

THE FEAST OF THE DEPOSITION OF THE BODY OF ST. GEORGE THE GREAT MARTYR

On Thursday 3rd/16th November 2017, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the deposition of the body of the Holy Great and Glorious Martyr George the Trophy bearer.

On this day the Church does not celebrate the martyrdom of the Saint but the deposition of his sacred relics in Lydda, which was brought from Rome where the Saint suffered a martyr's death during Diocletian's reign, around 305 A.D. The Saint's relic was transferred and deposited in Lydda because it is his hometown on his mother's side. When St. Helen came in the Holy Land between the years 326-336 A.D., she built a magnificent Church above his tomb in his honour, which is preserved to this day and belongs to the All-holy Shrines of the Jerusalem Patriarchate.

Therefore, on 3rd November each year, there is the commemoration of the deposition of the Saint's body and the consecration of the Church bearing his name in Lydda.

1. The Feast in Lydda

In the morning of the Feast, the Divine Liturgy was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, the Hieromonks Archimandrites Stephen, Niphon, and Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos. The Choir Leader of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos and Archimandrite Leontios sang in Greek, Russian and Romanian and the choir of this Parish sang in Arabic, in the attendance of a noble

congregation of the Orthodox faithful of Lydda and other towns of Israel and Palestine and pilgrims from Greece, Russia, Romania, Ukraine and Cyprus.

His Beatitude preached the Divine Word to this Congregation as follows:

"Blessed Trophy-bearer George, with the streams of thine own blood thou mightily didst quench the flame of delusion and error, destroying all the tyrants' pride, hereby glorifying Christ. From the right hand of the Most High hast thou therefore been given crowns of life ever-lasting and of divine incorruption" the hymn writer of the Church exclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims.

The sacred memory of the deposition of the Great Martyr George's holy relics in his Church in the historic town of Lydda, along with the memory of the consecration of this magnificent Church, has gathered us all herein. And this is for us to honour in thanksgiving "the husbandry tilled by Christ, as one valiant in martyrdom, let us sing praises of wise and noble George"

Indeed George was established a Great martyr among those who martyred for the love of Christ. This is a consequence of his martyrdom which referred to the preaching of the truth of Christ. All these happened during the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, the cruel persecutor of Christians who supported the worship of idols and many false gods. "Having gloriously preached Christ to be both God and the Son of God, he boldly proclaims reverence, namely the truth of the Gospel. For this reason he was imprisoned and suffered countless sufferings of all kinds" his Synaxarist says.

The wise George preached the Word of God Who was made manifest in the flesh, as St. Paul preaches by saying: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was

manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim.3:16). And the people believed in Christ because He was most fairly proven to be the self-truth and the light of the world. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6); "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

The steadfast faith of St. George on the light of truth and of life, namely of our Lord Jesus Christ, contributed greatly in abolishing the falsehood of idolatry and the worship of demons, whose followers believed that by killing those who believed in the truth and light of Christ, would offer praise to God, according to the prophetic word of Jesus who said "the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2).

The universally honoured memory of St. George is an irrefutable witness that "blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 5:10). The true Christian, my dear brothers, is certain to face persecutions, condemn and scorning, if not corporal mistreatment altogether. And this is so because "righteousness in Christ means all kinds of virtue" according to Zigavinos. A living example of this righteousness is St. George the Great Martyr, whose "soul thirsteth for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:2).

Moreover, the hymn writer is more precise on the same idea when he says: "With the streams of thine own blood thou mightily didst quench the flame of delusion and error, destroying all the tyrants' pride, hereby glorifying Christ. From the right hand of the Most High hast thou therefore been given crowns of life ever-lasting and of divine incorruption"

St. George's example teaches us that the prime care of the Christian should be the freedom from the corruption of sin,

namely the freedom in Christ. However, the true freedom is accomplished when man, and especially the man of the Church acquires the mind of Christ; namely, when man is reborn spiritually and receives the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. "But we have the mind of Christ" the wise St. Paul says.

And elsewhere, St. Paul warns us "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). In other words, brethren I beseech you, do not conform to the manner of living of the material people who are attached to the vain thoughts and cares of this temporary life, but be transformed through the gaining of Christian thinking so that you can distinguish the will of God, which is noble and pleasing to Him as well as perfect at the same time.

Our holy Church my dear brothers is the Church of those who live with Christ in heaven. Christ's co-citizens and friends are the saints and the multitude of the martyrs who adorn the earthly and heavenly foundation of the Church.

Today's honoured St. George the Great Martyr, "manifested as a living sun" through his holy relics, never ceased to intercede for all who ask his help. Therefore, along with the hymn writer, let us who honour his memory say: "As I voyage upon the sea, as I journey o'er hill and plain, as I sleep throughout the night, do thou keep me safe! And as I wake do thou rescue me all-blessed Great Martyr George; deem me worthy to perform every day the Lord's holy will, so that I may find in the day of dread judgment the remission of all sins that in my lifetime I have wrought, who now flee unto thee". Amen"

Afterward, the Hegoumen of the Monastery Archimandrite Nicodemus offered a reception to the Patriarchal entourage and many of the pilgrims at the Hegoumeneion. Therein His Beatitude greeted the guests as follows:

"Dear Mr. President of the Community

Your Excellences, Diplomatic Representatives,

Respected Members of the Community of Lydda.

Today's feast of the commemoration of the consecration of St. George's Church, as well as the deposition of his holy relics in the tomb here is of great significance. And this is so because St. George is an example in our contemporary multi-cultural and multi-religious and multinational composition of society in the Middle East as a whole, and especially in the Holy Land.

St. George was inspired by the Gospel of love and the righteousness of Christ, he denied the Roman military armor and was clad in the spiritual armor instead, according to St. Paul's command: "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For 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. 6:11-12). And the wise Paul adds: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" (Eph. 6:14).

It is precisely this breastplate of righteousness that the Great Martyr of the love of Christ George put on, who is honoured not only locally but universally.

In other words, the Great Martyr George incarnates the genuine preaching of Christ's Gospel as well as the authentic mission of the Christian Church in the world. And the mission of the Church in the world is nothing else but the salvation of man, namely his cure from the traumatic state of sin and the corruption of death. "But go ye" our Lord Jesus Christ asks His disciples "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” (Mat. 9:13).

The Church of Jerusalem, known as the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, has been a bearer and apostle of this preaching of the Gospel, through its unceasing presence and ministry in the Holy Land for two thousand years.

The Church of Jerusalem boasts for its saints and especially for those who became co-martyrs to the blood of the Righteous One, namely Christ. Distinguished among them is the Holy Hieromartyr and Apostle, James the Brother of God, and the first martyr Deacon Stephen, who during his stoning was calling upon the Lord saying: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge” (Acts 7:59-60).

Today’s honoured St. George in his hometown Lydda, walked on the footprints of the first martyr Stephen, and he represents the symbol of the harmonious co-existence and mutual respect among the religious communities living here, the Jewish, the Christians and the Muslims.

May our holy town, once known as Georgetown, be a beacon of co-existence, tolerance, as well as forgiveness among religions and their Communities. Many happy returns.”

At noon, the Hegoumen and the Parish Council offered a meal to His Beatitude and entourage.

2. At the H. Monastery of St. George of the Hospital

In this Monastery which is located near the Patriarchate and is adjacent to the Monastery of the Archangels, Vespers in the evening and the Divine Liturgy on the day of the feast were led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Demetrios of Lydda, with co-celebrants Hagiotaphite Fathers, at the singing of

Archimandrite Eusevios, Archimandrite Demetrios and nuns of the Patriarchate. Present was a congregation of monks, nuns and laity members of the Greek Community.

The good keeper of the Holy Monastery Abbess Pansemni offered a reception for the Episcopal Entourage and the Congregation at the Hegoumeneion.

3. At the H. Monastery of St. George of the Hebrew District.

In this Monastery, Vespers was held by Archimandrite Agathaggelos of the Holy Metropolis of Goumenissa, while the Divine Liturgy in the morning was led by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, in the attendance of a noble congregation of nuns, members of the Greek Community and pilgrims.

After the Divine Liturgy, the renovator of the Holy Monastery Reverend Abbess Anna offered a reception for all present at the hegoumeneion.

From Secretariat-General

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HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM PARTICIPATES IN THE CONFERENCE “PLACES OF WORSHIP AND HOLY SITES IN EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST” IN CYPRUS.

The Conference on “Places of worship and Holy Sites in Europe and the Middle East: Status and Protection under National and International Law” was held in Nicosia of Cyprus from Wednesday 26th October/8th November to Friday 28th October/10th November. The Conference was organized by the Conference of European Churches in partnership with the Presentation Office of the Church of Cyprus and the European Institutes.

In order to attend this Conference, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos arrived at Larnaka airport from Tel Aviv, escorted by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Methodios of Tabor, and Archdeacon Mark. His Beatitude and entourage were welcomed at the airport by the representative of Cyprus Most Reverend Archbishop Gregory of Masaoria, and the Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Nicosia Most Reverend Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra.

Upon His arrival at the place of His stay, the newly founded Exarchy of the Holy Sepulchre in Nicosia, He was welcomed by the Most Reverend Exarch and Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra, who has been the major contributor in the reorganization of

the Exarchy, and the Acre choir under the Patriarchal Commissioner in Acre, Archimandrite Philotheos, sang at the special Service in the Church.

The opening of the Conference was on Thursday morning, 9th November 2017. In the first session addresses were greeted by the following; His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostom of Cyprus, underlining the importance of the cooperation between the political and religious parties for the protection of the religious shrines in the Middle East in general and in Cyprus in particular which is the cradle of World Culture; the Minister of Foreign affairs of Cyprus Mr. Kasoulides, underlining the importance of the places of worship of the religious Communities for the preservation of their identity and the potential damage and loss of the identity of the religious Communities should they be forced to abandon their ancestral homes, as was the case with Iraq, Cyprus and other countries. Mr Kasoulides also referred to the importance of the restoration of the shrines and the return of the merchandised stolen artifacts of worship, as they are monuments and treasures of the universal cultural heritage. The Conference was also greeted by the co-organizer of the Conference, Mrs. Elizabeta Kitanovic, Executive Secretary of Human Rights of C.E.C. (Conference of European Churches).

His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the Conference with the statement in the following link:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/11/09/35726>

During His stay in Cyprus for the demands of this Conference, His Beatitude was hosted for a meal at the Archdiocese of Cyprus by His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostom of Cyprus.

In this meal His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem discussed with His Beatitude the Archbishop of Cyprus the recent disturbing issue for the Jerusalem Patriarchate and all

the Christian Churches of the Holy Land with the proposed bill by the 40 members of the Knesset, which if passed into law, will deny the right of the Churches to freely deal with their land properties, as well as the recent decision of the District Israeli Court, which gives effect to the illegal contracts of the Jaffa Gate hotels that belong to the Patriarchate to the Settlor group "Ateret Kohanim".

His Beatitude raised the same issue in the meeting He had with the President of Democracy of Cyprus Mr. Nikolaos Anastasiades. Both the Archbishop of Cyprus and the President of the Democracy of Cyprus listened attentively to the problems His Beatitude explained, and promised to support with all the means in their power His Beatitude in His efforts to resolve these problems according to the Status Quo.

From Secretariat-General

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THE FEAST OF ST. JAMES THE BROTHER OF GOD AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday 23rd October/5th November 2017, the Patriarchate celebrated the memory of the glorious St. James the Brother of God and first Hierarch of Jerusalem at his Holy Church, located between the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Church of the Resurrection, being the Cathedral of the Greek-Orthodox Arab-speaking Community of the Patriarchate in Jerusalem.

In this Holy Church Vespers in the evening was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios and Archdeacon Mark. In the choir, the choir leader of the Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos sang on the right in Greek and the Arab-speaking choir of St. James sang on the left, with the participation in prayer of members of the Arab-speaking Community in Jerusalem, monks, nuns and noble pilgrims.

In the morning of the feast, the Divine Liturgy was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios and Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Anastasios, and again the choir leader of the Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos and the left choir singer Mr. George Alvanos and the students of the Patriarchal School of Zion sang on the right in Greek, and the Arab-speaking choir of St. James under Mr. Rimon Kamar on the left. Present was the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, as well as a noble contrite Congregation of many noble pilgrims from Greece, Cyprus, Russia, Romania.

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

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:1-4).

Brethren, consider your trials and sorrows a cause of perfect joy. And you will rejoice in these sorrows and temptations, when you have the knowledge that the trial of your faith through sorrows creates the stable patience as a safe and complete result, and may this patience be firm and steadfast, so that it will produce the full fruit of your perfection, so that you are whole in everything, lacking nothing, St. James teaches.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

Blessed is our God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has deemed us worthy in this glorious day, to celebrate the sacred memory of the righteous and faithful martyr of Christ, James the brother of God and first Hierarch of Jerusalem.

Our Father among the saints James, has a special rank in the Holy Church of Christ, because he fulfils the "apostolic" the "hierarchical" and the "synodical" axioms, as well as that of the martyr. This is precisely what the hymn writer of the church notes by saying: "As a disciple of the Lord, O righteous one, thou hast received the Gospel. As a Martyr thou art never turned away. As the Brother of God thou hast boldness. As a hierarch thou canst intercede."

In his catholic epistle, among other things, the Saint Hierarch urges us to treat the various temptations with joy. And this is so, because the "trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:3). In other words, the pure and genuine faith is made manifest through the temptations and the trials of those who love God. "The temptations are therefore cause of all joy for the wise men, for their testing is made clear through them", the interpreter St. Theophylactos says.

The patience in Christ, that St. James teaches us, has nothing to do with the stoic apathy through which man becomes insensitive to sorrows to some extent, accepting them

pathetically and unsurprisingly. The patience of the Christians is the triumphant overcoming of sorrows, removing nothing from the faithful's activity, but on the contrary, strengthening his faith, motivating him towards grateful thanksgiving to God and reinforcing his vigour and zeal. And when we patiently endure any kind of trial, as if it were provided by God, no matter how long it lasts, and when we accept that in all obedience up to the point that we do not lose our internal peace, but we feel joy through it, then definitely our patience will have a perfect outcome.

And this perfect outcome is nothing else but the accomplishment of spiritual maturity, by which we will have the fullness of gifts and moral perfection of Christ, as St. Paul preaches: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). And according to St. James: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James 1:12).

"The crown of life", namely the eternal life in Christ, did St. James the Apostle receive through his martyr's blood, which made him an example of perfect patience and obedience, an example to be imitated. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" St. Paul preaches (Romans 14:17).

It is precisely this righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit that we follow, all of us who acknowledge that the Church is not a worldly organization on earth, but it is the very mystical body of Christ. "Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23).

Today's honoured Hierarch of our Church calls us to submit to God and resist the workings of the devil, drawing nigh to God and purifying our hearts. "Submit yourselves therefore to God.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 4:7-8).

St. James says this, addressing mainly those Christians, whose faith is dubious and resembles the waves of the sea; to those who wish to enjoy both the worldly pleasures and the gifts of God at the same time; to those who simultaneously worship God and mammon. For this, he underlines that: “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). Interpreting St. James’ words, St. Athanasios the Great says: Double minded are those who “without having one robust opinion, they change their mind and at times they support their words, and after a while they deprecate their own words, and again they support what they had decried earlier.”

My dear brothers and sisters, the days in which we live “are evil” (Eph. 5:16), therefore let us hear St. Paul saying: “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16). And with St. James the brother of God let us say: “behold, we consider happy those who show patience; behold we bless those who endure”.

Let us entreat St. James, who as the brother of God has the boldness to intercede, and as a Hierarch, to intercede to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls and for the cessation of the war in our region, and for the peace in the hearts of those who dwell in the Holy City. Amen.”

From Secretariat-General

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THE CELEBRATION OF 28TH OCTOBER 1940 AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, 15th/28th October 2017, the national celebration of 28th October 1940 was observed by the Patriarchate with a Doxology at the Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection.

This Doxology was a means of thanksgiving to God for His help to our nation in its fight for freedom from the German Nazi Occupation in 1940, and a prayer for the repose of the souls of our ancestors who fought bravely and died in this fight for freedom.

The Doxology was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Hieromonks and Hierodeacons, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the participation of many pilgrims from Greece, Serbia, Russia, Estonia, Bulgaria and locals from the Greek-Orthodox and Arab-speaking congregation of Jerusalem.

After the Doxology the Patriarchal Hagiotaphite entourage returned to the Patriarchate. There, His Beatitude addressed the guests as follows:

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos

Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

Today's national anniversary of 28th October 1940, is a great and marvelous work that the right hand of the Lord has accomplished in our days. For this reason, clergy and the people came down to the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, where we praised in thanksgiving doxology our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In addition, we prayed for the repose of the souls of all those who battled heroically and died like martyrs for the nation and the Country.

Undeniably the sacrificial battle of the Greeks was a battle for the defense of the natural and sacred moral values which rule the Greek-Christian spirit of the Greek soul.

This very Greek-Christian spirit is encompassed and projected by this anniversary of 28th October 1940. For this reason the narrative of the epic feats of 1940 should not be considered of minor importance to the brilliant historic commemoration of Hellenism in general and of the Greeks in particular.

It is also noteworthy that the racist ideology of Nazism and Fascism which was applied in practice during the Second World War in 1940, was the greatest insult of our century against the person and consequently against his Creator, namely God. Nowadays, the insult of Nazism is being demonstrated in a new form, that of Globalization, and the so-called new order, or new era.

Wars, disorder, regional disputes and conflicts are succeeding one another, religious fanaticism cultivates

violence and terrorism and the deification of mammon under the pretext of financial dominance militates the peaceful co-existence of the peoples and their countries. And the leaders of this century connive social concerns and remain oblivious and indifferent.

The anniversary of 28th October calls all of us into spiritual alertness, namely the preservation and protection of the moral values of the most sacred consignment of our fathers and brothers who sacrificed their lives for the sake of their religion and for their country.

Concluding let us cry aloud

Viva 28th October 1940!

Viva the pious nation of the Romans!

Viva Hellas!

Viva our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!"

The Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos also addressed the people as follows;

Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend Archbishops,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today is a day of honour, memory and responsibility for our Nation. We celebrate one of the most glorious pages of our contemporary history.

The historic NO to the fascist deadline of 28th October 1940 against the unconditional surrender of Greece and bestowal of its national sovereignty, symbolizes one grandiose unanimous decision of a people, who despite the recent hardship it

endured, did not hesitate to raise itself once again and defend its freedom and national honour.

That NO revealed in the outmost categorical way the deep historic consciousness of the Greeks, the strong common realization of their glorious course through the centuries, the unsubstantiated consignment of their ancestors who have encouraged all along their love for their country, the strength the self-denial and the great feeling of pride, with which they would rush to defend what is Holy and Sacred. The NO was precisely the denial of the Greeks to forget their history and live as an insignificant and subordinate nation.

The great historic event that we celebrate today underlined also the moral height and the strong feeling of righteousness of the Greeks. Due to this unmistakable guide they did not hesitate, not even for an instant, to oppose themselves against the exceedingly greater powers, who wanted to impose on the Greeks the arbitrary law of the powerful ones. The feeling of righteousness shielded the Greeks, who knowing only too well how to fight the righteous fights and being dominated by high morals, despite their small numbers, they defeated the bigger crowd that represented Nazism and Fascism.

Today the Greeks all over the world, honour those who fell and fought in the battlefields in Pindos, Macedonia, Crete, and elsewhere, in the years 1940-41. We honour those who contributed to the National Resistance and those who continued fighting against the intruders in the battlefields of World War II, in the Middle East and Europe, aground, in the air and at sea. We do not forget the thousands of innocent victims during the possession of the Nazis.

The active contribution of the Greek expatriates was crucial as well as precious on the heroic national movement that started with the NO of 28th October 1940, as it has likewise been for any other national movement. The same can be said for the contribution of those who volunteered in the Hellenic

armed forces in order to defend the Greek territories and of those who fought alongside the allied troops, defending the ideals of freedom and conducing to the final victory and the liberation of the Country. The significant assistance of the expatriate Greeks in the Middle East and especially of the Jerusalem Hellenism has been chronicled historically, and Greece is always proud and grateful to them.

In the coiling effort of all the forces of the Nation, with the aim of its moral and spiritual revival as well as its durability amidst many adversities, the Jerusalem Patriarchate, the Mother of Churches, has always been a special point or reference, a long term bastion of Orthodoxy and of the ecumenical values of Hellenism.

Today's anniversary is finally a day of responsibility; it urges us to consider the meaning of 28th October 1940 and its major symbolism for Hellenism today. The NO was expressed by people who fought because, just like today's Greeks, they wanted to live peacefully, free, with dignity and social righteousness. This was materialized thanks to the unbridled unity and togetherness the Greeks displayed, the patriotism, the national pride, their persistence and endurance.

It is a great responsibility for all of us to realize this message, to keep the spirit of 1940 lime, to be inspired by it and convey it to the generations to come.

Viva 28th October 1940! Viva Hellas!

From Secretariat-General

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THE FEAST OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELIC OF ST. SAVVAS THE SANCTIFIED IN THE HOLY LAND

On Thursday, 13th/26th October 2017, the Patriarchate observed the memory of the translation of the relic of our Father among the Saints Savvas the Sanctified in his Holy Lavra. This feast has been established in the Church of Jerusalem since 1965, when on 13th/26th October of that year, the holy relic of St. Savvas was returned from Venice, where it had been transferred by the Crusaders.

This all-night vigil feast was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis and Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Spiritual Father of the Monastery Reverend Archimandrite Eudokimos and other Hieromonks and Priests. The Choir leader of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos sang in Greek and the Hegoumen in Acre, Archimandrite Philotheos in Arabic, along with Fathers from Mount Athos, with the participation in prayer of St.

Savvas' monks and others, and Arab-speaking pilgrims from Bethlehem, Beit Sahour and Beit Jalla.

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

“ Savvas the Sanctified lived in this brook, which stems from Siloam, in solitude for five years, conversing with God and striving to cleanse the eyes of his mind in order to “behold with an open face as in a mirror the glory of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18), having had defeated the evil spirits by his unceasing prayers and closeness to God” St. Savvas' biographer, Cyril Skythopolitis says.

Beloved Brothers in Christ,

Noble pilgrims

Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God Who deemed us worthy to visit His Holy Temple (Ps.27:4) which was built by our Father among the Saints Savvas at the place of the brook where he lived in monastic striving.

The Holy Church of Jerusalem is rejoicing exceedingly in today's 52nd festal anniversary of the translation of the incorrupt relic of our Father among the Saints Savvas the Sanctified , in this sacred place where he was conversing with God “beholding the beauty of the Lord” (Ps.27:4) living in solitude and silence.

Our Father Savvas managed to have the vision of the beauty of God “having cleansed the eyes of his mind”. In this arid rough desert, St. Savvas tasted the fruits of the unity with God, Whom he loved with all his mind and soul. For this reason he would say along with the psalmist: “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16:11). And in more detail; You have made me aware of true ways of the blessed life here. You will fill me with joy when I also behold Your

face there. Under Your protective right hand Lord there are endless and infinite pleasures and joy.

A truthful witness and tangible proof that our Father among the Saints Savvas enjoyed in his earthly life the vision of the glory of God, is his incorrupt relic which lies before our eyes. An additional proof of this fact is the unceasing throughout the centuries operation of this Holy Lavra of St. Savvas, and the presence of the monks in it, who strive in ascesis and unceasing prayer.

In our contemporary era, my dear brothers, where creation is adored rather than the creator, and the spirit of fallacy, namely of the antichrist, is dominant as St. John the Evangelist says (1 John 4:3,6), this Holy Lavra and the relics of St. Savva in it, is projected as a bright beacon, leading us into the safe harbour of salvation, namely our Holy Church of Christ.

And we say this, because St. Savvas the Sanctified calls upon all of us, who believe and confess the incarnate Jesus Christ (1 John 4:2), to cleanse "the eyes of our mind" through unceasing prayers and "the closeness to God", if we actually want to consider ourselves Christians and active members of the mystical body of Christ, namely the Church. Amen."

After dismissal, the boiled wheat and the meal, His Beatitude returned to Jerusalem via the Monastery of St. Theodosios the Coenobiarch.

From Secretariat-General

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HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM VISITS HIS HOLINESS THE POPE OF ROME

On Monday 10th/23rd October 2017, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III visited His Holiness Pope Francis of Rome at the Vatican.

His Beatitude's entourage on this visit were Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Archdeacon Mark.

Upon His arrival at the airport of Rome on Sunday evening, 9th/22nd October 2017, His Beatitude was welcomed by the Most Reverend Bishop Farrell and Reverend Fr. Andrea Palmieri.

In the meeting, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem raised with His Holiness the Pope the recent problem of all the Christian Churches of the Holy Land, caused by the two recent issues; namely: the proposed bill by 40 Members of the Knesset which, if passed into law, would deny the rights of the Churches to freely deal with their land properties; and the recent decision of the Israeli District Court in Jerusalem, which gave effect to the unauthorised and illegitimate contracts relating to the Jaffa Gate properties that belong to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

His Beatitude asked for the support of His Holiness the Pope regarding the efforts to solve the aforementioned problems and for the preservation of the Status Quo especially in the Old

City of Jerusalem, which has always guaranteed the rights and customs of Jewish, Christian and Muslim quarters in the Old City. This issue is more accurately explained in His Beatitude's address in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/10/23/35398>

His Holiness Pope Francis listened attentively to the presentation of His Beatitude and stated that the Status Quo in the Holy City must be defended and preserved. The points of His Holiness address are stated in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/10/23/35400>

His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III thanked His Holiness Pope Francis and wished Him the grace of the Holy Sepulchre in the performance of His pastoral work as the head of the Roman Catholic Church; and He offered Him the icon of the Nativity of Christ.

This problem which concerns not only the Patriarchate of Jerusalem but also all the Christian Churches of the Holy Land were raised in detail by His Beatitude in other meetings that He had during His stay in Rome; namely: with His Eminence Archbishop Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States; with His Eminence Cardinal Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; with His Eminence Cardinal Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and with His Eminence Cardinal Parolin, Secretary of State.

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III expressed His thanks to

His Holiness Pope Francis for these meetings, for His hospitality in the Vatican hotel “Domus Sanctae Marthae”; as well as for the meal which he enjoyed with His Holiness.

His Beatitude departed for Jerusalem on Wednesday morning 12th/25th October 2017.

From Secretariat-General

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ADDRESS TO HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS FROM POPE FRANCIS

Your Beatitude, Dear Brothers,

With great joy I welcome all of you to Rome. I reciprocate with gratitude and fraternal affection the warm welcome Your Beatitude offered me during my visit to Jerusalem. Still fresh in my mind is the attentiveness with which you accompanied Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and myself in the Basilica that preserves the places of the Lord's crucifixion, burial and Resurrection. I am still moved when I think of our moment of prayer in the aedicule of the empty Tomb, and I again express my pleasure at the restoration of that most holy place. It has not simply secured the integrity of a historical monument, but also enabled the empty tomb to continue to testify that: “He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him” (Mk 16:6). I rejoice that the

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land have worked together in such harmony on this project, as they also did for the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. I thank Your Beatitude very much for your own efforts in this regard.

Our meeting allows me to renew my closeness to all those suffering from the conflicts that for decades have beset the Holy Land. The uncertainty of the situation and the lack of understanding between the parties continue to create insecurity, the restriction of fundamental rights, and the flight of many people from their land. I invoke God's help in this, and I ask all those involved to intensify their efforts to achieve a stable peace based on justice and recognition of the rights of all. To this end, any kind of violence, discrimination or displays of intolerance against Jewish, Christian and Muslim worshipers, or places of worship, must be firmly rejected. The Holy City, whose Status Quo must be defended and preserved, ought to be a place where all can live together peaceably; otherwise, the endless spiral of suffering will continue for all.

I would offer a particular greeting to the members of the various Christian communities in the Holy Land. It is my hope that they will continue to be recognized as an integral part of society and that, as citizens and believers in their own right, they can continue tirelessly to contribute to the common good and the growth of peace, striving to further reconciliation and concord. This contribution will be the more effective to the extent that there is harmony between the region's different Churches. Particularly important in this regard would be increased cooperation in supporting Christian families and young people, so that they will not be forced to leave their land. By working together in this delicate area, the faithful of different confessions will also be able to grow in mutual knowledge and fraternal relations.

Here I would reaffirm my heartfelt desire and commitment to progress on our way to full unity, in obedience to Jesus' fervent prayer in the Cenacle "that they may all be one... so that the world may believe" (Jn 17:21). I know that past wounds continue to affect the memory of many people. It is not possible to change the past, but, without forgetting grave failures of charity over the centuries, let us look to a future of full reconciliation and fraternal communion, and take up the work before us, as the Lord desires. Not to do so today would be an even graver fault; it would be to disregard both the urgent call of Christ and the signs of the times sown by the Spirit along the Church's path. Inspired by the same Spirit, may we not let the memory of times marked by lack of communication or mutual accusations, or present difficulties and uncertainty about the future, prevent us from walking together towards visible unity, nor hinder us from praying and working together to proclaim the Gospel and to serve those in need. In this regard, the ongoing theological dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox, in which the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem participates actively and constructively, is a comforting sign of hope on our journey. How good it would be to say of Catholics and Orthodox living in Jerusalem what the Evangelist Luke said of the first Christian community: "All who believed were together... one heart and soul" (Acts 2:44; 4:32).

Your Beatitude, I thank you and the distinguished members of your entourage most cordially for your visit. I reaffirm my closeness to our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, and my affection for our friends of the other great religions who live there. I hope and pray that the day of a stable and lasting peace for all will soon come. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May they prosper who love you! [...] For my brethren and companions' sake I will say, 'peace be within you!'" (Ps 122: 6-8).

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM OFFICIATES THE DIVINE LITURGY ON THE OCCASSION OF THE 170TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN MISSION (MISSIA) IN JERUSALEM

On Sunday 9th/22nd October 2017, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of the Holy Trinity of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission (MISSIA) in Jerusalem, on the occasion of its 170th foundation anniversary.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were eight Metropolitans of the Moscow Patriarchate, with first in rand the Most Reverend Metropolitan Juvenalii of Krutitsky and Kolomensky, from the Jerusalem Patriarchate, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the Head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission (MISSIA) in Jerusalem Archimandrite Alexander, the Hagiotaphite Archimandrite Sergios and many Hieromonks, Priests and Deacons; from Jerusalem Patriarchate Archdeacon Mark. The choir leader of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos chanted in Greek and Russian along with the female choir of MISSIA in the participation of a vast crowd of Russian and Arab-speaking local Christians.

His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos

preached the Divine Word to this congregation as follows:

“We ought to receive the brothers who come to Jerusalem, the hagiographic Metropolis of the Churches, so “that we shall become abettors to the witness of truth in Christ our God” (John 3:8).

Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, Head of the Russian Missia in Jerusalem,

Most Reverend Brothers in Christ and co-celebrant Archbishops, Priests, Hierodeacons of our brotherly Church in Russia which shares the same doctrine with us, representatives of the most dear brother Patriarch Cyril of Moscow.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psalm 133:1), and especially at the dwelling places of Jacob, “for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore” (Psalm 133:3).

This very blessing promised by the Lord is what the Church of Jerusalem enjoys, along with its Christian congregation, especially with the Order of the Wise men of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, the guardians and operators in the service of the All-holy Shrines, which are the irrefutable witnesses of the salvific preaching of the Gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ and of His passion on the Cross and Resurrection.

Our Brotherly Churches of the same doctrine become also communicants and participants of the blessing of all things manifested here, during the pilgrimages of both their Most Reverend Hierarchs and the noble pilgrims, who visit us from all over the world.

In appreciation of the moral and material support received during the most difficult periods of its historic course, for the protection of the All-holy Shrines, the Church of Jerusalem has never ceased commemorating in prayer the benefactors and donors from the Russian speaking countries.

At this point one could add, that it was the duty of the Church of Jerusalem to return the favour through its great Patriarchs Theophanes III and Paisios, and contribute greatly during the crucial turning point in the history of the Russian Church (16th- 17th cent.), for the rescuing and protection of its Apostolic Hierarchic Order, which was being threatened by the fabricated hermaphrodite teaching of Unia.

The bonding in the brotherly love in Christ between Russia and Jerusalem Churches was founded on the teaching of Paul; "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). And the law of Christ is nothing but His love; "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another" (John 13:34) the Lord says.

Today, with this Festal Patriarchal Divine Liturgy we demonstrate this law of love in Christ, in the attendance of the co-celebrant Archbishops and Priests, who had once been Heads of the Russian Missia in Jerusalem in the Holy Church of the Holy Trinity, on the occasion of its 170th foundation anniversary.

Anytime this law of Christ is bypassed or violated, the holy map of the spiritual rights of the Churches which has been enacted by the Holy Spirit in the Ecumenical Synods and the Sacred Canons is ruptured, resulting in schisms and divisions in the autonomous unity of the body of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12:27), St. Paul declares.

As the keeper of Christ's law and the apostolic traditions, the Church of Jerusalem remains faithful and steadfast in its mission of the witness of our Saviour Jesus Christ's passion on the Cross and His Resurrection in the Holy City of Jerusalem, the place of "the glorious honour of His majesty" (Psalm 145:5) and "the perfection of His beauty" (Psalm 50:2). The majesty and the beauty of the "One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church from one end of the world to the other" which

is represented by the indeed martyr Church of Jerusalem in kenosis and sacrifice, according to the canons in its region “and does not boast in another man’s line of things” (2 Cor. 10:16) as St. Paul says.

Today’s festal spiritual anniversary of Duhovnia Missia, which was hosted in the Holy Monastery of the Archangels of our Patriarchate in the beginning, urges us to “consider the end of the conversation” (Hebrews 13:7) of its mission and relevant implications in the Holy Land and the Middle East. In addition, we are called by the Spirit of the love and care in Christ to coordinate its future actions so that the word of St. Paul will be preached; “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

This should be done in order to avoid repeating the wrong doings of the past; and in order to achieve a more effective service in the ministry of the noble pilgrims and the pious remaining faithful Christians who live in hardship in the Holy Land and the surrounding Middle East region. And we say this because the Holy Church of Jerusalem, founded on the redemptive blood of our Saviour Christ on the Cross, and being witness of His resurrection, has been established as the true and faithful witness of the Ecumenical Orthodoxy and the guarantor of the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Concluding, let us hear the exhortations of Peter, the Leader of the Apostles, saying; “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:10-11).”

At the end of His Sermon, His Beatitude offered the Head of the Russian Mission Metropolitan Juvenalii an ivory icon of the Last Supper made in Bethlehem, an icon of the Resurrection of Christ with the Sacred Edicule and a copy of the cross made

by the Architect Kalfa Komnenos of Mytilene, who built the Edicule in 1810. This cross was found in the recent renovation of the Sacred Edicule.

In return, the Metropolitan Juvenalii offered His Beatitude a set of Patriarchal egolpia with a cross made on the occasion of the 170th anniversary of the Russian MISSIA.

His Beatitude asked Metropolitan Juvenalii to convey His Brotherly affection to His Beatitude Patriarch Cyril and thanked the Head of the MISSIA Archimandrite Alexander and his associates for the good co-operation with the Jerusalem Patriarchate.

Consequently, His Beatitude was guided to the exhibition of liturgical items of MISSIA, inside the building Sergei, which MISSIA has recently recovered from the Jerusalem Mayoralty.

Finally His Beatitude was hosted at a meal during which He gave the address in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/10/22/35394>

In the evening reception at the Notre Dame hotel, the Patriarchate was represented by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis who read the address in the following link on behalf of His Betitude:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/10/22/35396>

From Secretariat-General

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ADDRESS OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS AT THE RUSSIAN ECCLESIASTICAL MISSION (MISSIA)

“Your Eminence Metropolitan Juvenalii,

Your Eminences,

Dear Archimandrite Alexander,

Reverend Fathers,

Beloved Monastics,

Sisters and Brothers in the Lord,

Christ is in our midst!

We gather today in this holy and venerable Cathedral to give thanks to the Almighty God for 170 years of faithful service and witness of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. Founded in 1847, the primary purpose of the Mission over the generations has been to support the many thousands of pilgrims who have come to the Holy Land from the Russian Church. Your witness here has endured many challenges both in the Holy Land and in your motherland, and yet you have endured. In particular we celebrate today the recent

restoration of the Sergei Building of the Russian Compound to the Mission.

This Divine Liturgy that we have just concelebrated is the great and visible sign of the unity of the Holy Orthodox Church. The Eucharist is the expression of our unity in the apostolic faith, but our sharing in the common Chalice runs even deeper than this. As St. Paul says of the Body of Christ, *if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it* (1 Cor. 12:26).

Together we share in each other's sufferings as well as in each other's joys. We in the Church of Jerusalem, which is the Mother of all Churches, have long had compassion for the many sufferings of the Russian Church over the generations, and we are particularly mindful in our own day of the painful schism that exists in Ukraine.

And we know that you have a special concern for the Church of Jerusalem and the Christian communities of the Holy Land, especially at this time when the Church in this region is facing new and difficult challenges.

So our unity in this Divine Liturgy finds its most profound expression in our mutual *diakonia*, our care of one for the other. We wish to express our profound gratitude to His Holiness Patriarch Cyril, whose pastoral zeal for the Church of Jerusalem is well known. And we also wish to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Vladimir Putin, whom we regard highly both as a defender of Orthodoxy and as a world leader, who has a particular care for peace and reconciliation in the Middle East in general and in the Holy City of Jerusalem in particular.

Our mutual support and care is what everybody expects from spiritual leaders in our day. Our Holy Orthodox Church is the

witness that guarantees the identity and vitality of our Orthodox nations and communities. May this providential anniversary of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem strengthen our unity, so that we may, in our generation, give our best efforts together for the well-being of the Church, both at home and in our beloved Holy Land.

May God bless you all.”

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY IN THE ARAB- SPEAKING TOWN RENE

On Sunday 25th September/8th October 2017, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of the Greek-Orthodox Arab-speaking Community of Rene.

The town Rene is nearby Nazareth, and it there has always been a Greek-Orthodox Arab-speaking Community there, numbering approximately one thousand two hundred members.

Co-celebrants with His Beatitude at this Divine Liturgy were the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos, the former Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Porfyrios, the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of Tabor Archimandrite Hilarion, the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of Tiberias Archimandrite Dionysios, the brother of

the Metropolitan of Nazareth Fr. Telemachos, the Head of this parish Presbyter Fr. Simeon, Presbyter Fr. Lazarus and Deacon Anastasios. The choir leader of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos sang in Greek, Arabic and Russian with the choir he has been teaching in Nazareth and a great crowd of Orthodox people participated in reverence.

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

“And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: “They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever” (2 Cor. 9:8-9), the wise Apostle Paul preaches.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians

We rend glory and thanksgiving to the Holy Trinitarian God, Who has directed us in the historic city of yours, in order to become communicants of the Holy Table of the divine body and blood of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, in this Eucharistic gathering in the Holy Church of St. George the Great Martyr.

In the second Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul urges the Christian brothers to be willing to offer generously, namely to be charitable, in order to have the grace of God on the one hand, and on the other, to work exceedingly in every good work. “And God is able to bless you abundantly” (2 Cor. 9:8), “His righteousness endures forever” (2 Cor. 9:9).

And like that, the righteousness of God endures forever, because we who bear the name of Christ have put on Christ during the Holy baptism. That is, we have been surrounded with the light of Christ as a garment. “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but

will have the light of life" (John 8:12) says the Lord.

According to St. Chrysostom, "St. Paul refers to the virtue of good works and charity when he talks about righteousness here; He named charity as righteousness here. And it is right for him to do so, as [charity] burns sins like fire." It is however noteworthy, that the righteousness we are called to apply in our earthly life is the life in Christ, namely to keep the commandments of the Gospel of Christ, as St. Paul teaches by saying: "Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:14-15). And in more detail; Stand upright in the battle, having buckled around your waist with truth as another belt, so that the enlightenment of the truth may give you spiritual strength and agility. And be dressed with righteousness as another breastplate, so that you may be unharmed by every arrow of unrighteousness and you won't be enthralled by any work of injustice against your neighbour. And as new shoes, put on your feet the willingness to act, which is given to the soul by the keeping of the Gospel which gives peace.

And according to Prophet David, God's mercy and righteousness remain to all generations of those who keep His law and remember His commandments, so that they live according to them. "But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts" (Psalm 103:17-18).

Those whom our Holy Church honours and respects as its saints, are nothing else but "human beings, even as we are" (James 5:17), who guarded and kept the law and the commandments of the Gospel. Behold why our Church projects its Saints throughout the centuries as prototypes and examples to imitate.

The Saints of the Church are our spiritual luminaries, who guide us through the ocean of adversities and the confusion of this century. While the Church the mystical body of Christ, is the safe harbour of the salvation of our souls. "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?" (Mat. 16:26) says the Lord.

Moreover, the Apostles were called exactly to this by Christ, namely to the preaching of the salvation of the people's souls, as it is clearly witnessed by today's Gospel narrative according to St. Luke: "Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people" (Luke 5:10). [Do not be afraid, from now on that I call you to become my apostle, you will continue to fish, not fish but living people instead, whom you will guide to the salvation of their souls by your preaching]. This means that the mission of the Church is the transfiguration of man and the world into Christ, Who has conquered the death of corruption and sin by His Cross and Resurrection. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). While St. Paul does not hide his pain and suffering for the rebirth of his spiritual children until Christ's character is formed in them: "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" he writes to the Galatians 4:19.

On the contrary, those who claim that the Church should conform to the will of the world and thus of man, are no others than those for whom St. Paul prophesizes: "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash,

conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people” (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

Today’s celebrated St. Euphrosyne, an exemplar of the transfiguration in Christ, is projected to us my dear brothers, who having denounced the things of the world is rejoicing with the saints in heaven and intercedes for us to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith our Lord Jesus Christ, Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God(Hebrews 12:2). To Whom belongs all glory honour and worship unto the ages. Amen. Many happy returns.”

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception at the Community’s reception hall, at the presence of Mr. Caesar Martzie, representative of the Ministry of Religion of Israel. There were also thanking addresses to His Beatitude for His support to the Community and the purchase of land property for the Community followed by His Beatitude’s address as sited below:

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). [Seek peace with all men; seek the sanctification and purity of heart from every passion; because without sanctification no one will see the Lord], St. Paul preaches.

Your Excellency Mr. President of the Church Council,

Honourable members of the Church Committee,

Honourable Ladies and Gentlemen,

Reverend Fathers and Holy Brothers

Our meeting today in the town Rene of Sebastia County, where Christians and Muslims live in peace and harmony, is an event of joy and moral satisfaction. And this is so, because the

Lord's commandment is kept here; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27), and according to St. Paul, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour" (Romans 13:10).

The unceasing and historical presence of the primary institution of the Church through the centuries, which has shed its light to the world on the day of Holy Pentecost, in this very place of the crucified blood and the resurrection of its founder our Lord Jesus Christ, has made the Church of Jerusalem, namely the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate with its order of monks of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, the undeniable guarantor of the safe-keeping of the All-holy Shrines on the one hand, and on the other, the Christian presence and witness in both the Holy Land and in the outer Middle East district.

Needless to say, within its sacred mission of preaching the principles and values of the Gospel, the Greek-Orthodox Jerusalem Patriarchate has cultivated mutual respect and harmonious co-existence among the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Moreover, the good cooperation between the Church vestrymen of your community and our Patriarchate has brought forth the fruits of reorganization to both your community and the young people. We praise and bless this good effort of your vestrymen and that of the fighter and energetic worker of Christ's vineyard, namely the Reverend for you and us Priest and keeper Fr. Sama'an.

Finally, we would like to assure you, my dear brothers and sisters and respected members of your community, that we don't stop our care for you. Therefore, along with the wise Apostle we say: "being reviled, we bless; Being defamed, we intreat" (1 Cor. 4:12,13) and we pray our God and Saviour Jesus Christ so that the fruit of His Spirit, namely love, joy, peace, faith, gentleness and longsuffering (Gal. 5:22) fills the

hearts of all of you, by the intercessions of the Most-holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and the prayers of St. George the Great Martyr and St. Euphrosyne. Amen."

From Secretariat-General

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