

THE FEAST OF THE GREAT MARTYR ST. GEORGE AT THE ROMANIAN DELEGATION IN JERUSALEM

On Sunday 24th April/7th May 2017, the memory of the Great Martyr St. George the Trophy-bearer was celebrated one day after the actual feast day at his Holy Church of the Romanian Patriarchate Delegation in Jerusalem, located at the borderline between East and West Jerusalem, the district which was the passage of the borders between Jordan and Israel up to 1967, known as "Mandel Baum".

For this feast, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the morning of the above mentioned day, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-officiating the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the Head of this Monastery Archimandrite Theophilos and his assistant Hieromonk John, the Hagiotaphite Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos, Priests of the Romanian Patriarchate, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Agapios. Singing were the left choir singer of the Church of the Resurrection Mr. George Alvanos and the Romanian nuns of this Monastery, with the participation in prayer of Mr. Traian Plescan, the Representative of the Romanian Embassy in Israel, monks and nuns and Orthodox Romanian nuns in Jerusalem and pilgrims from Romania with local Greek citizens of the Old City of Jerusalem.

To this noble congregation His Beatitude preached the Divine word at the Koinonikon in English as in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/05/07/32493>

After the Dismissal, the Head of the Delegation Archimandrite Theophilos offered His Beatitude a beautiful canticle, in order to transfer the Holy Light from the Holy Sepulchre and

the Sacred Edicule in it. The feast was followed by a rich festal meal.

From Secretariat-General

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SERMON OF HIS BEATITUDE AT THE METOCHION OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN JERUSALEM ON THE FEAST OF THE HOLY AND GLORIOUS GREAT MARTYR GEORGE THE TROPHY-BEARER

HIS BEATITUDE THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

Sunday 7 May 2017

Dear Father Theophilos,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers and Monastics,

Beloved Pilgrims and Faithful,

Christ is risen!

In this joyful Paschal season, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy and Glorious Great Martyr, Saint George, who was “a companion of the resurrection” of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ’s resurrection from the dead has inaugurated new life, and in this new life Saint George participated and showed to others because he was illuminated by the uncreated Light of the resurrection.

And we sing on his feast:

*Since thou art limpidly illuminated
with the whole light of the Trinity, O all-blessed George,
as an invincible Martyr, as a champion of piety,
as a divinely crowned victor,
save by thine intercessions,
O Heaven-dweller, them that honour thee.*

(Matins, Second Canon)

The resurrection of Christ is the event that makes clear the fundamental truth of the Christian faith. Holy Pascha, the Feast of Feasts for the Orthodox Christians, is the crown of the year and the crown of creation. As Saint Gregory Palamas says, in a typical, but rich play on words, the *anastasis* – that is the *resurrection* – means *anaplasia* – which is remaking – as well as *anakenisis* – which means *renewal*. And it also means *anazoosis* – which is bestowal of new life. All these concepts are deeply related to the resurrection.

Saint Gregory tells us further that “the resurrection of the

Lord is the regeneration of human nature. It is the re-birth and re-creation of the first Adam, whom sin led to death, and who because of death, again was made to retrace his steps on earth from which he was made. The resurrection is the return to immortal life" (*Sermon on Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing women*).

And our Lord Jesus Christ says this in the Gospel of Saint John, when he assures us "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, even though he die, will live, and he who lives and believes in me will never die*" (John 11:25-26).

The Saints are those whose life is the confirmation of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. They lead us in our return to immortal life. The Saints of the Church in general, and the martyrs of the Gospel *kerygma* (preaching) in particular, are those who imitated the life of Christ in their lives, and in this way they have attained immortality and incorruption. They are more than our inspiration; they are the confirmation for us of our won journey to *theosis* – of our own spiritual pilgrimage to union with God. That which the Saints have attained, we also can attain.

Of this sharing in the unapproachable glory of God, Saint George shows us the way. As we sing on his feast:

*Since thou hast now laid hold on that blessed life
that is his in Christ, for which thou foughtest
even unto blood, O glorious George,
ask that they who praise thee with faith
may be saved from every adversity, O prizewinner.*

(Matins, Second Canon)

So the Saints build up the Body of Christ, the Church, by being the bridge between the Church militant here on earth,

and the Church triumphant in heaven.

As we gather on this joyful feast, we show our common witness that we, as Orthodox Sister Churches bear to the world. Christ is the head of the Church, Christ who has been raised from the dead, and who is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Cor. 15:20), and we are united in this conviction. The Spirit-filled Fathers and Councils of the Church have established us in our common life, and given us a framework for our witness and mission that ensures the right relationship of all in the Body of Christ. As we worship today in communion with the Mother Church of Jerusalem, we give thanks to Almighty God for this gift of communion within the One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

May our risen Lord, who made His faithful servant Saint George a companion of his resurrection, bring us also with all the saints into the fullness of glory and eternal life. And may God bless the faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Romania, and all the peoples of our beloved Holy Land in this joyful Paschal season.

Christ is risen!

Amen.

THE FEAST OF THE GREAT MARTYR ST. GEORGE IN ACRE

On Saturday, 23rd April/ 6th May 2017, the memory of the Great Martyr St. George the Trophy-bearer was celebrated by the Patriarchate at his Holy Church in Acre –the ancient Ptolemais in north Israel.

The Church honours St. George as he confessed Christ to the Roman army, where he was serving, and for this reason he martyred in Rome, from where his Holy relic was transferred to Palestine, his birthplace on his mother side, in the town of Lydda, where a great Church was founded by St. Helen.

This “conceivable diamond of patience” did the Jerusalem Patriarchate honour by the Divine Liturgy on the morning of the feast in Acre-Ptolemais.

The Divine Liturgy was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with concelebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom was Archimandrite Sophronios the Hegoumen of Ailaboun and Arab-speaking Presbyters, Priests of the towns in the surrounding to Acre area, Archdeacon Mark, Deacon Anastasios, at the singing of the choir led by Archimandrite Philotheos. Present were, Mr. Kouroumalos the delegate of the Greek Embassy in Israel and many Orthodox people.

To this congregation His Beatitude gave the following Sermon:

“Come as we all gladly celebrate the all-festive, glorious, radiant Resurrection of Christ, let us also celebrate the shining festival of the holy Great Martyr-George; with flowers of springtime, come let us now crown him who hath proved invincible, that by his most mighty entreats we may be redeemed from afflictions, tribulations, and all our iniquities” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The all-glorious memorial of the Great Martyr Saint George the triumphant hath shined upon us together with the Paschal Feast of the Resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and

has gathered us today in order to celebrate the inauguration of our new life in the risen Christ.

To this new life in Christ communicant and participant did Saint George the triumphant become, as well as a Great Martyr of Christ's love, who "poureth rains of miracles upon us from above" as his hymn writer says. Christ's friend George managed this because he was enlightened by the Unwaning and Uncreated Light of Christ's Resurrection. For this reason the hymn writer says: "since thou art limpidly illuminated with the whole light of the Trinity, O all-blessed George, as an invincible Martyr, as a champion of piety, as a divinely crowned victor, save by thine intercessions, O Heaven-dweller, them that honour thee".

Christ's resurrection my beloved ones, is what constitutes the fundamental truth of the Christian faith and the Holy Pascha the Feast of Feasts of the Eastern Orthodox Church, as described by the hymn writer: "This chosen and holy day is the first of the Sabbaths, the queen and lady, the feast of feasts, and the festival of festivals, wherein we bless Christ unto the ages".

The day of the Resurrection is "chosen and holy and the first of the Sabbaths" because it is the day of the Lord, the Lord's Day (Kyriaki). According to Saint Gregory Palamas, "the resurrection of the Lord is the renewal of the human nature, it is the bestowal and re-making and the return to the immortal life of the first Adam who was devoured by death due to sin and through death he was retraced to the earth by which he was made".

In other words, Saint Gregory continues, "Having risen from the dead, Christ is not conquered at all by death anymore; because having resurrected Himself on the third day, He is the only one who did not return to earth again, but he was ascended in heaven, making our human flesh which he had received for himself to share the same throne with the Father

as identical to God. For this reason Christ is the only one who became the beginning of the future resurrection of all people and the only one who became the beginning of the dead and firstfruits of the dead as well as the father of the time to come. And as all people, sinners and righteous die because of the (Old) Adam, likewise, because of Christ (the New Adam), all, sinners and righteous will be vivified, "but every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"(1 Cor. 15:22-26) at the general resurrection with the last trumpet. As St. Paul teaches, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:53-55).

The Saints of the Church in general and the martyrs of the Gospel teaching in particular, are those, who became imitators of Christ's life, His godly life, and were granted the vision of His divine and unapproachable glory. The glory which our Lord Jesus Christ revealed at the working of His miracles and especially at His transfiguration on Mount Tabor and exceptionally at His radiant Resurrection in Jerusalem.

Having become a spectator of this unapproachable glory St. George is now illustrious in heaven and prays to Christ our God for all who follow him, as his hymn writer says: "Since now hast thou laid hold on that blessed life that is hid in Christ, for which thou foughtest even unto blood, O glorious George, ask that they who praise thee with faith may be saved

from every adversity, O prizewinner”.

That which captivated and of course has still been captivating every human soul of good will is “the hidden life in Christ”. This life is revealed and shown in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ who said: “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:25-26).

Truthful witnesses of this fact are the Saints of the Church who have been sacrificed in favour of Christ’s blood, among whom is St. Great Martyr George the triumphant that we honour today. An also exceptionally truthful witness is the Most Blessed Glorious Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary, who kept in her womb God the Logos who has no beginning as the hymn writer says: “The tabernacle of testimony, wherein were the tablets, the urn, and the golden ark, prefigured thee, O all-pure Theotokos; for as that contained those, so heldest thou in thy womb the beginningless Word when He received a body”.

The Paschal Feast of St. George’s memory calls us to participate in the joy and gladness of this salvific fact on the one hand, and on the other hand to entreat the parressia towards God of the Martyr and trophy-bearer and most blessed George for the salvation of our souls and for the prevailing of peace in our highly tested region and the whole world. Christ is risen!”

For the Sermon in Arabic please follow the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2017/05/06/30276>

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a Procession led by the Scouts, three times around the Holy Church and in front of the Tomb of the New Martyr St. George the Cypriot who slept in the Lord in 1750.

Consequently there was a reception with addresses given by

Seich-Imam Samir Asaf, and Omar Kagiya representative of the Muslims, the Israeli Deputy Mayor of Acre, Mr. Kouroumalos the delegate of the Greek Embassy in Tel Aviv, the representative of the Baha'is, Mr. Safik, President of the "Acre" Community Council, the Patriarchal Commissioner in Acre Archimandrite Philotheos, who underlined the significance of the restoration project of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre by His Beatitude. To all the above His Beatitude replied with the following address:

"The righteous man shall flourish like a palm tree, and like a cedar in Lebanon shall he be multiplied. They that are planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God they shall blossom forth [the righteous]" (Psalm 91:13-14).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Your Honour Mr. President and members of the Community Board,

Like another blossomed palm tree and cedar of Lebanon which has been planted in the house of God, the Great Martyr of the righteousness and love of God George the Trophy-bearer is celebrated today.

George is indeed the "righteous of God". For this reason his annual memory is not only observed by the Eastern Orthodox Church but also by the faithful of the other heavenly religions.

George was distinguished for his ardent love for "God's righteous one", Christ, who preached the Gospel of righteousness, love and freedom but also the full respect towards the human being.

St. George's personality belongs to the chora of the Saint Prophets and friends of God, who condemned and denied the idolatry and the arrogance of the world-rulers of their era, not only by words, but also with their mission and especially by their martyrdom. And this they managed to accomplish

through their clear faith towards God the lover of man, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified and resurrected from the dead for our sake and for the sake of all people.

Christ's resurrection, the victory of life against the death of corruption and sin, of the true and unwaning light against darkness, of righteousness against injustice, and of love against hatred, would always inspire young George, who finally became "communicant of the passion of the Dispassionate, and of His rising", as the hymn writer says: "Cultivating with all care the saving seed of God's commands, thou didst piously disperse all of thy riches to the poor and in return didst acquire Christ's eternal glory. Then boldly wentest thou to conflicts with the foe and unheard-of pains, O glorious Martyr George; and as a sharer in the Passion and Rising of the Dispassionate, thou sharest also now in His Kingdom, praying for us in fervour".

This Great Martyr of God's love and righteousness that we have honoured today in his homonymous Church in the historic multi-national, multi-religious and multi-cultural town of Acre, let us entreat in prayer to intercede for our souls and the peace of our region and of the whole world.

On this occasion we would like to thank the representative and spiritual Hegoumen Archimandrite Philotheos and his associates for his hospitality and warm welcome.

Especially we thank the local authorities the police and all the representatives of the religious communities, Christian, Muslim, Druze and Baha'i, for their participation in this festal and paschal celebration of St. George. Amen. Christ is risen! Many happy returns."

For the address in Arabic please follow the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2017/05/06/30278>

Finally, a rich meal was offered by the Patriarchal

Commissioner Archimandrite Philotheos in honour of His Beatitude and many of the congregation.

From Secretariat-General

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THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY VISITS THE CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

On Wednesday morning, 20th April/3rd May 2017, the Most Reverend Archbishop of Canterbury of the Anglican Church Mr. Justin Welby visited the Horrendous Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre at the Church of the Resurrection, escorted by a team of his associates and entourage, among whom was the Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Jerusalem Most Rev. Suheil Dawani.

The Most Reverend Archbishop of Canterbury was received at the Horrendous Golgotha by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who was escorted by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Dragouman

Archimandrite Mattheos, the Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew, the Assistant Sacristan Archimandrite Polykarpos and other Hagiotaphite and Templar Fathers. His Beatitude addressed the Rev. Archbishop as in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/05/03/32404>

From Secretariat-General

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THE PASTORAL VISIT OF H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM IN JORDAN

On Sunday, 17th/30th April 2017, the Myrrh-bearers Sunday, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of the Annunciation in the area of Abdali of Amman in Jordan.

For this Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude arrived on Saturday noon at the Metropolis of the Patriarchate in Amman, where he held meetings and considered various matters related to the Patriarchate. He also visited the Greek Orthodox Arab-speaking Community of the Patriarchate in the town of Zarka, where He

was most warmly received by the Head of this Community Archimandrite Athanasios Kakis and the Priest Farah Hadat, the people and the rulers of the town, and He visited the Holy Church of St. George and the Old People's Home, which is funded by the Community under the service and care of Fr. Farah Hadat.

Co-officiating with His Beatitude on the Myrrh-bearers Sunday were the Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia and Geronda Secretary-General Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Hegoumen of Fhes Archimandrite Ieronymos, the Dean Priest of the Holy Church of the Annunciation – who is over ninety years old – Fr. Constantine Karmas, and other Priests of the Holy Church such as Fr. Evangellos Psiara, Fr. Nectarios Ratzaah, and Archdeacon Marc. Present was the Association of the celebrating on the Myrrh-bearers Sunday, Myrrh-bearing women, and singing were the Choir leader of the Holy Church Mr. Ilias Raband with his helpers, at the participation in contrite prayer of many members of this Parish and Community.

To this pious congregation of this Parish, His Beatitude preached the Divine word as follows:

“Let us arise in the deep dawn and, instead of myrrh, offer praise to the Master, and we shall see Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, Who causeth life to dawn for all” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Resurrected Christ,

Noble Christians,

The Paschal Feast of the Myrrh-bearing women gathered us all today in this Holy Cathedral of the Annunciation in Amman of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, in order that we offer our Lord and God thanksgiving praises instead of myrrh on His glorious Resurrection.

The Myrrh-bearing women as well as Christ's secret disciples Joseph and Nicodemus of Arimathea became eye witnesses of the Sun of Righteousness, Christ, who has caused eternal life to dawn on all people. And the myrrh-bearing women are the first irrefutable witnesses of the resurrection; while Joseph and Nicodemus are witnesses of the deposition from the Cross and the three-day burial of our Saviour Christ as the Evangelists narrate.

"Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre" (Mark 15:43,46). And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun" (Mark 16:1-2).

Christ's resurrection is the completion of the truly unverifiable mystery of Divine providence. For this reason St. Paul proclaims that the gospel preaching and the faith of the Christians have as a foundation and beginning Christ's resurrection from the dead. "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15:12-14).

In other words my dear brothers, denying the resurrection from the dead means denying Christ's resurrection and refutes the fact that Christ "died (on the cross) for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3). "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto,

but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mat. 20:28). This Christ, "God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it (death)" (Acts 2:24). In this case St. Chrysostom says "for if Christ was captured by death and He did not destroy its torments, how would He have been able to absolve others, had He still been captured by death?" And St. John of Damascus says: "if there is no resurrection, neither God nor providence exist, and all things are controlled by chance".

The death of the incarnate God the Logos, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the death which revealed the divine righteousness to the world. And the resurrected from the dead Christ, is the Sun of Righteousness. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed (in the gospel)" the wise Paul preaches (Romans 1:17).

Behold thus why we are called to offer the Lord the hymn of victory, the paschal hymn, instead of myrrh; and behold why the hymn writer exclaims: "We celebrate the death of death, the destruction of Hades, the beginning of an everlasting life. And with leaps of joy we praise the Cause thereof the only blessed and most glorious God of our fathers".

Christ's resurrection according to our Eastern Orthodox Church is nothing else but the inauguration, the "beginning of a new life, the eternal one". It is precisely this other life, the eternal one that Christ's Cross declares and evangelizes to all. And this is so, because by the Cross, our Saviour Christ obliterated sin and abolished the power of death and corruption.

Behold once more, why "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18) according to St. Paul. And again, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

Our Holy Church propounds Christ's faithful disciples, the myrrh-bearing women, because they became the evangelizers of Christ's resurrection, as the hymn writer of the Church says: "The Myrrh-bearers coming early in the morning and beholding the sepulchre empty, said unto the Apostles: He that is mighty hath destroyed corruption, and hath seized from their bonds those in Hades; proclaim ye with boldness that Christ God is risen, granting us great mercy".

Moreover, truthful witnesses of Christ's Passion on the Cross and His Resurrection were his secret disciples, Joseph and Nicodemus, who having removed Jesus' sacred body from the wood, buried it faithfully.

According to St. Gregory Palamas, the Lord's resurrection is the renewal of the human nature, the reviving and remodelling and return to the eternal life of the first Adam, who was swallowed by death and through death he regressed to earth of which he was made. Having resurrected Himself on the third day, Christ did not return to earth again, but ascended in heaven, making our flesh that He had received for Himself, sharing the same throne with the Father as identical to God.

In other words, Christ's resurrection made us free from the slavery of death, sin and corruption. For this reason St. Paul advices us: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1).

To this liberty, the liberty of Christ's resurrection we are called to become participants, and also preachers and evangelizers, imitating the Holy myrrh-bearing women and witnesses of Christ's love. Amen. Christ is risen!

On this blessed occasion we would like to express our warmest thanks and deep gratitude to his Majesty the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Mr. Abdullah II and his respected Government for their interest in favour of all the religious

and Christian communities living in Jordan in a peaceful and harmonious co-existence. We pray that the Lord grants Him and the Royal Family governmental power and health accordingly. Amen."

And in Arabic in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2017/04/30/30152>

Many people participated in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. After Dismissal, His Beatitude honoured the Dean Presbyter Fr. Constantine Karmas with a pectoral cross and an icon for the Holy Church of the Annunciation.

Finally, His Beatitude visited the recently refurbished reception halls of the Holy Church and the ecclesiastical court halls and departed for His visit to the King of Jordan, His Majesty Abdullah II bin al-Hussein.

From Secretariat-General

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RETURN OF VISITS TO THE OTHER CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES BY THE PATRIARCHATE

On Easter Tuesday at 11:00am and at 15:00, 5th/18th April 2017, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood under its Hegoumen, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, returned the Easter visit of the Franciscan Fraternity and the Custos of

the Holy Land.

At 9:15 on Wednesday, 6th/19th April 2017, our Patriarchate under His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos visited the Latin Patriarchate on the occasion of Easter. The Patriarchate was also visited by all the Christian Churches on the occasion of their Easter.

On Thursday 7th/20th April 2017 our Patriarchate visited the Armenians for their Easter.

On these visits His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos gave the addresses in the links below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/04/18/32028>

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/04/19/32032>

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/04/20/32199>

From Secretariat-General

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EASTER VISITS AT THE

PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, 5th/18th April 2017, the Easter visits among the Christian Communities took place. At 8:5am of that day the Patriarchate received the Franciscan Fraternity of the Roman Catholic Church. At 9:30am His Beatitude and the Hagiotaphite Fathers received the representative of the Apostolic Delegation of the Vatican in Jerusalem.

At 10:00 am His Beatitude and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood received all the Christian Communities together, the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem, the Anglican Church, Lutheran, Syrian, Coptic and other smaller ones.

On Wednesday, 6th/19th April 2017, at 8:30 am the Armenian Brotherhood visited the Patriarchate.

At the Franciscans' visit His Beatitude gave the following address:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/04/18/31940>

At the visit of all the Christian Communities His Beatitude gave the address in the following link:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/04/18/31942>

The address of His Beatitude at the visit of the Armenians is in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/04/19/32030>

Both the Custos of the Holy Land and the Heads of the other Communities stressed in their addresses the need for the co-operation of the Christian Churches within the spirit of the Cross and the Lord's Resurrection for the support of the Christian inhabitants in the Middle East and in other areas.

On Wednesday morning, 6th/19th April 2017, a Delegation of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem visited the

Patriarchate at the Patriarchate Hall on the occasion of Easter.

From Secretariat-General

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THE FEAST OF RESURRECTION OF PASCHA AT THE HOLY SEPULCHRE (2017)

At midnight on Holy and Great Saturday 2nd/15th April 2017, at the turn of Sunday, 3rd/16th April 2017, the Patriarchal Hagiotaphite Entourage came down from the Central Monastery to the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection.

There, at the Catholicon, Matins of Easter Sunday was held with the Canon while His Beatitude the Archbishops and Priests were dressed in their liturgical vestments. Then the Litany around the All-Holy and Life-giving Sepulchre started from the Catholicon.

After the Litany, His Beatitude standing before the Sacred Edicule read the Gospel narrative according to Mark on the Resurrection and recited the "Glory to the Holy Consubstantial

and Life-giving and Undivided Trinity” and started the “Christ is risen” ten times, and the congregation followed unceasingly in clamour and exclamations each one in his own language.

The Canon on the Resurrection of St. John of Damascus followed, Matins with praises and the Doxology and then the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, led by His Beatitude, with concelebrants the guest Most Reverend Archbishop Leon of Finland, Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops Theophanis of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks first among whom the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios and many Priests from Greece, Russia, Romania, Ukraine, Finland, at the singing of the Choir Leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos and Mr. George Alvanos from the gallery of the right and the left choir.

At the end of this festal and simultaneously contrite Divine Liturgy the Easter Message of His Beatitude was read by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina as in the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/04/09/31355>

When the congregation had received the Holy Communion His Beatitude read the Sermon of St. John Chrysostom “If any be pious and lover of God...”

After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen and the Epitropikon and received the traditional Easter egg and cheese.

From Secretariat-General
[httpv://youtu.be/onIQ6-5e5L0](http://youtu.be/onIQ6-5e5L0)

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THE SERVICE OF THE WASHING OF FEET AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Holy and Great Thursday morning, 31st March/13th April 2017, the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great was celebrated at St. James the Brother of God Cathedral, which is between the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood Residence and the Church of the Resurrection, led by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with concelebrants the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hieromonks and Deacons, as well as visiting Priests.

After the Divine Liturgy at 9:00 am, the Service of the Washing of feet started at the courtyard of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection. For this reason, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos came from St. James Church and going up on the platform washed the feet of twelve Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Presbyters, according to the Typikon of this unique to the Church of Jerusalem Service, in memory of the event that the Lord washed the feet of His disciples before His Passion, becoming a living example of humility.

At the end of this Service, bells tolling, the Patriarchal

Entourage headed for the Patriarchate amidst the noble pilgrims, where His Beatitude gave the following address:

“Initiating Thy disciples, O Lord, Thou didst teach them, saying: O friends, see that no fear separate you from Me; for though I suffer, yet it is for the sake of the world. Wherefore, be not scandalized in Me, for I am come not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give My life a ransom for the world. If then ye are My friends, imitate Me. He that would be first, let him be last; the master, as the servant. Abide in Me, that ye may bear fruit, for I am the Vine of Life” (Holy and Great Wednesday, Matins, Apostiha. Glory..Both now).

Reverend Holy Fathers and brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

Today, on Holy and Great Thursday, the Holy Fathers who have ordained everything well, as the Synaxarion of the Church says, handed over to us four things to celebrate: The Sacred Washing of the feet, the Last Supper (meaning the tradition of the Horrendous Passion of the Lord), the ardent Prayer and the Betrayal.

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem, keeping its Apostolic tradition and custom, observed today the Sacred Washing of the feet at the Holy Courtyard of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection, in memory of the washing of the feet of the disciples by our Saviour Jesus Christ, during the Last Supper.

By this action, that is, the washing of the feet of His disciples, Christ showed to both His disciples and us who believe in Him, the perfect way, and also the way of the salvation of our souls, the outmost humility, as St. Paul preaches: “ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of 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. 2:8-11).

The condensation of Jesus Christ to the point of the Cross and burial is an answer to the contemporary man who boasts in his arrogance. "But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil" St. James the Brother of God says.

My beloved brothers, we are called by our Holy Church not to "sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5:6). Let us therefore say together with the hymn writer "O Christ God, Who didst gird Thyself with a towel and didst wash the disciples' feet: Wash clean the thought of our soul and gird us about with a spiritual bond, that we might do Thy commandments and sing the praise of Thy goodness", Amen, Have a Good Easter."

From Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/sz0XyLQ4x3U>

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LAZARUS SATURDAY IN BETHANY (2017)

On Saturday, 26th March/8th April 2017, the rising of Lazarus by our Lord Jesus Christ was celebrated by the Patriarchate in

Bethany. On this feast, according to the narrative of John the Evangelist, the Church commemorates the following event; Lazarus from Bethany, which is nearby Jerusalem, was a friend of Christ, and having become seriously ill, he died. Having arrived at his tomb, the Lord in His divine-human power resurrected Lazarus who had already been dead for four days, confirming thus to both His disciples and us our common Resurrection.

In memory of this event, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the day of the feast in the Holy Nunnery named after Lazarus' sisters Martha and Mary, the place where the Lord began walking with Martha and Mary heading for the tomb.

The Divine Liturgy was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with concelebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Demetrios of Lydda, visiting Reverend Metropolitans of the Russian Church George of Nizni Novgorod and Alexander of Chlemitski in Ukraine, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom the Priest of the Holy Monastery Archimandrite Epiphanius, and Hieromonks chanting, as well as the nuns of the Monastery amidst a fully crowded Church.

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

"O Christ, who art the Resurrection and the Life of man, standing by the tomb of Lazarus Thou hast confirmed our faith in Thy two natures, O forebearing Lord, proving that Thou wast born from the pure Virgin as both God and man. For as man Thou hast asked 'Where is he buried?' and as God by Thy life-giving command Thou hast raised him from the dead on the fourth day" the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble pilgrims,

Great and paradox is the miracle worked today at this holy place where our Lord Jesus Christ stood and Lazarus' sisters Martha and Mary welcomed Him. This great miracle is the resurrection from the dead of the holy and righteous friend of Christ Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, and whose memory we festively celebrate. And this is so, because Lazarus became the salvific preamble of our rebirth, our general resurrection in Christ, as the hymn writer says: "Giving us before Thy Passion an assurance of the general resurrection, Thou hast raised Lazarus from the dead, O Christ our God. Therefore, like the children, we also carry tokens of victory, and cry to Thee, the Conqueror of death: Hosanna in the highest; blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord".

Being with His disciples in Bethany, by the tomb of the buried Lazarus, whom He resurrected, eventhough he had been dead for four days, Christ proved that He is the resurrection and the life, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26).

Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ proved that He is perfect God and perfect man. In other words, He certified His two hypostatic natures, the divine and the human. He certified His undertaking of the human flesh by the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit, which He deified, absolving it (the flesh) from the corruption of death, that is, the corruption of sin.

By Lazarus' resurrection, it became known that Christ was the Son of God and God; and that he was resurrected, and there will be resurrection of the dead. For this reason the hymn writer proclaims: "Christ the joy of all, the truth, the light, the life, the resurrection of the world, in His love appeared to those on earth; and He became Himself the pattern of our resurrection, granting divine forgiveness unto all".

It is precisely this joy of the resurrection, which our Lord Jesus Christ revealed to the world, that we foretaste today, with our presence in Bethany, the town of Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary. The hymn writer says, "Today Bethany proclaims beforehand the Resurrection of Christ the Giver of Life, and it rejoices at the rising of Lazarus". And Bethany also conveyed the message of the coming of the King of Glory in Jerusalem according to Prophet Zacharias who said: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9).

Of course, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of our Saviour Jesus Christ is the One who encouraged the children of Jerusalem to cry aloud "Hosanna in the highest, Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.

Let us therefore my beloved brothers, prepare ourselves, so that just like the innocent children we mystically praise him with palm trees and branches and proclaim: Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest. And together with the Hymn writer let us say: "By the prayers of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, grant us worthy too, to witness Your Cross and Passion O Lord, and the glorious, and queen of the days, Resurrection of Your philanthropy" Amen. Happy Easter!"

The dismissal of the Divine Liturgy was followed by a procession to Lazarus' tomb, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Demetrios of Lydda, where the gospel narrative according to St. John the Evangelist on Lazarus' resurrection was read.

The Abbess of the Monastery Nun Eupraxia offered His Beatitude a reception and a meal to the Episcopal Entourage.

From Secretariat-General

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