

VISITS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF JERUSALEM FOR THE CHRISTMAS FEAST

1. The Franciscan Church

The Franciscan Brotherhood visited the Patriarchate on the occasion of Christmas under its Hegoumen Fr. Francesco Patton at 9.15 a.m. on Tuesday December 27, 2017/ January 9, 2018.

The Hegoumen addressed His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos on behalf of the Brotherhood, underlining the words of St. Maximus the Confessor, that the Son of God “became incarnate once, so that we may have the ability to spiritually incarnate Him in our souls”. Fr. Francesco thanked His Beatitude for His co-operation at the All-holy Shrines and the support of the Christians’ rights, and expressed his support in His Beatitude’s mission, by raising his voice in boldness for the sustaining of the Status Quo of Jerusalem and condemning every action against His Beatitude and the Patriarchate.

In reply to the Franciscan Hegoumen His Beatitude addressed the Brotherhood as per the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2018/01/09/37064>

2. All Churches

At 10.00 a.m. our Patriarchate was visited by; the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem, under the Latin Patriarch Mr. Pierre Battista Pizzaballa, the Syrian Church in Jerusalem under its Archbishop Mourad Swerios, the Coptic Church under its Archbishop Antonios, the Anglican Church under the Most Reverend Suheil Dawani, the Lutheran Church under its Bishop Munib Younan and the Propst Fr. Worfgang Smidt and their

entourage.

The Latin Patriarch addressed His Beatitude and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood on the Churches' behalf, stressing the humility and kenosis of Christ's incarnation, as an example for our humility and care for our neighbour.

Likewise, the Syrian and the Anglican Bishops in Jerusalem addressed His Beatitude, condemning every attack against His Beatitude. The Lutheran Bishop and the representative of the Ethiopian Church also expressed their support.

His Beatitude addressed the Heads of Churches in return as per the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2018/01/09/37062>

3. The Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem

At 11.00 a.m., the Armenian Brotherhood under its Patriarch in Jerusalem His Beatitude Nourhan Manukian visited the Patriarchate. In his address to His Beatitude, the Armenian Patriarch stressed the need of co-operation and unity of the Churches under the light of the recent adverse conditions in the Holy Land.

His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed him in return as per the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2018/01/09/37066>

4. The Apostolic Delegate

On the same day, the Apostolic Delegate visited the Patriarchate on the occasion of Christmas. The Apostolic Delegate is the Vatican's representative in the Holy Land, his Excellency Leopoldo Girelli with his associate Fr. Marco Fromica. They were received by His Beatitude and Hagiotaphite Fathers. Mr. Girelli conveyed Pope Frances' message on the occasion of Christmas and the New Year to His Beatitude.

From Secretariat-General

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HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM ADDRESSES THE KING OF JORDAN

The meeting of the Heads of the Local Churches in the Holy Land took place on Sunday afternoon, December 4/17, 2017, at the Baptism Site of the Lord in the East Bank of the River Jordan, the Pilgrimage Centre of Jordan, at the presence of His Majesty the King of Jordan Abdullah Ibn Hussein II.

The meeting was held with the aim of tightening the cooperation in order to cultivate a climate of appeasement and tolerance regarding the recent political unrest. On behalf of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed His Majesty the King in Arabic as per the link below;

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2017/12/17/34735>

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From Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS OFFICIATES THE DIVINE LITURGY IN EKATERINGURG OF RUSSIA

His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the chapel of St. Catherine in the Holy Church of The Holy Trinity in Ekaterinburg of Russia, according to the calendar of the Russian Orthodox Church on Thursday 24th November/7th December 2017.

His Beatitude officiated this Divine Liturgy at the invitation of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril and the Most Reverend Metropolitan of Ekaterniburg, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril and other Metropolitans of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Tikhon of Tabov who escorted His Beatitude, other Archbishops and many Hieromonks and Priests of the Moscow Patriarchate. The choir was composed of nuns who chanted also in the Byzantine Greek language. An impressive congregation stood still in silent prayer and contrition during the Service.

After the Divine Liturgy His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the congregation as follows;

“Most Reverend Archbishops,

Reverend Co-celebrants Presbyters and Deacons,

Blessed people of God,

Being in the city of St. Catherine as pilgrims by the

invitation of your most devout pastor, in order to co-celebrate the memory of your patron Saint with this noble congregation, we wholeheartedly thank His Beatitude for the honorary invitation to Our mediocrity. From the Holy City of Jerusalem we convey the Gospel of our Lord who became Incarnate in the humble manger of Bethlehem for our salvation, abundantly offering to all of you the Life-giving grace of the All-holy Tomb, by which all creation is illumined, namely "the heaven the earth and everything beneath", with the unwaning light of the Resurrection.

As we celebrate today the memory of Catherine the Great Martyr of Christ, who shines like another aurora borealis over the luminous shimmer of the martyrs, especially in this ultimate time of the earth, we feel indebted to offer hymns of praise to the protector of your city. We praise the feats of this all-wise woman, the modest and dexterous bride of Christ, the reliable guide "to the narrow and sorrowful path", which leads however to the Kingdom of God, wherein the faithful friends of the martyrs march in great jubilation.

With extended hands and from the depths of our heart we beg her to remain always an irrefutable companion and defender of all the servants of God against the various deceitful workings of the lurking enemy.

We wholeheartedly thank her for being quick to intercede to the All-gracious God for every faithful beseeching her help, especially for those who willingly carry the cross of the martyrdom of consciousness.

The Saint knows by her personal experience the pain of the martyrdom, but she also knows the glory of the saints. They suffered a little in this temporary life and received the eternal wreath of unceasing beatitude, and being the praising choirs of the righteous, they surround the throne of glorified Christ, forever celebrating the heavenly Liturgy. The Saint in fact denied herself and lifted up her cross and followed

Christ, considering pulchritude, worldly wisdom, wealth and all other gifts given to her by the mercy of God too little, compared to the spiritual wealth. She thought of all these as "petty things", so she despised them "in order to win Christ". She displayed bravery according to the council of the Proverbs on the bravery of the woman, and patiently endured the torments contrived by the maliciousness of the people. In that manner, by the grace of God she was highlighted an eternal prototype for every Christian.

Catherine the great martyr is an ecumenical saint. She is honoured in the East and the West, by native Orthodox peoples and converts by missionary work, in parishes and monasteries. She is especially honoured in the Church of her hometown at the Patriarchate of Alexandria, as well as in the God-trodden Mount Sinai, which belongs to the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem Patriarchate for many centuries. She is also honoured in the vast land of Russia and the other Slavic Churches, in the blessed Greek-speaking world, and especially in every Church and every Monastery dedicated to her name. The reverence of the Orthodox people highlighted the commemoration of the Great Martyr in a prominent position among other feasts, especially by placing her feast after the apodosis of the Entrance of the Theotokos in the Temple.

According to the scriptures of the saints that narrate St. Catherine's life, our Lady Theotokos, at the Lord Christ's command, gave the Saint "the ring" signifying her betrothal to Him. In that manner the Theotokos became the guide to the union of the Saint with the perfect love of the perfect man, namely the God-man Christ. According to the wise Archbishop of Thessalonica, St. Gregory Palamas, and our Father among the Saints Nicodemus of Mount Athos, the Theotokos is the most perfect creature that has ever been born in the world. All creation came into existence so that the Theotokos would be born, the woman who due to her immaculate purity would be able to bear the perfect God in her womb and consequently nurture

Him. God the Word became incarnate so that He would be one of the people, and therefore be in communion with the people. This union of the created with the uncreated in the incarnate presence of Christ became the ladder that bridges the communion with God for all people. This is the pre-conceived plan of God, according to St. Maximus the Confessor. God the Word became incarnate not only to redeem the humankind from sin and corruption, but also to give it the chance of the full communion with Him, which is feasible to all those who willingly follow the path of the martyrdom of consciousness and of blood. Today's honoured St. Catherine was related to this perfect woman, the Theotokos. Both of them stand by God as bold intercessors. You have such a powerful protector and patron Saint for your city, that you should feel the absolute spiritual and physical security.

St. Catherine was distinguished for her strong worldly wisdom and immense patience in the atrocious tortures of her martyrdom. Nowadays that the secularized society is being projected and proclaimed, unfortunately led by foreign to the Christian doctrine authorities, the spirit and mind of the Saint are a bright beacon for all of us. As it was rightly noted by the Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church in Crete last year: "In these years of secularization, the need to highlight the significance of the holiness of life becomes imperative, as we face the spiritual crisis which characterizes the contemporary world... The Orthodox tradition that has been shaped by the actual living of the Christian truth, is a carrier of spirituality and of ascetic ethos, which should be projected and highlighted especially in our contemporary era".

Therefore, all of us the Orthodox Christians owe to bear witness to the Gospel of Christ in unity and strength, thus becoming "the light of the world" and "the salt of the earth". It is a necessity for all Christians to realise that the starting point for the re-evangelization is the concrete

testimony of Christ, of course in unity and respect of the ecclesiastical institutions, primarily of the Synodical institution.

Hence we urge you, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, to love Christ according to the example set by the Saint, wholeheartedly, and strive at all costs to proclaim our faith to all nations. In that manner Orthodoxy will be established once more the certain hope of the world.

May the grace of our All-gracious God be with you all!"

After this address, Metropolitan Cyril of Ekaterinburg offered His Beatitude a set of Patriarchal egolpia, while His Beatitude offered the Metropolitan an icon of the Theotokos' Nativity, an ivory cross and a set of Episcopal egolpia, and then He venerated the Holy relic of St. Catherine.

After the Divine Liturgy there was a Litany around the city.

At noon, the Governor of the city offered a meal to His Beatitude at the State Building, where His Beatitude offered him a copy of the recently discovered at the restoration of the Sacred Edicule cross of the architect Kalfa Komnenos.

In the evening His Beatitude attended a cultural event of a traditional concert under the pianist Mr. Alexei Lioubimov.

THE LAST DAY OF THE VISIT OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM IN EKATERINBURG

On Friday 25th November/8th December 2017, accompanied by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Ekaterinburg, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited the underground place of the execution of the Tsar of Russia Nikolai and his family. A magnificent Church has been built at this place, dedicated to the Russian Orthodox new martyrs of the years of the communist regime. Therein the Patriarchal entourage chanted the apolytikion of the martyrs.

Afterward His Beatitude visited the historic small Church of St. John the Baptist. During the October Government this was the only open Church for the services of feasts, weddings, funerals and other sacraments for the religious needs of the citizens who number half a million.

Later on, at the invitation of the Metropolitan, His Beatitude spoke on the Gathering of the Metropolis which was attended by Priests, teachers, monks, nuns and catechumens. His Beatitude conveyed the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ who became incarnate in the Cave of Bethlehem and was resurrected from the dead at the All-holy Tomb. He especially underlined the continuous mission of the Church throughout the centuries: "I am the light of the world, you are the salt of the earth". He also underlined the significance of the centenary anniversary festivities for the Russian Church and all Churches, due to the persecutions and sorrows; the Russian Church was victorious over these, having as the first martyr the Patriarch of Moscow Tikhon the Confessor. He stressed that the rebirth of Russia and its Church is owed to two leading figures, President Putin and Patriarch Cyril, with the mutual cooperation of Church and government. President Putin is in favour of the Evangelic principles and morals against the liberate principles and morals projected by Globalization, which circumvent the institutions of family, national identity and biological entity of the people. The Priests as the Cyrenes of the Bishops should focus their attention to the young people.

On the occasion of this Gathering, Metropolitan Cyril offered the medal of St. Seraphim of Sarov to distinguished Priests for their pastoral and ministerial work.

Finally, His Beatitude visited the historic Holy Monastery of St. Alexander Nevsky, which numbers 150 nuns. In this Monastery, the Church of Theotokos Novotichnaskoria is very large and most beauteous, with byzantine structure and murals. The Church has no electricity but its lighting is provided by

oil canticles. It is a place that one can admire the beauty of the Church as a reflection of the heavenly beauty.

The choir of the nuns of the Monastery chanted in Byzantine music and in the Greek language. The nuns keep iconography and translation workshops where they translate books from Greek into Russian. They welcomed His Beatitude and His Entourage in a touching reception, singing hymns of the Theotokos by St. Nectarios and the Polychronion.

His Beatitude spoke with reference to the present owner of the Church Mr. Igor Altouskin and his past donations for the Patriarchal Hall and the Exarchy of the Holy Sepulchre in Cyprus.

His Beatitude offered the nuns an ivory cross while they offered Him in return an embroidered cloth for the holy vessels and a complete embroidered Patriarchal set of vestments.

The welcoming reception at the Church was followed by a lunch meal offered by the Monastery.

Finally His Beatitude was escorted to the airport of Ekaterinburg by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Ekaterinburg, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Tikhon and Archimandrite Theophanes. His Beatitude returned safely in Tel-Aviv airport by the grace of God.

From Secretariat-General

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THE PRIVATE MEETING OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM WITH HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW

On Saturday evening 19th November/2nd December 2017, soon after the termination of the Assembly of the Sacred Synod of the Hierarchy of the Russian Church, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos had a meeting with His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril.

In this meeting, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril thanked His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos for the welcoming reception He always offers the Russian pilgrims and politicians and for His position regarding the issue of Ukraine.

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos replied as per the address in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/12/02/36236>

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Russia thanked His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem for this briefing regarding the proposed bill in the Knesset and the preservation of the Status Quo in the Old City of Jerusalem, and continued by saying that They consider the Hagiotaphites to be the guardians of the Holy Shrines and the Status Quo in Jerusalem. As it happened in the past, He said, if the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood had not existed, neither the Most Holy Shrines

would have existed up to the present. We praise the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood for its role of preserving the Most Holy Shrines. We express our gratitude towards the Brotherhood for its mission, which demands power, wisdom and bravery, and the Russian Church also considers the protection of the Most Holy Shrines its mission. For the sake of the Most Holy Shrines, Russia engaged in the Crimean War with all Europe. Today Russian considers the role of the Patriarchate quite important for the preservation of the Most Holy Shrines. The relations between the Patriarchate of Moscow and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem are on the rise. This helps Us discuss two current issues that concern Our Churches.

On the occasion of our meeting, His Beatitude continued, we refer to Ukraine, where the existing deep political conflict is being interpreted as an invasion of Russia to Ukraine. This claim is not true. Russia resists the occurring issues in Ukraine. In Ukraine, plans against our Church are being promoted, with an aim to change its title and pass it over to a schismatic movement, while our Church will be called Russian Church for the secession of our faithful from our Church. Another proposed bill is the effort of schismatic organizations and Uniates. Our faithful there are being persecuted by court decisions which are not been executed by the Government. Another proposed bill is that the Church definitions and the election of its Bishops owe to have the government's approval in advance. I wrote to the Pope of Rome and the World Council of Churches regarding these issues. There was a reaction on this matter by the Pope of Rome and the Chief Secretary of the World Council of Churches with an official letter from the latter. Due to this protest, at present the proposed bills lie dormant, however, they could be brought up again for discussion and promotion. Despite all these, the Hierarchs of the Russian Church of Ukraine came to this Council without hesitation. We thank You for Your presence today in the Assembly of the Hierarchy as well as for Your forthcoming presence at the festivities for the memory of

Saint Catherine in Ekaterinsburg.

Moreover, on this occasion, His Beatitude Patriarch Cyril enquired on the Qatar issue.

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem thanked His Beatitude Patriarch Cyril for His genuine interest in favour of the Holy Land, which is a continuation of His predecessors' interest, and that of the Russian peoples', who revere the Most Holy Shrines and especially the Holy Sepulchre. We are aware, His Beatitude said, that the ecclesiastical and political support of Russia can be taken for granted. The Russian pilgrims' presence is of a special significance, because they convey a message to the religious and political authorities of our region. The Orthodox visitors in the Most Holy Shrines are not "tourists", as they are often referred to by the political authorities, but pilgrims. We, being the Hagiotaphites, represent all Orthodox brothers of ours at the Most Holy Shrines. Without the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, the Most Holy Shrines would not have been preserved to this day. In my speech earlier at the Assembly of the Hierarchy I said that the Holy Sepulchre belongs to the whole world. The Brotherhood's mission is to preserve the All-holy Tomb and all the Shrines so that they are available to all people.

Your Beatitude, We express Our gratitude for Your undivided support to the Most Holy Shrines.

As far as His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril's enquiry for Qatar is concerned, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem replied that the relations between the Jerusalem Patriarchate and the Patriarchate of Antioch are good. The Jerusalem Patriarchate has worked for years and created and established a multi-ethnic Inter-Orthodox Ecclesiastical Centre numbering approximately 10.000 members to the present. With the co-operation and the efforts of the representative of the Jerusalem Patriarchate Most Reverend Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, who is also multi-lingual, a refuge and support are

being provided to the local Orthodox faithful, regardless their nationality. Nationalities of expatriate Orthodox faithful in Qatar include Jordanians, Palestinians, Greeks, Russians, and Romanians. The building of the Church of the Patriarchate in Qatar, His Beatitude said, is almost completed, and by an open invitation His Highness the Emir of Qatar awaits Our arrival for the Consecration Ceremony.

From Secretariat-General

ASSEMBLY OF THE S.SYNOD OF THE HIERARCHY OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH (3RD DAY OF HIS BEATITUDE'S VISIT IN RUSSIA)

On Saturday afternoon,, 19th November/2nd December 2017, the official Assembly of the Sacred Synod of the Hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church took place at the Conference Hall of the Holy Church of the Saviour Christ, which included proceedings of three topics, monasticism, marriage, and internal Constitution of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

The Heads of the Churches around the world addressed the members of the Synod according to the order; The Ecumenical All-holy Patriarch through a conveyed Statement, His Beatitude

the Patriarch of Alexandria in person [who offered as a gift the omophorion of the Patriarch of Alexandria Meletios Pigas, which he was wearing when he signed the legislation of the Patriarchal institution of the Moscow Patriarchate at the time of Job, Patriarch of Moscow], His Beatitude the Patriarch of Antioch John in person, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III in person. The address of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem follows below;

*“Your Beatitude Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Cyril,
Brother and co-celebrant of Our Mediocrity.*

Having arrived in the bearer of Saints and much suffered land of Russia from the Holy City of Jerusalem, we convey to You and the Holy Synod of the beloved Archbishops with You, as well as to the crowds of our brotherly Orthodox Russians the timeless hopeful message of the incarnate Christ the Lord of glory, Who lived as God-man in Bethlehem and the humble land of Palestine. We bless our brothers and sisters in Christ, by the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Holy Tomb.

Amidst the period of spiritual preparation for the forthcoming feasts of Christ’s epiphany, towards which the holy hymn writer generously and gradually mystifies our minds and hearts, namely “the newest mystery of all new mysteries”, the Incarnation of the Redeemer of the World, we feel that man’s rebirth is primarily ensued through Via Dolorosa, as we commemorate in these sacred meetings of requiem and memory the recent harsh and onerous history of the Church of Russia. Moreover, the end of the Forty days of the Christmas fast, the Twelve-day festal period, coincides with the commemoration of martyrs such as the myriads of infants who were unjustly slaughtered by Herod for the name of the Lord, as well as that of Archdeacon Stephen the First Martyr, who during the martyrdom he suffered by his callous fellow citizens, saw the heavens open and the glorified Christ sitting at the right

side of God the Father. The vision of the ineffable and uncreated light was the redemption for martyr Stephen. Similar divine visions of light were experienced by many new martyrs of the Russian nation in the recent years.

The martyrs' offenders ever failed to actually realize that our God is glorified by myriads of archangels and angels, and simultaneously by armies of martyrs, nor did they ever realize, that our God is made manifest on earth in the form of peace and good will among men. Martyrdom is central in the spiritual life; according to the Lord's beloved disciple John the Theologian, the martyrs "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). "They stand before the throne of God, and serve him" boldly for all eternity (Rev. 7:15). The One that sitteth on the throne of Glory our God, protects His servants from "the heat of the day" namely the wickedness and maliciousness of the "rulers and the principalities of this world" (Eph. 6:12), because "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters" (Rev. 7:15-17). The martyrs beseech God that He may wipe out the wickedness of the world by His love, and that the Divine mercy, peace and righteousness of the God Who is beyond all visible, invisible and comprehensible things will prevail: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).

We glorify the worshiped in one Trinity God, because the prayers of the myriads of the new Russian martyrs, who have been not in the least inferior to the ancient ones, have liberated Your Church from tyranny and strengthened it, so that it marches towards the last times brightened and radiating with the glory of the Holy Saints according to the Lord's will.

The Church of Jerusalem glories especially, having being the womb of the martyrdom, because it was in Jerusalem that He Who

“being in the form of God”... “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”, and the first to indicate the path of lifting the cross, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil.2:6-11).

According to the great master of monasticism and the Orthodox Doctrine Theodore the Stoudite, whose memory we celebrated only a few days ago, all beings and the whole of nature will kneel when sin will be abolished in the last day of judgment, precisely because sin lacks hypostasis “as it [sin] was nothing among the living things, but it existed and was created by the free will of the doer [the person who had committed the sin]”. At that time, only God’s creatures will remain in existence, because they have a hypostasis, but sin will not, as it has no hypostasis. In addition, “the souls who have been led astray, having gone through all centuries without finding a place to stop, will come to God, Who has no limit, and then by realization and not by [spiritual] communication will they recover their strength, namely they will be restored to their ancient form and realize that God is not responsible for sin” (PG99, 1500D-1501B).

Such is the dominance of the glorified Lord, and such is the power of the plan of the ineffable Divine Providence. According to your native religious philosopher N. Berdyaev, the power of the kingdom of Spirit is elevated above this unmodified foundation against Caesar’s kingdom. Many are the times throughout history, that the Church has witnessed the dominance of the kingdom of the Spirit. In this case, this is confirmed by the contemporary status of the brotherly Church of the Russian and other Orthodox Patriarchates and autocephalous Churches. The persecutions have ended and the Church has once more been highlighted as “gold in the

crucible". Today the Orthodox Church is called again to bear witness to the truth in a secularized world which is being promoted by the Globalization. As it was recently noted in the Holy and Great Synod in Crete: "In these years of secularism, and in the face of the spiritual crisis which characterizes the contemporary civilization, the projection of the need to underline the importance of the holiness of life is significant...The Orthodox tradition, shaped by practising the Christian truths, is the bearer of spiritual and ascetic morals, which should be highlighted and promoted especially in our era". All of us the Orthodox faithful owe to bear witness to the Gospel of Christ dynamically and in unity, thus becoming the "light of the world" and "the salt of the earth". A matter of prime importance for the faithful is to realize that the starting point of re-evangelizing people is precisely the unity and the respect towards the ecclesiastical ordinances, and especially of the ordinance of the Synod. According to the Apostolic tradition, the Synod of each Church is the ordained body by God, to guide the pastoral and missionary work.

Your Beatitude, Holy Brother,

We know by personal experience the sensitive Russian soul, witnessed by the thousands of pilgrims who visit the sacred shrines of the Holy Land every year. The Russian Orthodox faithful lay their deepest heart, often in tears, primarily before the Horrendous Golgotha and the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb. The deep faith of these genuine faithful people leaves the Hagiotaphite Fathers ecstatic at times. The projection of our souls towards the All-merciful God in deep faith and patience draws His Mercy.

Therefore, we, both the clergy and the people are called, to imitate the Saints' example, in alignment with the timeless exhortation of the psalmist to each one of us: "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord" (Psalm 27:14). This waiting on the

Lord is the God-taught narrow path for the victory over sin and death, and at the same time the creative course towards the true theology, which the world needs greatly in order to glorify God.

To Him all glory and power unto the ages of ages. Amen."

His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem also expressed His gratitude towards the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril and the President Mr. Putin for their support to the Jerusalem Patriarchate in our efforts to preserve the Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem and to protect the Christians of the Holy Land and the Middle East. Likewise there were addresses by the following; His Beatitude the Patriarch of Georgia Elijah by a representative, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Serbia Eirinaios, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Bulgaria Neophytos, His Beatitude the Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostom, His Beatitude the Archbishop of Albania Anastasios, His Beatitude the Metropolitan of Warsaw and all Poland Savvas, His Beatitude the Archbishop of the Czech Republic and Slovakia Svatislav, His Beatitude the Metropolitan of America and Canada Tikhon in person.

After the addresses by all the aforementioned Hierarchs, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril thanked each and every one of the Heads of the Orthodox Churches and the Hierarchs of the Russian Church for their contribution in underlining the role of the Confessor and Hieromartyr Patriarch St. Tikhon in the reconstitution of the Patriarchal institution of the Russian Church, and declared the termination of the Assembly proceedings.

From Secretariat-General

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THE FEAST OF THE NEW MARTYR ST. PHILOUMENOS THE HAGIOTAPHITE

On Wednesday 16th/29th November 2017 the feast of the New Martyr St. Philoumenos was celebrated at Jacob's Well in Nablus of Samaria.

As known, the canonized by the Church of Jerusalem Saint in 2009, had joined the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood since his early childhood, and was ministering as the Hegoumen of Jacob's well when he suffered a martyr's death by the hands of an irreverent man in 1979.

On the feast of this new martyr at the marvellous Church that has been built by Archimandrite Ioustinos above the well, the Divine Liturgy was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina and Philoumenos of Pella, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks; the Hegoumen of the Monastery of the Shepherds Archimandrite Ingatios, Arab-speaking Priests, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Anastasios. The choir leader of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos sand in Greek, Russian and Romanian on the right, and Archimandrite Leontios in Arabic on the left, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and a vast crowd of faithful, Arab-speaking locals and pilgrims from

Greece, Cyprus, Russia and Romania who honour the Saint.

His Beatitude preached the divine word to this congregation as follows:

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Tim.1:7-8), St. Paul advises his disciple Timothy.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The sacred memory of the new hieromartyr Philoumenos the Hagiotaphite has gathered us in this holy hagiographic place of Patriarch Jacob’s well and the hometown of St. Photeini, the Samaritan woman, where the saint suffered his martyr’s death, in order to honour him and glorify in Eucharist our Lord and God Jesus Christ, who suffered death on the cross for us and our sins.

The unselfish love for our Saviour Christ has highlighted the indeed great and dense cloud of people who martyred for the truth of Christ’s faith. And the blood of these martyrs is what has watered the tree of life, namely the mystical body of Christ and the Church.

The holy martyrs, Stephen the first martyr, James the Brother of God, and James the son of Zebedee, became the primary founding apostolic stones of the foundation of the Church of Jerusalem through their sacred martyr’s blood.

In other words, they became co-martyrs of the sacred blood of Christ on the cross, who was indeed the cornerstone of the foundation of the Church (Eph. 2:20). Those who became the house of the Spirit of God are all the saints, and the Palestinian martyrs and friends of Christ among whom is today’s honoured Saint Hieromartyr Philoumenos.

The Church of Jerusalem boasts in "the glory of Christ" (Eph. 15:17), because according to St. John the Theologian, the martyrs of the Lord are those who "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (Rev. 7:14-15).

And again the Church of Jerusalem boasts in "the glory of Christ" (Eph. 15:17), because it is the "womb" of the martyrdom of the redeeming blood of the Son of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

In other words, Christ delivered us from the bondage of sin, offering His precious blood as a lamb's sacrifice, being totally immaculate and clean as St. Paul preaches by saying " Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Peter 1:18-20).

The holy Martyrs are the soldiers of Christ who have drunk from the cup and received the baptism of His life-giving death, as communicants of His sufferings and glory, according to St. John Damascene who says: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Cor.12:28); and the martyrs of the Lord chosen soldiers from all orders, who have drunk of His cup and have been baptized the baptism of His life-giving death as communicants of His suffering and glory".

Such a soldier of Christ and communicant of His life-giving death was our Father Hieromartyr Philoumenos, who loved Christ from his early childhood and placed himself in the ministry of

His vineyard, namely the Church, and the Church of Jerusalem, by his joining the Order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

During his ministry as the Hegoumen of this holy shrine and as the shepherd of the congregation of the Nablus district and Samaria, not only did he drink from the spiritual water that the Samaritan woman drunk, but also he followed her footsteps, preaching and teaching that Christ is the Messiah the Son of God, the light and the life and the redeemer of the world.

St. Philoumenos' preaching that Christ is the completion of the Mosaic Law and the prophets and "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9) caused the wrath and rage of his murderers. Those who hated him, the friend and Priest of Christ, hieromartyr Philoumenos, thought that by slaughtering him at the time of prayer they offer worship to God, according to the testimony of St. John the Evangelist: "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:1-2).

The killers of the martyrs of Christ, among the latter our saint Philoumenos, did not realise that the holy martyrs are standing by the throne of God and worship Him eternally in boldness, as St. Methodios of Olymbos says "the martyrs are chanting; and there are two choirs of the martyrs, the one of the New Testament, and the other of the Old Testament".

Our Father Philoumenos who has been deemed worthy of the truth of Christ's gospel as a martyr, is rejoicing along with all the holy martyrs in heaven and unceasingly prays to God for all those who honour his memory. Therefore my dear brothers, let us say along with the hymn writer: "No tribulation, threat or hunger, persecution, fire, sword or savage beast could separate the holy martyrs from God! They were bound by His love and lived as exiles in this world! Their suffering has won them a glorious prize: They inherited the heavenly

Kingdom//where they ceaselessly pray for our souls” and for the peace in our region. Amen. Many happy returns!”

After the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen and owner of the Holy Church Archimandrite Ioustinos offered a reception and a meal.

During lunch the Lawyer Mr. Halil Ganam, of Roman-Orthodox descend, addressed His Beatitude in Arabic as per the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2017/11/29/34298>

From Secretariat-General

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HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS SPEAKS TO THE KNESSET

On Monday afternoon, 14th/27th November 2017, there was a meeting of the representatives of the Religious Communities of Israel in the Hebrew Knesset in West Jerusalem, by the invitation of the President and Correspondent of the Knesset Mr. Yuli Yoel Edelstein, with the topic **“encouraging tolerance and harmony among the Religious Communities”**.

Invited Participants in this meeting were the Heads of the Religious Communities, Judaic, Christian, Muslim and Druze with their escorts, Israeli politicians, the Ambassador of Greece in Israel Mr. Constantine Bikas, the Consul of Germany Chief Rabbi Mr. David Lav and other Rabbis of Israel, representatives of the Department of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Israel Mr. Jacob Salame and Caesar Martzie and other members of the aforementioned Religious Communities.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos spoke on the subject on behalf of the attending Christian Leaders as per the following address in English:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/11/27/36113>

From Secretariat-General

REMARKS OF H.H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AT THE KNESSET-EVENT TO ENCOURAGE TOLERANCE AND HARMONY BETWEEN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN ISRAEL

His Beatitude Theophilos III
Patriarch of Jerusalem

27 November 2017

Your Excellency Mr Speaker,

Your Excellency Mr Azoulay,

Beloved Fellow Heads of the Churches and Leaders of the other Faith Communities, Distinguished Ministers

Respected Members of the Knesset,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we look to the upcoming season of light and renewal to all our communities of faith in the Holy Land, especially the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities, we are very glad to be here for this event that is focused on encouraging tolerance and harmony between religious communities in Israel.

We believe very strongly that we have in our history a long experience of peaceful co-existence and a great deal of practice in mutual understanding and respect between the great religious traditions of this region. We have lived side by side for generations in this land that has a unique identity, for it has become the place of the human-divine encounter, and we are keenly aware of the rhythm of each other's lives.

We are celebrating the 10th anniversary of our Council of Religious Communities, itself a testimony to our commitment to this aspect of the multi-ethnic, multi-religious multi-cultural landscape in which we have all lived for millennia.

This is a tremendous strength in the face of the difficult times that currently affect the Middle East, and our region of course, and that threaten even more severely this longstanding tradition, The very nature of the Old City of Jerusalem as a living symbol of our diverse tapestry of life, and spiritual beacon for the whole world, is at stake.

Our Council must find new and creative ways to ensure that our

age-old frameworks and relationships that have safeguarded the well-being of our communities in the Holy Land for so long are respected and supported, for we are the children of Abraham. We share a common humanity and a common human destiny, and it is for this reason that we have all been put in this common home, by Divine Providence, to be a sign of hope for the world.

There is no doubt that we need to build a closer relationship between ourselves as religious leaders. We need to commit ourselves to more frequent meetings and to the kind of practical co-operation that ensures the proper witness of our traditions in the face of religious radicalism that is on the rise. Without courageous action on our part, we stand to lose the integrity of the Holy Land and of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

In this work, however, we must also count on the support of the civil authorities. The special balance of life in Jerusalem and the Holy Land has long been guaranteed by those who have exercised civil authority in our region, and the Status Quo rules are a crucial element in this structure of support. The religious communities know how to create an environment of peaceful co-existence, but we need the clear commitments of governments at home and abroad if this delicate harmony is not simply to be maintained, but sustained and celebrated.

Therefore we wish to take this opportunity to say to the members of the Knesset that you also have a role to play in deepening tolerance and harmony between the religious communities of our region. Indeed without your firm encouragement of the integrity and vitality of all, the task before us is nearly impossible.

In our turn we urge you, for example, to enact and enforce legislation to deal with the phenomena of prejudice that find expression in the "Price Tag Hate Crimes" and other radical

activities, so often directed against religious communities and holy sites, and which our common civilized society would never condone. We also call upon you to uphold the freedom of religion and the autonomy of religious organizations in the management of their affairs, adhering to the rules of the Status Quo. And we hope that you will do all in your power to restrain radical groups who, under the pretext of religion, undermine the unique character of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

If we are to resist those radical groups who seek to make Jerusalem and the Holy Land exclusive, we must be re-committed, as this Council is, to the understanding that it is in the strength of our multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural life together which makes our City and our Land the inclusive society that It has been for generations and to which we all aspire.

We have every confidence, Mr Speaker, that the highest law-making body in this country shares our belief, and that it can and will embody the true meaning of the foundation of the State of Israel and the values of the constitution, to ensure that all the religious traditions, and our rights and privileges sanctioned by the sacred history, which is our common history, are respected and protected under the law In order to keep the harmony we all seek. This demands mercy as well as justice. We say this because we are witnesses of certain actions, often warped by the distortions of media coverage. We are confident that you will look beyond these distortions that may well have led some members of this esteemed body to precipitate action. And we firmly believe that the proposed "Bill on Church Land" will be rejected.

As we read in the Psalms, mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other (85:10).

By acting in these ways and by keeping all this in mind, you will make the most effective contribution to the work of this Council in deepening tolerance and harmony between the

religious communities of Israel.

On behalf Of our Council, we wish to express our appreciation to you for gathering this Council for the first time in this esteemed hall of government, and for the commitment that you are showing to us and to the world that the Government of Israel remains committed to the freedom and integrity of all the religious communities that make up the diverse tapestry of this country.

Thank you.

THE 12TH ENTHRONEMENT ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS

At 10:00p.m. on Wednesday 9th/23rd November 2017, there Ceremony with the Doxology took place at the All-holy Church

of the Resurrection on the completion of twelve years since the Election and Enthronement of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The Doxology was led by His Beatitude, with co-celebrants the Archbishops and Hieromonks of the Patriarchate, and the participation in prayer of the noble congregation of monks, nuns and laity members of the Greek Community and the Arab-speaking congregation, and the honouring presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the representative of Romania in Ramalla. After the Doxology the Patriarchal Entourage returned in the Patriarchate. Therein, Geronda Secretary-General addressed His Beatitude as follows:

Your Beatitude Father and Master,

The Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches, along with our venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, commemorates and celebrates the 12th anniversary of Your Beatitude's election as the Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, according to the official voting of the Holy and Sacred Synod. This celebration is in the manner of a thanksgiving Doxology and fullness in participation of monks, nuns, clergy and laity, who form the base and of the structure of the holy body of the Church and strengthen its unity in peace, especially at a time that it is being severely tested.

Through the decision of Your election and Enthronement in 2005, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood denounced illegal contracts mortgaging priceless for its material and more significantly cultural value land and estate property of the Patriarchate, contracts which confound the over the centuries established Status Quo in the Old City of Jerusalem and seriously wound its Christian Churches. At that time, faithful to its mission over the centuries to safeguard the Holy Shrines, the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre stood up for this and protested strongly. Instead of corruption, it chose

transparency and placed Your Beatitude an experienced captain of the ship of the Church which began with Saint James the Brother of God, and despite the disintegration and the storm it was not submerged.

Having accepted this mission, Your Beatitude has worthily worked for these twelve years, undertaking decisions and actions which establish the Patriarchate locally as well as in all Orthodoxy and Christianity, as a Church with a leading role among the Christian Churches of the Holy Land, in their mission for the protection of the Christians' rights and the peaceful co-existence with their Jewish and Muslim fellow citizens.

Proof of the leadership and reconciliation of the Patriarchate among the Christian Communities is the participation of Your Beatitude as the representative of all Christians of the Holy Land in the Conference for the peace in the Middle East in New York last July, with the initiative of the peacemaker Rabi Melhior; and above all, recent restoration and renovation project of the Sacred Edicule by the National Technical University of Athens, which was initiated by Your Beatitude and was completed only in a few months, despite the numerous difficulties, with the full co-operation of the Christian Communities.

As far as the Ecclesiastical property is concerned, irrefutable proof of Your Beatitude's interest in its favour is Your attitude towards the recent wrongful decision of the District Israeli Court, giving effect to the illegal contracts of the Jaffa Gate hotels that belong to the Patriarchate. Ever since, Your Beatitude has not hesitated about neither toil, nor financial cost for the removal of this court order, which if applied, can be destructive for the established since the reign of Constantine the Great Christian Quarter.

In order to protect the Christian Quarter, Your Beatitude has mobilized the Christian Churches of the Holy Land, visited the

King of Jordan, the Ecumenical Patriarch, the President of the State of Israel, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, the Pope of Rome, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of Cyprus and the President of the Democracy of Cyprus. This issue was also raised by Your Beatitude at the Conference of the European Churches in Cyprus, and the ongoing Meeting of the World Council of Churches hosted by the Patriarchate in Amman. In all aforementioned meetings Your Beatitude has been warning on the consequences of the implementation of the court decision, and has received serious commitments for its removal and the support of the Patriarchate in its efforts to preserve the Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem which guarantees the peaceful co-existence of its citizens in the traditionally set districts for each Quarter.

Praising Your Beatitude for all these, we the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood declare our intention to engage and join You in this mission, subjugating our personal will to the collective and ecclesiastical one, so as with the harmony and sequence of the members of the human body, we operate harmoniously, bearing fruit to our Sacred Community and the Greek Orthodox Arab-speaking Congregation.

Raising my glass on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and all the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, I wish Your Beatitude many happy returns, in peace, joy, steadfastness and health, with a governmental strength guided from on high, for the increase of Your noble works, for the praise of our blessed nation and the glory of our Trinitarian God. So be it.

The Consul General of Greece as follows:

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

In feelings of joy and great honour, we participate today in the festive celebration of the twelfth enthronement anniversary of His Holy Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, here in the See of the Mother of Churches.

Today is a festive day for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, the Patriarchate, for Orthodoxy and for Greece.

This day is also a chance, Your Beatitude, to express the respect, love and gratitude on behalf of Greece for your great pastoral work, for the important national work of preservation and highlight of the Holy Shrines in the Holy Land and for the defense and projection of the ecumenical values of Orthodoxy.

Your Beatitude,

Your devotion in this sacred mission, Your focus in this very important work, quite often under adverse conditions, Your tireless efforts, within and outside the borders of the region for the defense of the Status Quo which has guaranteed the peaceful co-existence of the Religious Communities in the Holy Land for centuries, Your materialized vision and determining initiative for the restoration of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, the cornerstone of the Shrines that reconciles the peoples, nations and civilizations, as well as your steadfast promotion of peace-making, mutual understanding and moderation in a turbulent area which continues to face great challenges and where many are those who talk about peace, but very few the ones who honestly and effectively work towards its achievement, establish this Holy Institution a point of reference with a significant role.

For Greece, the defense of the Institution of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, and of its lawful rights is a priority of prime importance. The Mother of Churches symbolizes our long-term presence in the Holy Land, as well as the attitude of friendship and cooperation with all other peoples, according to the ecumenical values of Orthodoxy.

Your Beatitude,

The Greek Government and the faithful Greeks surround You always with their love and devotion. Greek Officials and civilians flock to the Patriarchate as pilgrims annually, highlighting the indestructible historic bond with it, as well as the importance they give to Your mission, Your work and the work of the Hagiotaphite Fathers.

Feeling the burden of Your responsibilities and sharing Your anguish, the staff of the General Consulate of Greece stand by Your side and pray as humble pilgrims that You may have health, strength and longevity to continue Your work, for the benefit of the Patriarchate, the Brotherhood, Orthodoxy, Your Greek-Orthodox Congregation, for the peace in the region and for the Nation of Greeks.

His Beatitude thanked and blessed them for their addresses and replied as follows:

Your Excellency Mr. Consul General of Greece,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Christians,

Noble pilgrims

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

Today, on the completion of the twelve-year ministry since Our climb to the indeed martyr’s Patriarchal throne of our Church of Jerusalem, we went to the All-holy Church of the Resurrection along with the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in order to praise the Trinitarian God in a thanksgiving Doxology, “for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose” (Phil. 2:13).

This festive twelve-year anniversary does not refer to Our unworthiness, but to the God-founded Institution of the Church in the Holy Spirit, "which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:9-10) according to St. Paul.

Our spiritual and pastoral responsibility on the Hagiataphite established Mother of Churches so far, has aimed at nothing but the keeping of the Sacred and Apostolic consignment of our holy, immaculate and unadulterated Orthodox Faith, according to the order of the Apostle of Nations: "Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us" (2 Tim. 1:14). Moreover, Our aim has been the preservation and ministry of worship of the all-holy and most sacred shrines and the inalienable privileges and lawful rights over them of the noble nation of the Roman Orthodox people.

In addition, hearing the words of Prophet Isaiah: "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch" (Isaiah 62:1), We have set on an international campaign for the preservation of the existing multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and interreligious, namely Judaic, Christian and Islamic, Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem, which is being threatened by radical partisan groups and messianist settlor movements.

We do this by our Patriarchal and Moral Mission of "peace in Christ by which God has called us to live in" (1 Cor. 7:15). "God is not of disorder but He is the God of peace" the wise Paul preaches. And this is so because the Holy City of Jerusalem is the universal spear and eternal emblem of the blood of divine righteousness, namely of the prophets and

especially our Lord Jesus Christ, who “died, the righteous for the unrighteous” (1 Peter 3:18) according to Apostle Peter.

Today’s twelfth anniversary on the Patriarchal Enthronement calls us not to boast in the things that have been done by Us, but to give “glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God” (Romans 15:17). “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience” (2 Cor. 1:12). At the same time, this anniversary calls us to be alert in view of the current clutter in the world in general and in our region of the Middle East in particular. “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity” (1 Cor. 16:13-14), St. Paul orders us.

In this sacred mission of Ours we have as collaborators and communicators Our reverend and dear Hagiotaphite Fathers and brothers, Archbishops, Hieromonks, Deacons and Monks, with whom, as the God-inspired St. Ignatios says “ we take care to work all things in unity, under the Lead of the Bishop who is according to God, and the Presbyters who are according to the mind of the Apostles and the Deacons...who have been entrusted the ministry of Jesus Christ, Who had been with the Father before all ages and in the end was made manifest to us” (Vol.2, p.269).

Truly we say along with St. Paul, “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12). This truth is more obviously witnessed by the history of the Church of Jerusalem, namely of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, being surged on the waves of falsehood and slander but not submerged under them.

Let us pray to the Father of Lights “that He may guide our footsteps in the work of His commandments” by the prayers of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and the intercessions of our Father among the Saints Nectarios of

Pentapolis. And the Grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Sepulchre of our Saviour Jesus Christ fortify us in the ministry of the All-holy Shrines, the irrefutable witnesses of our faith, and in pastoring our pious Christian congregation.

For all these, we call upon all those who prayed along with Us and have honoured this feast, the strength from on high, the grace of the Holy Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing coming from God, expressing heartfelt thanksgiving to those who addressed Us namely; 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 in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Leontios, representative of our Brotherly All-holy Church of Russia, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the Brotherly All-holy Church of Romania, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our Parish in Nazareth, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Jordan, the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Joppa, the School Director of our Patriarchal School of Zion, who spoke on behalf of the School, the Reverend Fr. Charalambos Bandour, who spoke on behalf of St. James Cathedral Parish, the Reverend Mr. Abu Aeta, representative of the Community of Beit Sahour, Archimandrite Narkissos and Fr. Jouseph Hodali, who spoke on behalf of the Community of Beit Jalla, as well as all participants in the celebration of this Enthronement Anniversary.

To the health of all of you!"

The reception at the Patriarchate was followed by lunch.

From Secretariat-General

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THE FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THE ARCHANGELS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday 8th/21st November 2017, there was the celebration of the Synaxis of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. On this feast the Church commemorates the event that Lucifer and his angels when the latter ones opposed their Creator, Archangels Michael and Gabriel and their Angels fought against them and cried aloud "stand firm stand in fear!" worshiping and obeying God.

The Patriarchate celebrated this feast in the Monastery of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel in Joppa which has been renovated by its Hegoumen Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa. The Divine Liturgy was led by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth and the Most Reverend Archbishops; Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina and Secretary General, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the visiting from the Church of Greece Most Reverend Metropolitan Justine of Krini and Kalamaria, from the Church of Cyprus Most Reverend Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol, from the Church of Bulgaria Most Reverend Metropolitan Nikolaos of Philipoupolis; also participants in prayer were the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophylactos of Jordan, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Hierodeacons, Hierodeacon Eulogios, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Anastasios. Archimandrite Aristovoulos sang on the right in Greek, Russian and Romanian and the choir of the Arab-speaking Community of Joppa sang in Arabic on the left, at the presence of the Ambassador of Greece in Tel-Aviv Mr. Demetrios Bikas and members of the Community, the noble congregation of the Parish of Joppa and neighbouring Communities, as well as pilgrims from Greece, Russia and Romania.

His Beatitude preached the divine word to this congregation as follows:

“Ye Chiefs of heavenly hosts and foremost leaders of the most high and awful thrones of divine glory, O great Michael and Gabriel, ye Chief Commanders, as ministers of the Master who ever pray with all of the incorporeal Hosts on high, warmly pleading for all the world, ask that He pardon our sins and grant His mercy and His grace unto us on the judgment day” the hymn writer proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

“He, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire” (Hebrews 1:7), our Lord God, has gathered us all in this Holy Church of the Bodiless Hosts, in order to celebrate their annual feast; the Synaxis of the Chief Commanders of the Angels, Michael and Gabriel.

The Bodiless Heavenly Hosts are ranked in nine orders, namely, Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Authorities, Powers, Archangels and Angels. These Angelic Hosts were created by God from the non-being and before the visible world and man according to the witness of St. John Damascene: “He [God] is the creator and maker of the angels from non-being into being, having created them in their own bodiless form, which is spirit or immaterial fire, as Prophet David says: “who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire” (Psalm 104:4). And in more detail, He is the one who made the angels fast as the wind and his ministers energetic as the flame of fire.

The form and the state of these heavenly hosts is known to none but the Lord God, their creator. “Whether they are equal in essence to each other or different we don’t know. Only God their creator knows, who is the One who knows all things” St. John Damascene says.

The Angels and Archangels with their leaders and Chief Commanders Michael and Gabriel, are powerful and ready to fulfil the divine will and they are at once present anywhere the divine Spirit calls them with the speed of nature, safeguarding all places on earth. They supervise nations and countries as the Creator has appointed them, safekeeping and helping us in all things of our concern. However they have an advantage over the people regarding the divine will and order because they are constantly near God. They make haste to help and protect especially from the hatred and the fury of the devil all those who call upon them, as the hymn writer says;

“Whenever thy grace casteth its shadow, O Archangel, thence is the power of the devil driven away, for fallen Lucifer cannot bear to stand before thy light.”

The Angels delegation in the ministry of the divine commandments and God’s unspoken will is obvious in the Sacred History of our salvation, namely in the Holy Bible, the Old and the New Testament.

The orders of the immaterial bodiless hosts along with all the saints of the Church are the chorea of the citizens in the heavenly Church as St. Paul says: “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:22-23).

In other words, the angels festively and unceasingly give glory to God, singing the hymn of victory: “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord Sabaoth; the heavens and earth are full of thy glory; Hossana in the Highest, blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hossana in the highest”.

For their boldness towards God, the Angels receive a special honour from the faithful members of the Church. Needless to say that a Guardian Angel accompanies us ever since the time of our spiritual rebirth, in our baptism in the font. They never leave us unless we drive them away with our non-Christian manner of living. The Angels participate in the joy in heaven on the genuine repentance of a sinner according to the word of our Lord Jesus Christ: “Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10).

For all these, there is the well-known prayer among the many various prayers in our Church, in which we entreat the Lord saying: “Compass about with Thy holy Angels, that, guided and

guarded by their array, we may attain to the unity of faith and the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory". And in the prayer to the "Guardian Angel of man's life" we pray to the holy Angel to protect us from every work of the devil directed against us.

Angels were the ones who served Jesus after his victory over Satan in the desert, as Mark the Evangelist witnesses: "And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him" (Mark 1:13).

Today's honoured Chief Commanders and Archangels Michael and Gabriel along with the rest of the holy bodiless heavenly hosts, my dear brothers, urge us to the recovery of our souls, namely to repentance, especially as we find ourselves before the preparation for the great Feast of Christmas.

Let us pray by the intercessions of the Angels and together with the hymn writer say: "Whenever thy grace casteth its shadow, O Archangel, thence is the power of the devil driven away, for fallen Lucifer cannot bear to stand before thy light. Wherefore, we implore thee to extinguish his fiery darts that are cast against us, ad by thy mediation deliver us from his stumbling-blocks, O praiseworthy Archangel Michael". Many happy and peaceful returns. Amen."

After His Beatitude's address, the students of the Patriarchate's School in Joppa thanked Him for His support to the School through the following address in Arabic and offered them a bouquet of flowers;

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2017/11/21/34110#more-34110>

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a Doxology and then a meal reception at the Hegoumeneion, hosted by the Hegoumen Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa.

From Secretariat-General

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