Holy Father Peter of Athos whom we also commemorate today, along with the Theotokos the Mother of God the Word, the Most Blessed One, the Ever-Virgin Mary, so that by their intercessions to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we may heal the passions of our souls. Amen."

After the Divine Liturgy, there was a special prayer for the fruit and a memorial service at the tomb of the founder of the Monastery and the tomb of Nun Seraphima.

Finally the Abbess of the Monastery Nun Paissia offered a festal reception to the Episcopal entourage at the Hegoumeneion and to all the pilgrims at the courtyard of the Monastery.

# THE FEAST OF SAINTS CONSTANTINE AND HELEN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday May 21/June 3, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated along with the feast of All Saints, that of the Holy, Glorious, God-crowned, Great Sovereigns Constantine and Helen the Equals to the Apostles, at their Holy Church in the Central Monastery, as the founders and patron Saints of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the other Holy Shrines and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

The Feast was celebrated with vespers in the evening, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the participation in prayer of Hagiotaphite Fathers, Archbishops, Priests and monks, who received the boiled wheat at the courtyard of the Church at the end of the service.

In the morning, the feast was celebrated with the Divine Liturgy, which was led by His Beatitude, with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Hieromonks ministering in this Church, with first in rank the Typikon Keeper Archimandrite Alexios. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, monks, nuns and local faithful and pilgrims.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, dressed in His Patriarchal vestments, His Beatitude returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters escorted by the Hagiotaphite Fathers and the

congregation. Each one received a small loaf of bread as a blessing on the way to the Patriarchate by the baker Nun Seraphima.

At the reception hall of the Patriarchate His Beatitude addressed all present as follows;

*“Thou wast first of all the Christian kings to receive the scepter from God; for His saving sign which was hid in the earth, was shown to thee, O blessed Constantine. By its might thou didst subjugate all nations and peoples underneath the Christian’s feet, since thou didst truly have Christ’s life-giving Cross as a weapon which no adverse power could conquer, and thereby thou also wast brought to our God”.*

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

*The Holy Church of Jerusalem honours and venerates today the commemoration of the Holy, Glorious, Great, God-crowned Sovereigns Constantine and Helen, the Equals to the Apostles, owners of the All-holy Shrines in the Holy Land, and founders of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.*

*The contribution of these great sovereigns to the abolition of the religion of idols and the prevalence of the Christian faith made them Equals to the Apostles and Evangelists, patron saints of the Holy Land and founders of the uncontested and insurmountable spiritual and cultural greatness of the ecumenical “Romiosyne”.*

*It is confessed by all that the highlighting of the All-holy Shrines and the Holy Sepulchre by Saints Constantine and Helen, established the long-term presence of the Christian Communities in the Holy Land as well as in the wider Middle*

*East region.*

*Being grateful to the Trinitarian God Who has made wonders through the Saints Constantine and Helen the Equals to the Apostles, we have celebrated the Divine Liturgy in thanksgiving in the Monastic and Patriarchal Church bearing their names, and we prayed for our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, for the continuation of its God-pleasing mission, and also for the prevalence of peace in our tested region, by the intercessions of the Most Blessed, our Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and the prayers of today's honoured Holy, Glorious Constantine and Helen the Equals to the Apostles. Amen. Many happy returns.*

At noon there was a monastic festal meal.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **MONDAY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT THE RUSSIAN SPIRITUAL MISSION (MISSIA) IN JERUSALEM**

On Monday of the Holy Spirit, May 15/28, 2018, according to the Pentecostarion, the Feast of Pentecost was celebrated, namely the coming down of the Holy Spirit, at the Holy Church of the Holy Trinity of the Moscow Patriarchate in West

Jerusalem.

This event was celebrated by the Divine Liturgy which was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrant the Most Reverend Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia and Aristovoulos of Madaba, the Head of the Russian Mission Archimandrite Alexander and the other Priests of the Mission, as well as Priests from our Patriarchate, Archimandrite Ieronymos, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Anastasios, and other Deacons. The Choir of the Nuns sang, while the service was attended by a large Russian congregation.

His Beatitude delivered a Sermon to this congregation as follows;

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4.24).

Your Grace Archimandrite Alexander, representative in Jerusalem of H.H.B. the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Cyril, and Hegoumen of the Russian MISSIA here,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

The grace of the Holy Spirit Who puts together all the institution of the mystical body of Christ, in other words, our One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church, has gathered us all in order to celebrate in thanksgiving and doxology this life-giving and all-mighty Spirit, the One of the three Persons of the Trinitarian God, Who is of one honour, one substance and one glory with the Father and the Son.

The One of the Trinitarian God, of the same substance and glory with the Father and the Son is the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, for Whom Christ spoke about to His disciples: “And

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14.26).

Today's feast is an extension of the great feast of Pentecost, as very clearly the hymn writer of the Church says: "Let us faithful celebrate this fair post-festal time with joy and the final festival: this is the day of Pentecost, which now fulfillleth the promise and time appointed. For on this day, the fire of the Good Comforter straightway came on earth, like unto tongues in form and it enlightened the disciples and made them Heaven's initiates. Behold, the Comforter's light hath come down and enlightened the whole world".

This light of the Comforter, which has enlightened the world is being evangelized by the Holy Church of the Orthodox faithful to all people who search for the light of truth, the Comforter Spirit, Who is shed to every person today.

The Holy Church of Jerusalem, having become a truthful witness of this paradox, this mystery, rejoices and is glad because it was in its holy bosom, in the Upper Room of the city of Jerusalem, where all the Apostles were gathered together, that tongues like fire were given to each of them and everybody was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.3-4).

And the Holy Spirit, making a start from the chorea of the Holy Apostles: "from them He extended grace to the believers by participation. And he confirmeth His mighty descent by the distribution of tongues in the likeness of fire to the disciples, unto the praise and glory of God".

The extension or shedding of the grace of the Holy Spirit to the faithful, to the Holy Apostles, is the guarantee of the unshakable unity of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

of the Orthodox faithful.

And this means that the living and existing mystical body of Christ in the world, namely the Church, moves and works under the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. This is what St. Paul says to his epistle to the Ephesians: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1.13-14).

This consignment of Paul is addressed to all of us, and especially to the brotherly Orthodox Churches, reminding us that the uprising canonical matters should be solved according to the Holy Spirit, and in conjunction with the decisions of the Ecumenical Synods, and of the Holy and Great Synod in Crete which was in session on the Holy day of Pentecost two years ago.

Today my dear brothers and sisters we celebrate not only the coming of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit in the world, Who has been granted unto us by the intercession of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but also the unity of the brotherly Orthodox Churches, as the hymn writer of the Church says: "Of old the tongues were confounded because of the audacity in the building of the tower, but now the tongues are made wise for the sake of the glory of Divine knowledge. At that time the confusion of tongues was wrought for punishment, but now the concord of tongues hath been inaugurated for the salvation of our souls".

By the coming down of the Holy Spirit, through the intercessions of the Most-blessed our Lady Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary, and those of the Holy and glorious Apostles, Christ our God, enlighten our souls, have mercy on us and grant the world and our tested region peace. Amen.

At the end of the Sermon, He offered an icon of the renovated Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre to the Head of the Russian Mission Fr. Alexander, who offered His Beatitude an icon of Christ in return.

After the Divine Liturgy there was a reception and a monastic meal. There, His Beatitude addressed all present, saying among other things that today's feast is the Feast of the Church and especially of Jerusalem. Through the coming down of the Holy Spirit, Christ's mission on earth was sealed, the Church was founded and it continues His redeeming mission. For this reason all Church rejoices today, and of course the Church of Jerusalem. Even if it has been tested through persecutions and migrations, in Asia Minor, Serbia, and the Middle East, it has transplanted new parishes and it has been renewed. Despite the hardships, the Church remains steadfast, fighting for the unity against the schisms. The Holy Spirit puts together the whole constitution of the Church. The Holy Spirit led to the Great Synod of Crete in 2016.

Replying, Archimandrite Alexander thanked His Beatitude for His good support which Missia and its Orthodox pilgrims enjoy.

### **From Secretariat-General**

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# **SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Sunday April 23/May 6, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the Sunday of the Samaritan woman at the shrine of Jacob's well in Nablus of Samaria. This feast commemorates the meeting of the Samaritan woman with the Lord and the revelation that "He is the Messiah, God is spirit and those who worship Him should do so in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:26-27). This revelation made her believe in the Lord, and consequently led to her martyrdom as well as that of her family, sons and brothers, and thus she is honoured by the Church as Foteini the Great Martyr.

In this shrine and in the quite big and beautiful Church of St. Foteini that has been built by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Ioustinos, the Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the visiting from Moscow Patriarchate Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokomosk and the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina. There were also Hagiotaphite Hieromonks with first in rank Archimandrite Makarios, Hegoumen of the Monastery of St. Nicodemus, Fr. Nikolaos from Moscow Patriarchate, the Head of the Russian Missia in Jerusalem Archimandrite Alexander, Archimandrite Martyrios, the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of the Annunciation in Rafidia Archimandrite Leontios and others, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Anastasios. The right choir was led by Archimandrite Aristovoulos who sang in Greek and Russian, and the left by the Rafidia Community who sang in Arabic, while the service was attended by Arabs, Greeks, Russians and Romanians.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this Congregation;

*“When the Lord came unto the well, the Samaritan woman entreated Him Who is compassionate, saying: Grant me the water of faith, and I shall receive the streams of the font of baptism, unto exceeding gladness and the redemption. O Giver of Life, Lord, glory to Thee”.*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Noble Christians and Pilgrims*

*The Samaritan woman who saw Christ, the Saviour of our souls, has gathered us by the power of the Holy Spirit in this sacred place of Patriarch Jacob’s well, in order to celebrate her feast, namely of the Samaritan Woman, who became co-martyr of Christ’s blood.*

*Upon her meeting with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Samaritan Woman asks for “the Water of Faith” according to the witness of St. John the Evangelist; “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw” (John 4:13-15).*

*This water of faith, which is given by Christ, is no other than the power of the Holy Spirit, and thus His active power, namely the Divine Grace, which can be rushing, like rushing waters at times. “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14) says the Lord. “To grant everlasting life” Zigavinos interprets. “It has the power to maintain everlasting life” St. Cyril of Alexandria says.*

*Indeed, my dear ones, the Holy Spirit is the One that grants everlasting life and maintains it. For this reason the Lord says to the Samaritan woman: “Ye, [the Samaritans] worship ye*

*not know what... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). And in more detail; Very soon the hour comes, and I am in the position to say that that hour has now come, when the true worshipers will worship the Father with newly-enlightened spiritual power, and in a worship that will be inspired by the full cognition of the truth. Because the Father [God] also wants those who worship Him to be likewise true worshipers. God is spirit, therefore He cannot be confided in places. And those who worship Him should venerate Him with their internal spiritual powers, in devotion of both heart and mind, but also in true cognition of God and of the worship befitting to Him.*

*It was precisely to this cause that the Samaritan woman approached, "the true worship of God", when she heard Jesus saying to her: "I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:26), namely the Messiah, the Christ (John 4:25). This true cognition of God highlighted the Prophets, the Apostles, the Martyrs and all the Righteous, meaning the Saints, as well as the Great Martyr George the Trophy-bearer whom we co-celebrate today, who have glorified the Name of God the Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

*The true cognition of God dawned in the mind and heart of Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who saw a great Light, namely the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, as the hymn writer says: "Thou didst appear to them that sat in darkness, O Lord, since Thou art the never-setting Light and the Life of all. Wherefore, when the assembly of the righteous beheld Thee, O Word, they leaped for joy and cried: Thou art come to set all loose from their bonds; we praise Thy dominion".*

*The unwaning Light and the Life of all is no other than the Water of Life, namely the Holy Spirit of our Lord and Saviour*

*Jesus Christ, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses very clearly: "Whosoever thirsteth, let him come unto Me and drink; he that believeth in Me, rivers of the water of life of the Divine Spirit shall flow forth from his belly" (John 7:37-38). Moreover, St. Paul calls the Holy Spirit "Living Water" saying: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).*

*In other words, my dear ones, the Lord's words: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14) are not addressed only to the Samaritan woman, but to all people, believers and non-believers.*

*And we say this, because the one that drinks the living water that comes from our Lord Jesus Christ, ensures by the power of the Holy Spirit the eternal blessing and satisfaction of the internal desires of his soul, relieving it from thirst and spiritual death.*

*The phenomenon of this spiritual death is characteristic of our contemporary era. This is noted among the religious people as well as among Christians, who are faithful only by name and not in essence.*

*Christ's Church, the source of the living worship, is the source of God's gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the food and drink of every man's soul, especially of those who have been watered in one Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, according to St. Paul (1 Cor. 12:13).*

*Come, my dear brothers, let us come to the source of Life, our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by the intercessions of the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and of the Holy Philoumenos the New Martyr, and say along with the hymn*

*writer; "Thou art the Water of Life, cried the Samaritan woman unto Christ. Give me to drink, therefore, who always thirst for Thy divine grace, O Word, that I may no longer be held by the drought of ignorance, but may proclaim Thy mighty acts, O Lord Jesus" and worship Thy Holy Resurrection. Amen.*

*Christ is risen!*

After the Divine Liturgy the Hegoumen and renovator of the Monastery Archimandrite Ioustinos offered a reception and at lunch time a festal meal to the Patriarchal entourage and many of the faithful.

During the meal, the native Roman Orthodox young lawyer Haleel Abu Yanam addressed His Beatitude in Arabic as per the link below;

<http://www.jp-newsgate.net/ar/2018/05/06/38120>

From Secretariat-General

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**HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH  
OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE**

# D. LITURGY AT REINEH OF NAZARETH

On Sunday of the Paralytic, April 16/29, 2018, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos led the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of St. George of the Greek Orthodox Arab-speaking Community of the town Reineh, a suburb of Nazareth in Galilee.

After a very warm welcome by the Scouts and the parish, His Beatitude led the Divine Liturgy with co-celebrants the Most Reverent Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Archimandrites Hilarion and Makarios, Arab-speaking Priests from that area, such as the Dean Priest of that Parish Fr. Simeon, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Aanasios. The parish choir sang in Arabic, while the service was attended by a large congregation, very faithful to its Church.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation:

*“At the sheep’s pool, a man lay in sickness; and when he saw Thee, O Lord, he cried: I have no man, that, when the water is troubled, he might put me therein. And straightaway, taking compassion on him the Saviour saith unto him: for thee I became man, for thee I am clothed in flesh, and sayest thou: I have no man? Take up thy bed and walk.”*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Noble Christians,*

*Christ our true God, who was risen from the dead and cured the paralytic by the Sheep’s pool, has summoned us all on this Paschal day, in your town Reine, so that we may glorify His ineffable philanthropy.*

*And the philanthropy of God the Father is manifested by two great and unprecedented historical events; that God the Word became incarnate and took the form of a man by the Virgin Mary; and that God the Word, and Son of God the Father, our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ was risen from the dead.*

*To the desperate protest of the impotent man who had been waiting for thirty eight years and said to Jesus: "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath" (John 5:7-9).*

*Jesus healed the paralytic by the authoritative manner of His word, just to show His sovereign strength and force, as St. Cyril of Alexandria interprets; "He commands the man to take his bed and walk, in order to show to the spectators the mighty force of the healer".*

*It is precisely this sovereign force and power over corruption and sin that Jesus revealed, and showed to all peoples through His three-day burial and resurrection, as the hymn writer says; "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".*

*In other words, my beloved brothers, our Lord Jesus Christ cured the paralytic saying; "Rise, take up thy bed and walk" (John 5:8). And this was done in this manner in order to show that it was a miracle by the divine power of Jesus and not a by a mere phantasy, as St. Chrysostom says: "Not only did He make the man walk, but He also ordered him to take up his bed, in order to confirm the accomplished miracle and no one would suppose that what happened was a phantasy or hypocrisy."*

*Jesus Christ's question to the paralytic: "Wilt thou be made*

whole?" (John 5:6) has a timeless significance and is addressed to every single man who wants to be made whole.

And we say this, because our Lord and Saviour, God the Word, was made man and took upon Himself our human flesh in order to release us from sin, in other words, the sickness, and consequently our "paralysis".

Behold why the Church of Christ is rejoicing on His Resurrection, having Him as its head and body. Let us hear the hymn writer saying: "When thy Son destroyed all the might of death, O Virgin, as the mighty God He exalted and deified us with himself by His Resurrection. Wherefore, we sing His praise unto the ages."

Our deification is the ultimate purpose of the calling through the Church that God offers by His ineffable philanthropy to His own creature, the wounded man. Christ's divine blood on which the Church was founded, was shed for us people. And the Church should not be thought of as a worldly or social organization, but primarily as a sanatorium and hospital of our souls and bodies.

As a sanatorium and hospital, the Church has always its gates open wide, at all times towards all people, according to the Lord's words: "and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37) and "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17). In other words, Christ calls the sinners "not remain sinners, but to repent, in other words, to return to Him" St. Theophylactos says.

This means my dear ones, that there are many people and especially Christians, who consider themselves healthy without the need of a physician, namely of Christ and His Church. But to them applies what the Lord said to the Bishop of Laodicean in the book of Revelation of St. John the Theologian: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and



*miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17). And in more detail; you claim in your pride and self-complacence that you are rich in virtues and have no need for more. And you don’t know that you are indeed miserable and deplorable and poor in virtue, and blind and sick sot that you don’t see your paralyzed spiritual condition.*

*Today’s festal and Paschal celebration of our Holy Church calls us through the words of its hymn writer to get to know the power of the horrendous mystery of the Lord’s crucifixion and resurrection for our sake; “Christ our Saviour, the Word who was in the beginning, was crucified for us and was buried of His own will, and arose from the dead, that He might save all things. Let us worship Him.”*

*Our Holy Church of Jerusalem has been a faithful witness and preacher of this truth, with its Monastic Order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, which has preserved the Holy Shrines throughout the centuries, as places of sanctification and spiritual refreshment and also as a guarantee of the Christian presence in the Holy Land and in the Middle East.*

*Let us give thanks to the merciful God and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who was born by the Most Pure and Ever-Virgin Mary the Theotokos and say along with the hymn writer: “Do Thou, O transcendently Good, heal my soul, which hath been grievously infirm for many years, even as Thou madest whole the paralytic before, that I may walk in Thy paths, which Thou hast shown to them that long for Thee.” Amen.*

*Christ is risen!*

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception at the reception hall next to the Church, where His Beatitude addressed all present as follows during lunch time;

*“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Philip. 4:4). “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philip. 4:7).*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Respected Members of the Church Committee,*

*We rend glory and thanksgiving to the resurrected from the dead our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who has deemed us worthy concelebrate in this Paschal Day of the Lord, in which “All things are filled with gladness, having received the proof of the Resurrection”.*

*This gladness of Christ’s Resurrection is what the Church of Jerusalem preaches, through its Christian noble Congregation, which is scattered all over the Holy Land and especially in the Galilee area, where the Lord appeared to His disciples saying to them: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:18-19).*

*All power on earth that was given to the victor over death and sin, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was also given to the Church, which is Christ’s mystical body in the world. And this power is no other than that of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of our God and Saviour Christ. For this, says the Lord; “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matt. 12:31-32).*

*And we say this because many are those who are driven against*

*the Church, in other words, against its members the Christians. Of course, those who are against us "they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).*

*The primary mission of the Church and consequently of its faithful members is the preaching of love, righteousness, reconciliation, peace and forgiveness in the world.*

*The Church, the Eucharistic and Liturgical Community in the Holy Spirit, is God's city in substance, as the Great Apostle of the Nations St. Paul says; "ye are come unto the city of the living God" (Hebrews 12:22). This means, according to St. Paul's teaching, that "our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philip. 3:20) Who was resurrected from the dead.*

*Christ is risen!*

### **From Secretariat-General**

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# THE FEAST OF SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN IN ANCIENT ARIMATHAEA (REMLI)

The event of the Deposition of the Lord from the Cross and His burial by Joseph the honourable counselor, who asked to receive His body from Pilate (Mark 15:43-46) was celebrated by the Patriarchate in Remli – ancient Arimathaea – on Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women, April 9/22, 2018.

The commemoration of this feast was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishops Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, such as Archimandrites Kallistos and Makarios, Priests from the neighbouring to Remli areas, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Anastasios. The hymns were delivered by the Remli Community Choir and the Service was attended by representatives of the Greek Embassy in Tel-Aviv and a large Orthodox Congregation.

His Beatitude delivered a Sermon to this Congregation as follows below;

*“Let the nations and peoples praise Christ our God, Who willingly endured the Cross for us and was in Hades for three days. And let them worship His Resurrection from the dead, whereby all the ends of the world were enlightened”. The hymn writer of the Church proclaims.*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Reverend Christians*

*Your ancient and hagiographic town of Arimathaea is rejoicing gleefully in its participation in the Passion on the Cross and the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through the secret but faithful disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, who also became preachers of Christ's three-day burial and rising from the dead.*

*This is shown clearly by today's festal and Paschal day of the Lord, in which we honour the commemoration of the Holy Myrrh-bearing Women and of Christ's faithful disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, who became truthful witnesses of His burial and Resurrection, as referenced by Mark the Evangelist: "Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counselor, which also waited for the Kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus...And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre" (Mark 15:43.46).*

*Joseph of Arimathaea, the honourable counselor, is distinguished for two things; firstly, he was expecting the Kingdom of God, of our Lord Jesus Christ; secondly, "he laid him [the crucified Christ] in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock", and that sepulchre was his own one. Nicodemus was a co-confessor to this event, "who at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight" (John 19:39).*

*Both Joseph and Nicodemus recognized in Jesus the Son of God preaching the Kingdom of Heaven, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses; "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:5-6). In more detail, "I verily tell you Nicodemus, Jesus said, that unless a man is not born spiritually by the Holy Baptism and the Holy Spirit, Who works the regeneration*

of man invisibly, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Every single living being who has been born naturally of the flesh is also flesh, it cannot enter this spiritual Kingdom. And the one who has been born of the Holy Spirit, is a spiritual being and personality, and he will enjoy the spiritual Kingdom of God".

In other words, my dear brothers, "His Resurrection from the dead, whereby all the ends of the world were enlightened" according to the hymn writer, is nothing but the Kingdom of God, in which every single man is called to enter. Christ's resurrection declares the victory of Christ's death over the death of corruption and sin, as His Church proclaims; "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the grave He hath given life". And "Pascha the Lord's Pascha; for Christ God hath brought us from death unto life and from earth unto heaven"; And moreover; "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**".

And the unwaning day of God's Kingdom is man's salvation, in other words, his participation in the resurrection of Christ's deceased human nature. Christ is the One, Who in His resurrection exalted and deified our human nature along with Him, as the hymn writer says; "When thy Son destroyed all the might of death, O Virgin, as the mighty God He exalted and deified us with Himself by His Resurrection. Wherefore, we sing His praise unto the ages".

This reality of the fact that He "exalted and deified us with Himself by His Resurrection", do we Christians live and realize inside the Church, which is the mystical body of Christ in the world. And we say this, because the Kingdom of God, which Christ revealed to the world, is not eating and drinking freely. It is righteousness and peace and unity with our brothers and fellow humans, and the joy granted by the Holy Spirit. St. Paul preaches; "For the Kingdom of God is not

*meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men” (Romans 14:17-18). And elsewhere St. Paul again says; “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:50).*

*Interpreting St. Paul’s words, Cyril of Alexandria says; “as long as the human body is flesh and blood, in other words, mortal and corruptible, it cannot inherit the Kingdom of God”. This means two things; firstly that by our participation in the sacramental and liturgical or Eucharistic life of the Church, we, its faithful members, are able to foretaste spiritually the Kingdom of heaven; and secondly, we are able to embrace incorruption, as evidenced by the myriads of holy men and women and especially by the sustained relics of the Saints of our Church. As the hymn writer says, “Having suffered for Christ unto death, O prizewinning Martyrs, ye have your souls in the Heavens in the hand of God, and your relics are escorted throughout the whole world.”*

*Christ’s Resurrection, my beloved ones, is the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. To this cause we are called today, by the Holy Myrrh-bearing women and Saints Joseph and Nicodemus, through the intercessions of our All-Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, saying along with the hymn writer; “renew O my soul all thy senses towards the divine vision; for Christ wants to perform the inauguration of renewal in this manner”.*

*Christ is risen!*

After the Divine Liturgy there was a Litany around the Church, and the inauguration of the refurbished reception hall, where His Beatitude addressed the congregation as follows;

*“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mat. 5:14).*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Reverend members of the Community*

*Today, there is festal Paschal joy and gleefulness in the Holy Monastery of your town of Arimathaea, where you are working on a refurbishment project under our dearest Hegoumen Reverend Archimandrite Niphon and the donators who love the goodness of the House of the Lord, all the faithful and dear to Us members of this Community.*

*The venerable Jerusalem Patriarchate with the Order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood has managed throughout the centuries to sustain the All-holy Shrines in the Holy Land and in the city of Jerusalem; it has also managed to guarantee the Christian presence therein.*

*And we say this, because the Christian presence and witness in the Holy Land and the surrounding region of the Middle East is a liturgical mission of worship on behalf of the Mother of Churches, for which it is written "and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Mat. 16:18).*

*The co-operation between the Patriarchate and your Community within the spirit of the Church and Christ's love, is owed to the educational, social and spiritual progress in the Community of Remla. "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?" (Mat. 5:13)*

*The peaceful co-habitation with our Hebrew and Muslim fellow citizens is an example to imitate. Congratulating you on all these good works, we wish that the Light of the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ may enlighten your minds and hearts. To the members and the President of the New Community Committee we wish strength and success in their mission, reassuring them of Our undivided support.*

*Christ is risen!*



At the end of all events there was a festal meal.

### **From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE FEAST OF THOMAS SUNDAY IN KANA OF GALILEE**

On Thomas Sunday, April 2/15, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated in Kana of Galilee the commemoration of the event that eight days after the Resurrection, Thomas put his fingers in the wounds of the nails on the Lord's body, according to the Gospel narrative (John 20:19-31).

In this town, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was welcomed at the Gate by the Hegoumen of Kana Archimandrite Chrysostom, other Clergy, the Community Council and the Scouts. In this procession, His Beatitude reached the Monastery of the Patriarchate, in which the Church is dedicated to St. George.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated in this Church, in commemoration of the Lord's miracle at the wedding in Kana, and of the event with Apostle Thomas.

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 Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and pilgrims, the Hegoumens of the neighbouring Monasteries of Kana and the Arab-speaking Priests of Nazareth and Archdeacon Mark. The Kana choir delivered the hymns in Byzantine music in the Arabic language, and the service was attended by a large congregation.

His Beatitude's Sermon to this congregation follows below;

*"Shine, shine O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord hath arisen upon thee; dance now and be glad, O Sion, and do thou exalt, O pure Theotokos, in the arising of Him Who thou didst bear", the hymn writer of the Church, St. John Damascene proclaims.*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Reverend Christians and pilgrims*

*The dawn of the glory of the Theotokos' Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Unwaning Light of the Resurrection, has gathered all of us in this sacred place of Kana in Galilee, so that we declare the salvation of the world, the Pascha of incorruption, in thanksgiving and doxology; as the hymn writer says, "When Thou hadst fallen asleep in the flesh as one mortal, O King and Lord, Thou didst rise again on the third day, raising up Adam from corruption, and abolishing death: O Pascha of incorruption! O Salvation of the world!"*

*Hearing Isaiah's words "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isaiah 60:1), St. John Damascene calls the Church of Christ, which is the New Jerusalem, to be enlightened with the light of the glory of Christ's Resurrection.*

*It is precisely this glory that Christ revealed at the wedding of His friend Simon, which took place here, by working the*

first of His miracles, the turning of water into wine, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Kana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him" (John 2:11).

Christ revealed the glory of His Resurrection to His disciples, and especially to Apostle Thomas, who was saying: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). This glory did Thomas himself preach to the nations when he saw Jesus' hands and put his finger into the print of the nails on Christ's side and cried out loud and said "My Lord and my God" (John 20:27-28).

The glory of the Lord that hath arisen upon Jerusalem, namely the Church, is no other than the glory of the God-man our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Head of the mystical body of His Church, of which [Church] we are members. And inside the Church of the Resurrected God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ we foretaste, or better say, the beginning of everlasting life, as St. John Damascene says clearly: "We celebrate the death of death, the destruction of Hades, the beginning of an everlasting life. And with leaps of joy we praise the Cause thereof, the only blest and most glorious God of our Fathers".

The grandeur of the feast of the new and mystical Pascha, my dear brothers, is owed to the fact that the day of the radiant resurrection is "the forerunner of the bright-beaming Day of the Resurrection, where on the Timeless Light in bodily form shone from the grave for all", according to St. John Damascene. And according to prophet Isaiah, Christ is the "great light" which has risen to "the people that walked in darkness...and dwell in the land of the shadow of death" (Mt. 4:16, Isaiah 9:2). "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:9).

*For this reason, St. Peter advises the Christians by saying: You are a chosen nation, a priesthood with royal descend. You are a holy nation, dedicated to God, a chosen people who especially belong to God. And you have all these special characteristics in order to preach with your own example, the splendid and endless perfection of Him, Who has summoned you from the darkness of false beliefs and of sin into His new bright and wondrous spiritual life. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).*

*In other words, the mission of the conscious and faithful members of the Church is to evangelize to their fellow-men "all the words of life in the resurrected Christ" according to the Acts of the Apostles: "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" (Acts 5:20) and "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26).*

*The Christians, and especially the members of the Church, should be obliged to consider themselves ministers of the gospel of love, reconciliation and freedom, righteousness and peace, according to the words of the resurrected Christ, our Lord and Saviour: "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).*

*The Holy Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches, which has been founded by the redeeming blood of Christ, which came forth from His pierced side, has become the primary minister of the light of the resurrection, namely the truth in Christ. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the*

*light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21) – says the Lord.*

*Today, as we also celebrate in great jubilation the great Pascha, which sanctifies all faithful who live the triumph of Christ's victory of death against the death of corruption and sin, let us exclaim in gleefulness and exultation along with the hymn writer: "we celebrate the death of death, the destruction of Hades, the beginning of an everlasting life".*

*Christ is risen!*

At noon, the Hegoumen Archimandrite Chrysostom offered a meal for His Beatitude's entourage and many members of the congregation.

Later on, His Beatitude paid some pastoral visits in Kana for the strengthening of His congregation.

### **From Secretariat-General**

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# PASCHAL GREETINGS TO THE HEADS OF CHURCHES ON THEIR CELEBRATION OF EASTER

10 April 2018

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

Your Beatitudes,

Your Excellences,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

We thank you, dear Friends, for your greetings to us in this joyful Paschal season, and we recall the words of a beautiful Paschal hymn:

*A Pascha of delight...has dawned for us,*

*a Pascha whereon let us embrace one another with joy.*

(From the stichera of Pascha)

We can never forget that joy is at the heart of our Paschal proclamation, a joy that overcomes fear, a joy that mends disunity, a joy that triumphs over death, a joy that brings forth freedom and hope. We must never lose this aspect of our faith, for such joy, the joy that bursts forth from the Empty Tomb, is a sure safeguard against the changes and chances of an uncertain and confused world.

The moral meaning of the freedom we celebrate in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be described in human terms. This divine gift of freedom can only be understood in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Resurrection is our freedom from the death of corruption, for in this great Pascha we have passed over not just from death to life, but also from slavery to freedom. The Resurrection is the ultimate declaration of the dignity of the human person.

Therefore we hold fast to the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all joy and of hope, for as Saint Paul reminds us in the First Letter to the Corinthians;

*If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile...But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.*

(1 Cor. 15:17,20)

The Resurrection is at the very heart of our spiritual message of hope. And Jerusalem is the "home of hope" for everyone, precisely because it is here that our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only righteous one, shed his blood, and was raised. As we said in our joint Easter message to the world;

*This is the time where the Christian Family worldwide remembers God's redeeming work in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jerusalem, the City of Hope and the Resurrection, remains a sacred symbol of God's salvation and a reflection of the heavenly Jerusalem that is yet to come. In fact, this sacred, communal, and spiritual character of Jerusalem continues to be a beacon for hope, peace, and life for the people of this region and the entire world.*

The Empty Tomb is the undisputed testimony for this.

We who live and minister here, who have the pastoral care of our local Christian communities as well as of countless pilgrims, can never forget this. Nor can we forget the power

of Jerusalem to give hope and spiritual refreshment, particularly in this time, when our region is torn by violence and is experiencing such darkness. For as Saint Paul says, *our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh... but against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places* (Eph. 6:12). It is precisely in this spirit of Saint Paul that we have a moral obligation to maintain and sustain the Christian faith of love here in Jerusalem. As our Lord Himself says; *I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!* (John 16:33).

This we do in spite of our weaknesses and failures, for the vocation of Jerusalem comes from God and not from man. Even as we witness renewed violence and unrest in our region, we cannot lose sight of the power of Jerusalem to be a beacon of hope.

So our celebration of the Resurrection is both for our strengthening as well as for the life of the world. This is affirmed by the great influx of pilgrims, both Christians and non-Christians, whom we see in the Holy Land. We can never waiver from this duty and this joy, and we remember the words with which Saint Paul encouraged the Christians at Corinth:

*Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*

(1 Cor. 15:58)

Let us thank our Lord for giving us this festal opportunity to demonstrate once again our unity in His love and His Resurrection. May God bless our communities, and all the peoples of our beloved Holy City and Holy Land, and may we have the blessed peace of the Paschal Feast.

Christ is risen!



Thank you.