

# DOXOLOGY ON THE NATIONAL CELEBRATION OF 25TH MARCH

At 10:30 am on Monday 14th/27th March 2017, a Doxology was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection, as a thanksgiving to our God, who fortified our nation in order to be liberated from the four hundred years of Turkish slavery; there was also a Deisis to God for the repose of the souls of our brothers and fathers who fought for their faith and country and died gloriously.

The Doxology was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and co-officiates were Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Hieromonks, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos with the participation in prayer of members of the Greek Community and the Greek Orthodox congregation.

After the Doxology the ascend to the Patriarchate followed, where His Beatitude gave the following address:

“Your Excellency Consul General of Greece, Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today’s anniversary of 25th March 1821 is a landmark not only to the glorious and long history of Hellenism and Romiosyni but also to the history of humanity. And this is so because the Christian nation of the Greeks, inspired by the eternal principles of the Gospel of the Crucified and Resurrected our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, was not in the least quailed by the sufferings it endured by the Ottoman slavery and tyranny. On the contrary, it remained faithful in the hope of resurrection; the resurrection which is inextricably linked

with freedom, which was granted as a gift by the creative power of God to His deified creature, the human being, as St. Paul preaches; "For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty" (Gal. 5:13).

To this "calling to liberty" were highlighted not only the holy martyrs of Church, but also the fighters of the 1821 revolution. This is moreover witnessed by the famous watchword of the revolution; " For the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the country".

Genuine and candid ministers of the fight for the faith and the country were distinguished among others, the great leaders and heroes of 1821, the Metropolitan Palaion Patron Germanos, Theodoros Kolokotronis, Makrygiannis as well as members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

We make reference to the sacrificial to the blood contribution to the fight for faith and freedom of these great men, because our contemporary era is challenged by the ill and libertine spirit of globalization, that is opposed to the sacred command of the first martyr of freedom Rigas Feraios, which is directed especially to the young people; "Do not put you hope in foreigners and adulterate sons for Greece to be saved..."

The heroic fight of the Greek Revolution for the faith and the country in 1821 propounds the moral and indelible values which distinguish the uniqueness of the human being and the purpose for his existence. And this is so because a specific characteristic of man is the spirit that lives in him (2 Tim. 1:14), that is, his soul. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mat. 16:26) says the Lord.

Our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, sensing its duty, partakes with its whole mind to this festal memorial for our noble nation's rebirth from its ashes, and thus came to the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection in full participation, where they offered a thanksgiving Doxology to our Crucified and Resurrected

Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ, for the divine benefaction towards our nation. They also prayed fervently for the eternal repose in the land of the living for the souls of those who heroically fought for their faith and country and gloriously suffered a martyr's death in the sacred fight for the noble nation of the Roman Orthodox people.

Through this celebration today, our Holy Church of Jerusalem, boasting in the Lord for its contribution as well as the participation of its faithful children, clergy and laity for this fight for freedom from the conqueror's slavery, dutifully venerates their sacred memory and gratefully honours the victorious triumph of the 1821 revolution of the nation.

For all these, allow Us to raise Our glass and exclaim in thanksgiving;

Vive 25th March 1821!

Vive the noble and royal nation of the Romans!

Vive Greece!

Vive the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!"

Consequently the Consul General of Greece gave the following address:

"Your Beatitude, Most Reverend Fathers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We celebrate today the Revolution of our Nation in 1821. With a feeling of national pride we remember the most glorious page of our contemporary history and honour those who with their grandiose rebellion, which began on 25th March 1821, led the fight for all, and managed to throw off the Ottoman yoke through a long and unequal confrontation, full of sacrifices and indescribable sufferings, and to put an end to the four dark centuries of foreign sovereignty and secure the outmost gift of freedom for the generations that followed.

With today's celebration we ought to remember those elements which made the success of the Greek Revolution possible, which always remain contemporary, and especially when our Country faces great challenges and is surrounded by old and new dangers; the importance of faith in the righteous fight which bears boldness and determination, enough to overcome the greatest obstacles; of fortitude of soul which ensures endurance and physical strength that are necessary provisions for every long and arduous effort, and of course, of the national togetherness and unity of all the national powers in the common effort.

We ought not to forget that the national revolution in 1821 was made possible because Hellenism managed to keep integral its identity, national consciousness, values, and the desire for freedom during the long and tenebrous years of the Turkish occupation. To all these, the most significant role was of course that of the Church, which became depositary of our values, preserving the language, the Christian Faith and the hope of the nation's Resurrection. Thanks to the Church, the Roman's expectation to be liberated never abandoned them.

Moreover, before the time of the Revolution drew near, clergy men, such as Saint Cosmas Aitolos, worked tirelessly to awaken the people's consciousness with the educational message of the nation's revolution, and quite often, paid the price with their lives. When the time of the Revolution came, the Greeks fought for their country as much as they did for their Faith. A multitude of clergy men participated in the battlefields and shed their blood.

The role of the Expatriate Greeks was also important for both the preparation and the positive outcome of the Revolution. The members of the Society of Friends (Philiki Etairia) originating from big cities of Europe, had a significant participation in the initial planning, organization and material/financial support of the Revolution, while highly educated members of the expatriates conveyed the ideas of

Enlightenment and demonstrated their relevance to Hellenism, thus giving a contemporary ideological substance to the Fight, inspiring the Fighters and giving expression to their patriotic spirit; at the same time, they contributed to the projection of the Revolution towards the international common opinion of the time and the promotion of a favourable attitude towards Greece.

March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1821, remains for all of us the foundation of our national hypostasis and the capstone of the Nation's contemporary history. The heroism, self-denial and determination of the Revolution Fighters to have a free, law-abiding and democratic Country, especially now amidst the most adverse international conjuncture, inspire us, but simultaneously bind us to live up to their standards, and just as they did, we should also rise to the occasion and work together in unity for the overcoming of the obstacles, no matter how insurmountable they appear to be. Greeks worldwide and especially those of the Holy Land, headed by the venerable Church of Zion, are a precious source of inspiration and strength in this effort.

Today's celebration, the anniversary of the national regeneration should be a source of hope and expectation that our own efforts to overcome a long lasting financial crisis will succeed. We ought at the same time to consider our duty and responsibility towards the Nation, recalling the words of General Makrygiannis "we are in "we" and not in "I".

Vive 25th March 1821!

Vive Greece!"

The ceremony ended by honouring His Beatitude.

From Secretariat-General

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# **HIS BEATITUDE'S THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM NAME DAY (2017)**

On Saturday, 12th/25th March 2017, the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was celebrated (transferred from Wednesday) by the Patriarchate. His Beatitude bears the name of one of the Holy Forty Martyrs of the lake of Sabastia in Pontus, who celebrate on 9th March.

## **1. In the evening**

On Friday evening the feast began with the reading of the 9th Hour at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen.

Afterwards, bells tolling, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood descended at the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection. There, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and the Hagiotaphite Fathers venerated the Holy Deposition Shrine and the Holy Sepulchre, and then having put on His cloak, He gave the blessing in the Catholicon and Great Vespers began, with the Great Entrance and the Blessing of Bread. Meanwhile, the Archbishops of the Holy Synod venerated the Horrendous Golgotha and the Deacons performed the incense procedure around the Shrines. At the end of Vespers, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood headed for the Patriarchate quarters.

## **2. On the Day of the Feast**

On Saturday morning, 12th/25th March 2017, after the descend at the Church of the Resurrection and the veneration of the

Holy Deposition and the Holy Sepulchre, His Beatitude was dressed in His cloak and entered the Catholicon, blessed and went up on the Throne, and the procedure of the prayers to receive the blessing from both the Priests and His Beatitude followed, while the Choir Leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection was chanting festal hymns.

Once His Beatitude and the Archbishops were dressed in their liturgical vestments, the Divine Liturgy began in the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, led by His Beatitude, with concelebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia, and the Most Reverend Archbishops: Alexios of Tiberias, Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Nectarios of Anthedona, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, and Arab-speaking Presbyters of the Patriarchate, the Hierodeacons Eulogios, Anastasios and Archdeacon Mark. Singing were the choir leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the Consul Mr. Koenis, other members of the Greek Consulate and many pilgrims.

After the Holy Eucharist and the Dismissal, a Doxology for His Beatitude's feast took place at the centre of Catholicon, with the participation of the concelebrants Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Hieromonks. At the end of the Doxology, the Patriarchal Entourage headed for the Patriarchate. There at the Reception Hall, Geronda Secretary-General addressed His Beatitude as follows:

*Address of Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina on His Beatitude's our Father and*

*Patriarch of Jerusalem Name Day*

*H.B. Theophilos III*

*9th March 2017*

*Your Beatitude, Father and Master,*

*The Memory of the Holy Forty Martyrs, who suffered cold and other similar tortures for their confession of Christ in the lake of Sebastia in Pontus, is celebrated by Church today, in the beginning of March, and in the middle of Great Lent. This feast is before us today, as a strong hortatory challenge and encouraging reinforcement for the continuation of our spiritual struggle towards a worthily participation in the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*For the Mother of Churches and the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in it, the memory of these Great and Holy Forty Martyrs is associated with the feast of Your Holy Beatitude's Name Day, as you God-lovingly bear the name of one of them, the Holy Martyr Theophilos.*

*For this double occasion of the memory of the Holy Forty Martyrs and Your Name Day, the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist was celebrated, and a thanksgiving Doxology was sang in the middle of the earth, where our God worked our salvation and where the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection stands, with the participation of all the members of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, the Clergy and laity from near and afar places belonging to the jurisdiction of our Patriarchate.*

*Continuing the prayer we started in the Temple, for Your Beatitude's health and longevity, we conclude now in this historic Hall of the Throne, and express all that is worthy, demure and praising, as proven by Your works, that befit You.*

*And we commence by saying that Your Beatitude's distinguishing pastoral concern, care and diligence for our Greek-Orthodox*



*Arab-speaking congregation has been once again unceasing, manifested at Your pastoral visits either at the feasts with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the preaching of the Divine word, or by providing financial aid on different occasions of need, according to the measure and the ability of the Patriarchate. On this field, with the financial aid of the Patriarchate, we celebrated recently the inauguration of the Holy Church of St. George of the border Community of Pkea in north Israel, and the suitable for it Priest was ordained. Caring for the Arab-speaking congregation, Your Beatitude has recently started the procedure for the operation of the Joint Council, an institution which specifies the participation limits of laity in matters concerning the Patriarchate.*

*The places of worship and estate rights of our Patriarchate were likewise protected and secured, as in the cases of the property of the Monastery of St. Theodosios, in the surrounding area of St. Savvas' Lavra, which is a no construction area, and in the Metochion of Gethsemane opposite the Church of the Resurrection, which was in danger by the treacherous and illegally occupying the neighbouring guesthouse Israeli settlers. In order to safeguard these property rights of the Patriarchate, large sums of money were paid to court and lawyers' fees.*

*The humanitarian activity of our Patriarchate was made manifest again in practice, by the third visit of Your Beatitude in the Syrian refugees' camp in Zaatar in Jordan, where humanitarian help prepared by the Patriarchate's office in Amman, was offered.*

*All the above, Your Beatitude, took place while for more than one year, lying on Your shoulders, was the responsibility and the care in both theory and practice of the work of the restoration, conservation and rehabilitation project of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, according to the study of the Interdisciplinary Team of the N.T.U.A. under the coordination of the present with us today, Professor Antonia*

*Moropoulou, with the financial contribution of noble donators, whose names are in the book of life. This work, is the capping stone of Your works, as a difficult task was made easy, and what was impossible was made possible, for which Your Beatitude first of all, and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood who cooperated with willingness and devotion with You, are able to boast modestly, for they have added a fixative and sustaining stone to the pre-existing work of Komnenos and our Fathers, as an eternal mark of the religious peace-making and cultural mission of our blessed nation in the history and glory of the Resurrected from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Sincerely congratulating Your Beatitude for these, I raise my glass on behalf of the Brotherhood, wishing you undiminished health for as many years as possible, peace, solidarity and governmental power, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, towards the creation of more good works for the benefit of our Holy Congregation and the glory of our Trinitarian worshiped God. So be it."*

His Beatitude was also addressed by His Exchellency the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, as follows:

*"Your Beatitude, Most Reverend Fathers, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*Today's feast is of special significance to all of us, as the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the noble Congregation, among which are those who serve at the Greek Consulate, honour the Name Day of the Head of the Zion Church, the Mother of Churches, His Holy Beatitude's the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.*

*It is a special honour as well as joy for me to be present at this feast for the first time since the undertaking of my duties in Jerusalem. On this occasion, I would like, Your Beatitude, to convey on behalf of the Greek Government, its unwavering confidence and support towards the Patriarchate,*

*the Hagiographite Brotherhood and You personally, together with the recognition and our admiration for the multi-task work that you, tirelessly and with self-denial perform. Allow me to express our most sincere and heartfelt wishes for health, longevity and strength, so that you continue to accomplish Your important mission.*

*Only a few days after the bright ceremony of the completion of the restoration project of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, which inspired admiration and deep respect to Christians worldwide, we are given the opportunity to recognize that this project would have never been materialized without Your historic initiative, Your vision and sense of great responsibility for the protection of the exaltation of the shrines, which as You Yourself emphasized, reconciles peoples, nations and cultures, and constitutes an eloquent witness of our common human nature, our common destiny.*

*Your Beatitude,*

*The sincere disposition for understanding and reconciliation that You demonstrate and systematically cultivate, not only for the relationship with the other Doctrines and Religions, but also in the broader reconciliation and peace-making effort in this unsettled region, adds moral authority and status to the Jerusalem Patriarchate, rendering it an institution of moderation and stability, amidst an era of uncertainty, instability and reorganizations which seem to favour fanaticism, intolerance and tensions.*

*Jerusalem Patriarchate is certainly a stable point of reference for the Greeks worldwide and symbolizes our long presence in the Holy Land, while it is an indestructible bond of friendship and cooperation with other nations, as it also is representative of the Orthodox Christians in the region, preserving precious traditions and conveying the Ecumenical message of Orthodoxy to all destinations. For all of us, the Holy Institution is the trustee of the most important Holy*

*Shrines of Christianity, which are being defended with devotion and self-denial by the Hagiotaphite Fathers.*

*Your Beatitude,*

*Both the Greek Government and the faithful Greeks surround You with love and devotion. Officers and others gather at the Patriarchate as pilgrims, as we witnessed a few days ago, proving the significance they attach to Your work, and the work of the Hagiotaphite Fathers.*

*Among them, we also pray that You may have health, strength and longevity for the benefit of the Patriarchate, the Brotherhood, Your Greek Orthodox Congregation, Orthodoxy and peace in the Holy Land. Many Happy Returns."*

His Beatitude was also likewise addressed by representatives of other Orthodox Churches and congregations, which are shown at the rendering of thanks of His Beatitude at His address below:

*"O wondrous prizewinners, with minds staunch with courage, as ye endured the pains of martyrdom nobly, ye passed through fire and water, O ye valiant men, coming out into the breadth of eternal salvation; ye gained the inheritance of the Kingdom of Heaven..." the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.*

*Your Excellency Consul-General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,*

*Reverend Fathers and Brothers,*

*Noble Christians and pilgrims,*

*"Let us rejoice in the Lord, let us shout with jubilation unto God our Saviour" (Psalm 94:1); for He has granted us the Communion of His Heavenly and Immortal Mysteries at the celebration of the bloodless sacrifice at the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection, on the memory of the Holy and Great Forty Martyrs of Sebastia, as well as the Great Martyr Theophilos,*

*our guardian and advocate.*

*These Saints were distinguished for their unanimous and wholehearted confession of their faith to crucified and resurrected from the dead Christ in front of their persecutors, the idolaters, who did not succeed in dissuading the Martyrs. For this reason, being naked in mid-winter, they were condemned to spend the night in the middle of the lake by the city of Sebastia, where they suffered a martyrs' death as their hymn writer says: "The Martyrs, O Christ God, esteemed the lake as Paradise and the cold as warmth. The threats of the tyrants did not affright their mind, nor did the noble Saints fear the assaults of torments, since they possessed the Cross as a divine weapon; for with it, as mighty men, they put the enemy to flight. Wherefore, they have also received the crown of grace".*

*The Sacred Memory of these Holy and Great Martyrs is especially honoured by our Holy Orthodox Church, and this is done during the period of the Great Lent. And this is so because the Holy Martyrs went through fire and water and entered the Kingdom of Heaven, fulfilling by their works the prophetic word of Prophet David: "We went through fire and water and Thou didst bring us out into refreshment" (Psalm 65:12).*

*Partakers of this experience were the friends and preachers of the Gospel of love and righteousness and of the light of the salvific truth of Christ, the Holy Apostles and all who faithfully followed them, the Holy Martyrs, teachers and God-bearers Prelates of our Church.*

*Our Mediocrity, bearing the name of Martyr Theophilos, who participated in the chorea of the Holy Forty Martyrs of Christ's love, we render glory and thanks to the Holy Consubstantial and Life-Giving and Undivided Trinity on this Sacred Feast of our spiritual rebirth in Christ, but also for our calling to the Apostolic and Institutional position, of*

*the Head of the Most Holy Church of Jerusalem on the one hand, and on the other hand, of the Hegoumen of the Order of Monks of the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.*

*Today's festal day, amidst the reverend and distinguished members of the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, Archbishops, Hieromonks, Priests, Deacons and Monks, as well as Clergy of our brotherly Holy Orthodox Churches, and the participation of the faithful Christians of our Congregation, grants us with a great honour and an even greater responsibility "as those who must give account to the Lord" according to St. Paul's command: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).*

*"For an honour to the Martyr is the imitation of a Martyr" St. Chrysostom preaches. This means that the way by which Christ's Martyr is praised, is the steadfast imitation of his faith and virtue during his life in Christ, by us who festively celebrate his Sacred Memory.*

*The blood of the martyrdom in Christ of the Holy Forty Martyrs and of the Holy Martyr Theophilos with them, calls all of us today to vigilance, so that the light of the witness of the sons of Christ's light may not be put out. "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thes. 5:17-19).*

*We therefore say this, because the darkness of the persecutors of Christ has made its appearance in our contemporary era with the form of the most demonic terrorism which plagues humanity as a whole.*

*Let us thus entreat the Holy Martyrs who have parressia before God the Father, so that by their prayers and the intercession*

*of the Most Blessed our Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, we may bear witness in this world of the martyrria of love, peace and righteousness of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and we may be found worthy to celebrate the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*For all these, we pray for all who have been praying with us and have honoured this feast, that you may have the strength from on high, the grace of the Holy Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing from God. We express our heartfelt thanks to those who addressed Us, Geronda Secretary-General, Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy Synod and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Russia, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Romania, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Joppa, the Most Reverend Archimandrite Philotheos, who spoke on behalf of our congregation in Acre – Ptolemaida, Reverend Fr. Charalambos Bansour, who spoke on behalf of St. James Cathedral, Professor Mrs. Moropoulou, the Zion Patriarchal School Director and teacher, Mr. Nikolaos Souliotis, and all participants in this feast.*

*To the health of every one of us!"*

The reception at the Reception Hall of the Patriarchate was followed by a festal meal. The above mentioned Church Services were broadcast live by the Jerusalem Patriarchate radio station.

From Secretariat-General

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# **REMARKS OF H.H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AT THE RECEPTION AFTER THE RE- DEDICATION OF THE SACRED EDICULE**

22 March 2017

"Your All- Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew,

Your Paternity, Father Francesco,

Your Beatitude, Patriarch Nourhan,

Your Excellency, Archbishop Pierre Battista,

Your Excellency, Archbishop Lazzarotto, the Papal Nuncio,

Beloved Fellow Heads of the Churches of the Holy Land,

Your Excellency, the Prime Minister of Greece,

Respected Members of the Civic, Governmental, and Diplomatic  
Services,



Esteemed Professor Moropoulou and the Members of the  
Scientific Team,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Monastics,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we celebrate this historic occasion, we remember the words  
of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel of St. Matthew:

*Let your light so shine forth before others,*

*so that they may see you good works*

*and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

(Matthew 5:16)

With the renovation and re-dedication of the Sacred Edicule,  
the world sees the light of the spiritual identity of  
Jerusalem, a light that is itself a reflection of the  
Uncreated Light that shines from the Holy Tomb.

It is a great honour for the Church of Jerusalem to host this  
historic event, and to welcome guests from our City, our  
region, and around the world. Together with our Brothers in  
Christ, His Paternity Father Francesco and His Beatitude  
Patriarch Nourhan, along with His Excellency Archbishop Pierre  
Battista, we are witness to this day, which is a special day  
not only for us, but for Jerusalem and the communities that  
make up the unique and extraordinary multi-cultural, multi-  
ethnic, and multi-religious landscape of the Holy Land.

We hope and pray that the restoration of the Sacred Edicule  
will be an encouragement to restore the hope and peace of our

mutual respect and co-existence. By showing that the Sacred Edicule can be shared harmoniously by all, we are a witness that Jerusalem also can be shared harmoniously by Jews, Christians, Muslims and all people of good will.

Allow us to welcome His Excellency the Prime Minister of Greece, who will give a few remarks. And now allow us to introduce Professor Moropoulou, who will make a presentation (see [https://www.dropbox.com/s/8wqg6lilqozkg6e/09\\_2\\_Completion\\_Presentation\\_March\\_2017\\_EN.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/8wqg6lilqozkg6e/09_2_Completion_Presentation_March_2017_EN.pdf?dl=0) link: )

Finally, allow us to repeat here on behalf of all of us our profound gratitude and appreciation for all who by the generous gift of their financial support, expertise, and prayers, have made the impossible possible, in the restoration of the Sacred Edicule.

*And now to God who is able to strengthen us*

*according to the Gospel*

*and the proclamation of Jesus Christ*

*to the only wise God,*

*through Jesus Christ*

*be glory forever.*

(Romans 16:25,27)

Thank you.”

From Secretariat-General

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# **THE CEREMONY MARKING THE COMPLETION OF THE RESTORATION PROJECT OF THE SACRED EDICULE OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE**

On Wednesday morning, 9th/22nd March 2017, the ceremony marking the completion of the restoration and rehabilitation of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre took place in front of the Sacred Edicule. This project began one year ago, by the initiative of Jerusalem Patriarchate and the agreement among the Christian Communities, the Franciscans and the Armenians; the research study and the work were undertaken by the Interdisciplinary Team of the National Technical University of Athens (N.T.U.A.) under the coordination of Professor Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou.

Present at this ceremony was His Excellency the Prime Minister of Greece Mr. Alexis Tsipras, who had visited His Beatitude at the Patriarchate earlier that morning, Ministers of Greece, Mrs. Mika Ertegün, Commissioner of the World Monuments Fund, major and minor donators for the completion of this project, His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who had also visited His Beatitude at the Patriarchate earlier, Representatives from Mount Athos, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki, Representatives from the State of Israel, such as Mr. Yacoub Salame and Cesar Marjieh, the Israeli Jerusalem Police Chief Mr. Yoram Levi, Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. Tsahi Hanekby; present were also, as invited, the majority of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, led by their Hegoumen, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem

Theophilos.

The ceremony began with the chanting of Paschal hymns by the choir leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos and his team and “The angel cried to her that is full of grace...” immediately after the address of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem (see [link:https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/03/22/30993](https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/03/22/30993)) . His Beatitude’s address was followed by the addresses of the Custos of the Holy Land Fr. Francesco Patton, the Armenian Patriarch in Jerusalem His Beatitude Nourhan, the former Custos of the Holy Land and at present the Latin Apostolic Administrator Fr. Pierre Battista Pizzaballa.

An address was given by His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (to be posted shortly).

Messages were also read by the Pope’s delegate Cardinal Leonardo Sandri and the Catholicos Patriarch of Armenia H.H. Garegin.

At the end of the ceremony the invitees proceeded to the Patriarchate. There His Beatitude gave the following address (see [link:https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/03/22/31041](https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/03/22/31041)) and introduced the Professor of the N.T.U. and coordinator of the project Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou, for the presentation of the technical aspects of the project on screen. The presentation in English is as follows:

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Consequently, His Beatitude honoured Mr. Ivan Savvidis with the Supreme Distinction of the Great Cross bearer of the Holy

Sepulchre, and the owners of the Aegean Airlines Mr. Theodoros and Mr. Eutychios Vassilakis with that of the Grand Commander of the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

The ceremony ended with the address of the Prime Minister of Greece Mr. Alexis Tsipras.

Concluding all the above, the ceremony ended and all guests were invited to a fasting reception buffet, giving thanks to God, Who deemed us worthy to achieve the completion of such a project.

From Secretariat-General

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# **ADDRESS OF H.H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AT THE CEREMONY MARKING THE COMPLETION OF THE RESTORATION PROJECT OF THE SACRED EDICULE**

22 March 2017

Your All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew,  
Your Paternity, Father Francesco,  
Your Beatitude, Patriarch Nourhan,  
Your Excellency, Archbishop Pierbattista,  
Your Excellency, Archbishop Lazzarotto, the Pappal Nuncio,  
Beloved Fellow Heads of the Churches of the Holy Land,  
Respected Members of the Civic, Governmental, and Diplomatic  
Services,  
Esteemed Professor Moropoulou and the Members of the  
Scientific Team,  
Your Eminences,  
Your Graces,  
Dear Monastics,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we gather here at the holiest of the Holy Places on this  
providential occasion, we recall the words of the Psalmist:

*How great are your works, O Lord!*

(Psalm 95:2)

Let us hear again the account from the Gospel of Saint  
Matthew:

*Joseph took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in a clean linen  
cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in  
the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb*

*and went away.*

(Matthew 27:59-60)

We stand today in this same place. And we give thanks to the Triune God for having given us this opportunity to bring to completion the renovation and conservation of the Sacred Edicule of the Most Holy and Life-Giving Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first time in over two centuries the Sacred Edicule has been restored for its veneration by the faithful.

We do not simply celebrate the renovation of a structure today. In this holy moment we give our common Christian witness – *our martyria* – to the Gospel of the Resurrection. For this sacred monument, which was hewn in the rock, contained within itself not simply the crucified body of Jesus of Nazareth; it embraced our whole human nature, which was assumed by the Incarnate Divine Logos, who is Christ, the light to the world of hope, love, reconciliation, peace and truth.

We praise the holy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ for the co-operation of the three Communities of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate, the Franciscan Custody, and the Armenian Patriarchate, who share the *Diakonia* of this Holy Place. We give thanks also for the common witness that is ours here with our brotherly Christian Communities who also share in worship in this place, as well as our brothers and sisters of the great Abrahamic faiths, many of whom, faithful, come here as pilgrims.

All this is the evidence that this rededication of the Sacred Edicule has an ecumenical significance for the whole human family, for this is a place that brings together peoples of all nations, all ethnicities, and all cultures, and it is an eloquent testimony that we share a common humanity and a common destiny. This restoration of the Sacred Edicule is not

only a gift to our Holy Land, but to the whole world.

The unity that is demonstrated in this restoration, must be an inspiration to the peoples of our region, especially in times when our world is experiencing unfathomable difficulties and confusion. And this unity of purpose will be a sign of hope for future generations, who will in their turn, be called upon to give spiritual leadership and guidance. Throughout the ages, the Holy Tomb has been at the heart of Jerusalem's enduring vocation, and we pray that the Sacred Edicule may always give spiritual nourishment to the identity of Jerusalem as the shared home of all humanity.

We take this blessed opportunity to express our thanks to our brothers, His Paternity the Franciscan Custos and His Beatitude the Armenian Patriarch, as well as to His Excellency the Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate, for the unprecedented fraternal collaboration that has resulted in today's rededication.

We are grateful for the presence among us of His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, and of His Excellency the Prime Minister of Greece, other civic and governmental representatives, and guests from here and around the world, who are with us for this celebration.

We must also thank all those whose financial donations, both large and small, have made this project possible. We would like to mention in particular His Majesty King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, who was the first donor to this project, as well as His Excellency, President Mahmoud Abbas. We thank also for their generosity Ms. Mica Ertegun, Mr. Jack Shear, and the World Monuments Fund; Mr. Boris Socol, Mr. Alexander Feldman, Mr. Vadym Nowynskyi, Mr. Igor Alexeevitch Altushkin, Mr. Bashar Masri, and Mr. Issa Audeh. We are deeply grateful to Aegean Airlines for their considerable benefaction.



We also offer our profound gratitude to Professor Moropoulou and her team from the National Technical University of Athens, who undertook this delicate and complicated project, and executed it in a professionally scientific manner.

We wish to express our thanks also to the National Geographic Society for their role in documenting the various stages of the renovation.

May the uncreated Light that shines forth from this Holy Tomb enlighten us all, and may Christ our true God, who is risen from the dead, save us and bring us peace.

Amen.

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## **SUNDAY OF THE ADORATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS AT THE PATRIARCHATE (2017)**

On the 3rd Sunday of Great Lent, 6th/19th March 2017, the feast of the Adoration of the Precious and Life-giving Cross was celebrated by the Patriarchate, as established by the Church, so that by the Sacred Cross of Christ, through which we have been saved and deified, the faithful are strengthened in their struggle of fasting, in order to reach the Holy Easter, meaning the participation in the Cross and Resurrection of the Lord.

The celebration was observed according to the rules of the Typikon of the Church.

## 1. In the Evening

The Service began with the reading of the 9th Hour at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos at 1:45pm on Saturday. At 2:00pm, bells tolling, the descend to the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection followed. Upon arrival, the veneration of the Deposition Shrine and the Holy Sepulchre took place, by His Beatitude, the Archbishops and Hieromonks.

Once His Beatitude put on His mantle, went to the Catholicon and gave the blessing, the bells started tolling, while the Archbishops and the members of the Synod venerated the Horrendous Golgotha and the deacons performed the incense procedure around the shrines.

Great Vespers began immediately, with the Great Entrance and the Blessing of Bread, at the singing of the Choir Leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos on the right, and Mr. Alvanos on the left, at the presence of many contrite and pious faithful people.

At the end of Vespers, the Patriarchal Entourage headed for the Patriarchate.

## 2. On the Day of the Feast

At 7:00am on Sunday, the Patriarchal Entourage left the Patriarchate and reaching the Church of the Resurrection, venerated the Holy Deposition and the Holy Sepulchre. His Beatitude then blessed everybody at the Catholicon and the bells started tolling while the Priests received the blessing by His Beatitude. His Beatitude also prayed to receive the blessing and entering the Holy Altar the brotherly osculation among the Archbishops followed. Having ended this procedure, the Divine Liturgy began at the Holy Sepulchre, led by His Beatitude. Concelebrants were the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops, Theophanis of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios

of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Nectarios of Anthedon, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis and the visiting Bishop Innocent of the Moscow Patriarchate, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos. Singing were the Choir Leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos on the right, and Mr. Alvanos on the left, at the presence of a big crowd of praying faithful from Greece, Russia, Romania and Cyprus.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the procession around the Holy Sepulchre and the Shrines began, led by the Sacred Cross with the Sacred Wood, with the singing of the festal troparia of the day.

Upon ending the procession, the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate where His Beatitude gave the following address:

“In Paradise of old the tree stripped me bare; for by giving me its fruit to eat, the enemy brought in death. But now the Tree of the Cross that clothes men with the garment of life has been set up on earth, and the whole world is filled with boundless joy. Beholding it venerated, O ye people, let us with one accord raise in faith our cry to God: His house is full of glory.”

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

Today the Holy Church of Christ and all the world with it, are filled with joy because the image of the life-giving Cross of our Saviour Jesus Christ has been seen to be venerated.

Today, the hymn writer says, “The Church is revealed as a

second Paradise, having a tree of life, as the first Paradise of old: by touching Your Cross, O Lord, we share in immortality!”

The significance of the Sacred Cross in the salvific mystery of Divine Providence has been vividly expressed by the former prosecutor of the Cross, the Great Apostle Paul who says: “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14).

Interpreting these words, St. Chrysostom says: “And what is the boasting for the Cross? That Christ took upon Himself the form of a slave, and suffered so much, for me the slave, the enemy, the ungrateful; but so much He loved me, that He even gave up Himself for me.”

In other words, the crucified passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is precisely what made the world enter into the infinite love of God, peace, righteousness, reconciliation, but also condemnation, according to the witness of St. John the Theologian: “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). And the light that has come into the world is no other but the word of the Cross, for which St. Paul says: “For 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).

To this power of the Sacred Cross we become partakers my dear brothers and sisters, through the veneration of the Wood of Life, in this very place where our Saviour Christ was Crucified and Resurrected.

Spiritually embracing the power of the Live-giving Cross today, we are called to continue the good striving of abstinence. Let us therefore say together with the hymn writer: “What shall we offer You, Christ, for You have given

us Your precious Cross to venerate: where Your holy blood was shed, and Your flesh was fixed by nails: we kiss it with love, giving thanks to You!" Amen.

Wishing you many happy returns and a happy Easter."

All the above mentioned services were broadcast live by the Jerusalem Patriarchate radio station.

From Secretariat-General

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## **THE FEAST OF SAINT GERASIMOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Friday 4th/17th March, 2017, the feast of St. Gerasimos of the Jordan was observed by the Patriarchate, at the Holy Monastery which is named after him, located in the desert of Jordan, near the banks of the river in the Dead Sea.

St. Gerasimos founded this Monastery coming to the Holy Land from Lycia of Asia Minor, guiding thousands of monks and laity in the Orthodox life, which confesses Jesus Christ in one hypostasis and two natures.

This Holy Feast was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of

Jerusalem Theophilos, who celebrated the Divine Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts, with concelebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, and the Most Reverend Archbishop Methodios of Tabor, and the praying Archbishops of the Patriarchate, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophylactos of Jordan, the Most Reverend Archbishop Demetrios of Lydda, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis; concelebrants also were many Hagiotaphite Hieromonks of whom first was Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Hierodeacons and local Priests, at the singing of the Choir Leader of the Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos in Greek, Arabic, Russian and Romanian. Present was a great congregation of monks, nuns and laity, friends of the Holy Monastery and local people, from Galilee and the occupied Jericho areas, as well as pilgrims from Greece and Cyprus.

To this massive crowd of faithful His Beatitude preached the Divine Word as follows:

“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” (1Cor. 15:45-49), the Great St. Paul preaches.

Beloved Brothers in Christ,

Noble Christian pilgrims,

The desert of Jordan rejoices today on the festal memory of its holy child, Gerasimos the God-bearer and spiritual Father

of all who respectfully honour him. Having gone through the ladder of divine virtues, he was deemed worthy of the contemplation of God, by Whom he became wondrous.

Our Father among the Saints Gerasimos became indeed wondrous, because in this deserted land, where his Holy Monastery lies, he managed to renounce the image of his earthly man – the man of corruption and sin – by his ascetic striving, and he put on the image of the heavenly man, meaning the incarnate our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Gerasimos therefore accomplished this, because he put into action the words of God-inspired Paul who said: “And as we have borne the image of the earthy (Adam), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (Adam)” (1 Cor. 15:47-49). This according to St. Methodios means that “the image of the earthly man” is what is written in the Holy Bible “for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen.3:19). While on the other hand, the image of the heavenly (Adam) is the resurrection from the dead and the embracing of incorruptibility.

With reference to the above, St. Paul says: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Romans 6:3-5).

St. Gerasimos urges us with the words of St. Paul to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). This my beloved ones means that we too, as members of the Church, “have been buried with Christ through his baptism, which has made us partakers of his death, so that just like Christ was risen from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, likewise, we shall be risen in

the new virtuous and holy life, and conform our behaviour, or should I rather say, our conduct of living, according to the demands of our Christian faith". It is precisely to this new way of living, that is, in Christ, that our Father Gerasimos became a guide to many people, imitating St. John the Baptist and St. Paul. As the hymn writer says, St. Gerasimos shone forth like Lucifer in the darkness of life and guided people to the light of the state of Angels.

Indeed, the life and works of St. Gerasimos shine forth in today's darkness of confusion and in the prevailing worldly disorder, like a bright star, emerging from the richness of the grace of the Holy Spirit. This very richness of the Holy Spirit is what our Holy Orthodox Church offers, especially at the present time of the Great Lent, when we are called to tame and bridle the spirit, or should I rather say, the passions of the flesh. As the hymn writer says; the King of all, reign over the passions and the lusts of the flesh and through fasting and toiling make us worthy to bless Thee unto the ages.

Through fasting, that is, abstinence, St. Gerasimos became heir to the Kingdom of God and to the fruits of the Holy Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit" St. Paul says, "is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:22-24). Therefore, those who indeed belong to Christ, have mortified the earthly man together with his passions and desires. St. Peter teaches that by the power of Christ we have received exceeding great and precious promises, so that urged and strengthened by them we may become partakers of the divine nature. For this reason he admonishes in his 1<sup>st</sup> letter; be holy and partakers of the life of Christ, having become exempted from the corruption of the world, which is caused by the sinful desires. "That by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption



that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

Our Father among the Saints Gerasimos accomplished to be partaker of the divine nature, meaning the participation in the gifts and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, by his fasting and avoidance, or better say, exemption from evil habitudes as well as actions and thoughts.

In other words, my dear ones, our Father Gerasimos urges each one of us by his own example, to consider on the one hand the purpose of our Christian identity, and on the other hand, to be primarily concerned with the salvation of our souls. And this is so because the man's soul carries within the image of God, and as St. Peter teaches, "the end of the faith (is) the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:9).

As for us my dear brothers and sisters, let us entreat our Father among the Saints Gerasimos and the Mother of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Most-Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary to surround us with her power in the time of abstinence as she is the given support of the faithful. And you, St. Gerasimos, being in the presence of Christ, beseech Him in favour of those who honour your memory. So that we may be found worthy to go through the period of Great Lent and be able to venerate and worship Christ's Holy Resurrection. Amen.

After the Divine Liturgy there was a procession around the Holy Monastery with the participation of the congregation, led by the Scouts, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos.

Once the procession was completed, the renovator and preserver of the Holy Monastery, who has turned it into an Oasis and also offers a social work in it, offered a fasting meal to the Patriarchal Entourage and all visitors at the refectory.

From Secretariat-General

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# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AT THE CEREMONY OF THE 70TH INCORPORATION ANNIVERSARY OF THE DODECANESE WITHIN GREECE**

In order to participate at the festivities on the 70th anniversary of the incorporation of the Dodecanese within Greece, and the presentation of the restoration project of the Holy Edicule, invited by the Mayor of Rhodes Mr. Fotios Chatzidiakos, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, arrived at Rhodes airport from Jerusalem by Aegean air, escorted by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Athens Archimandrite Damianos and Archdeacon Mark, at 10:00 a.m. on Monday 21st February/6th March 2017.

Therein, His Beatitude was received by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Rhodes, the Mayor of Rhodes Mr. Fotios Chatzidiakos and other official members of Rhodes.

At noon of the same day, His Beatitude attended the ceremony of proclaiming the President of the Greek Democracy Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos an Honorary Citizen of Rhodes. This honorary distinction and a copy of the keys of Rhodes were offered to the President of the Greek Democracy by the Mayor of Rhodes, followed by the latter's address, that the President is deservedly awarded, as he is the protector of the rights of Rhodes and all Dodecanese, and because as a lecturer and minister of the Legal Science, he had said that "The Legal Science is the corrective function of social injustice" and that "Democracy is the constitution of measures and analogies".

Replying, Mr. President thanked Mr. Mayor for the honour appointed to him as an individual by the historic island of Rhodes. He also said that by the 1947 treaty between Greece and Italy, Greece was granted the full sovereignty of the island of Rhodes, all the Dodecanese and the neighbouring islets, and not only the rights of sovereignty, but also the obligation of the defence fortification of Rhodes, from both manifested and impending challenges; and this is for the sake of the protection of the island of Rhodes, the Dodecanese, Greece, and the whole of the European Continent where Greece belongs.

At noon of the same day, His Excellency Mr. Mayor offered a meal in honour of the President and all the guests, at the restaurant of the renovated building of AKTAION, a renovation that coincided with that of the three historic Mills of Rhodes for their proper function.

In the evening of the same day, there was the ceremony of the presentation of the ongoing restoration project of the Holy Sepulchre, at the presence of the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Rhodes, the Mayor and other guests, at the Venetian Fortress of the Grand Master. At the ceremony the Mayor addressed the guests, and then His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos gave the following address:

“And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed” (Mat. 27:59-60)

Your Excellency President of Greece, Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos,

Your Eminence Mayor of Rhodes Mr. Fotios Chatzidiakos,

Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Rhodes,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the Holy City of Jerusalem, we bring you the blessing of the new tomb, meaning the Most Holy and Life-giving Sepulchre of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The historic multi-cultural and multi-national island of Rhodes, which has been evangelized by the Apostle Paul and which celebrates today its 49<sup>th</sup> incorporation anniversary within the Greek Dominion since 1948, has been associated with the Holy Land and thus the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Therefore, today's ceremony of the presentation, regarding the completion, maintenance, preservation and restoration project of the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre by the National Technical University of Athens, under the scientific superintendence of Professor Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou, together with the actual presence and participation of our associates and spiritual leaders, the Franciscan Custodian Father Francesco Paton, His Beatitude the Armenian Patriarch Nourhan Manougian and the Commissioner of the Latin Patriarchate His Excellency Mr. Pierebattista Pizzaballa, is of particular importance.

And this is so, because firstly, the common Christian witness that “the one that ye (the myrrh bearing women) seek, Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here – in the new tomb- ; behold the place where they laid him” (Mark 16:6) is denounced.

And secondly, because it preaches to all nations the never setting and ever-lasting light of hope and the resurrection of the Son of Man, the Sun of Righteousness.

The significance to the contemporary man of this Pan-Christian, Universal and indeed holy tomb, which has been hewn out in the rock, is owed to the fact that it has accommodated within it not only Jesus the Nazarene but also the whole of the human nature which He received in the Incarnate God the Logos, Christ, the light of love, the light of the world, the light of reconciliation and peace.”

Addresses were also given by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril of Rhodes, the Custodian of the Holy Land Fr. Francesco Paton, the Delegate of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem Hegoumen at the Church of the Resurrection Fr. Samuel, Commissioner Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem Fr. Pierre Battista Pizzaballa.

After the addresses, the Professor of the National Technical University Mrs. Antonia Moropoulou presented the complete restoration project of the Holy Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre with the following lecture:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/pys9xfthbck2v4s/07\\_2\\_Rhodes\\_March\\_2017\\_Integrated\\_V7\\_EN\\_F.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/pys9xfthbck2v4s/07_2_Rhodes_March_2017_Integrated_V7_EN_F.pdf?dl=0)

Mrs. Moropoulou’s presentation was followed by a musical event and then dinner at the Dinioras Restaurant, hosted by the Mayor of Rhodes.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE FEAST OF THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, 20th February/5th March 2017, the Feast of Orthodoxy was celebrated by the Patriarchate. The Feast is about the setting up of the holy icons in the Churches of the Byzantine Empire after the more than a century harsh persecution by the iconoclasts, who had denied the veneration of icons under the influence of other religions.

The church has adopted the holy icons as a confirmation of the earthly visible incarnate presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Church Fathers confessed this doctrine especially during the 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synod, supporting that the denial of the holy icons means the denial of the earthly incarnate presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. The victory of the holy icons, being perceived as a victory of Orthodoxy, was celebrated by the Patriarchate according to the rules of worship of the Typikon.

## 1. In the evening

The 9th Hour was read at the monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and bells tolling, the descend to the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection took place.

Therein, His Beatitude, the Archbishops and Hagiotaphite

Hieromonks were received at the Deposition Shrine, while the choir singers were chanting the troparion "We venerate you most pure image Good One".

After entering the Catholicon, there was the veneration of the Fathers of the Synod and the Archbishops at Golgotha, and bells tolling, the deacons followed the incense procedure around the Most Holy Shrines.

Following the incense procedure, Great Vespers began, with the Great Entrance and the Blessing of the bread, with the singing of the Choir Leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos on the right, and Mr. George Alvanos on the left, and the praying noble congregation of monks, nuns, and laity, locals and pilgrims. At the end of Vespers all headed to the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood quarters.

## 2. On the Day of the Feast

The descend of the Patriarchal Entourage at the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection was at 7:00 a.m. on Sunday morning.

Upon entering, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who led the celebration, venerated the Holy Deposition and the Holy Sepulchre and upon entering the Catholicon, the Priests prayed to receive the blessing by His Beatitude following His Beatitude's prayer to receive the blessing, and after the Episcopal osculation in the Holy Altar they all returned to the Catholicon to start the Divine Liturgy. Concelebrants with His Beatitude who led the Service, were: the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops, Theophanis of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina and Geronda Secretary-General, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda and Secretary of the Holy Synod, Makarios of Qatar, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis; Hieromonks, first among whom was Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite

Nectarios, and Hierodeacons Mark, Anastasios and Agapios. Singing was the Choir Leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos on the right, and Mr. George Alvanos on the left, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, and the praying noble congregation of monks, nuns, and pilgrims from Greece, Russia and other Orthodox countries.

Following the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, there was the procession of the Holy Icons three times around the Holy Edicule and then around the Shrines. At the end of the procession, there was the reading of the Synodico of Orthodoxy opposite the Holy Edicule, which proclaims "anathema" to the disclaimers of the Holy Icons and all heretics, and "everlasting remembrance" to the defenders of the Holy Icons, the Holy Patriarchs Photios, Ignatios, Tarassios, the noble Emperor Mihail and Empress Theodora and all those who venerate these items of worship.

After all the above, the Patriarchal Entourage headed to the Patriarchate where His Beatitude gave the following address:

"Though infinite in your Divine nature, Master, You condescended to be Incarnate in these last days, and became finite, for by putting on the body you put on also its natures. Therefore we present the likeness of your image, and venerate it in honour of its prototype, ascending towards your love where we partake of the grace of healing, following the divine traditions of the Apostles" the hymn writer of the church exclaims.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece,

Reverend holy Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The grace of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ has deemed us worthy to celebrate the victory of Orthodoxy, meaning the



veneration and the setting up of the holy and sacred icons, by the memorable Emperor of Constantinople Mihail and his mother Theodora, at the time of the Patriarch of Jerusalem and Confessor, Saint Methodios, .

This historic and indeed great fact in the life of the visible to the world institution of the Church, is not related to national ceremonies of our Christian faith but to the safe conduct of the doctrine of the Incarnation of God the Logos, our Lord Jesus Christ. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14), St. John the Evangelist says.

Moreover, the Church of Christ has highlighted a multitude of Saint Martyrs, who became conformable to the passion of Crucifixion of Christ, denouncing and fighting against the religion of the idols as well as the worshiping of creation as the hymn writer of the church says: "For having firmly refused to worship creation apart from you, Master and Creator, they evangelically renounced the world, imitating Your passion which they had prophesied".

The commemorated feast on today's First Sunday of the Great Lent, regarding the triumph of the vigorous Orthodox Faith on the veneration of the icons and the liturgical items in general, should not be misinterpreted as an act of intolerance, but on the contrary, as the fight in favour of the living truth of Christ "I am the truth" (John 14:6) says the Lord, against the "profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6:20) which stem from the father of lies of this era. "The triumphant assembly and Church of the Lord rejoices – says the hymn writer – beholding the people of God who cry aloud with one accord: Blessed are Thou, Lord, in the temple of Thy glory!" Amen. Many happy returns and have a blessed Great Lent."

The Feast concluded with the Episcopal osculation and the

kissing of His Beatitude's hand.

The above mentioned Services were broadcast live by the Radio Station of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and in video form on youtube and facebook.

From Secretariat-General

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# **THE FIRST PART OF THE SALUTATIONS AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Friday evening of the First Week of Great Lent, at the Catholicon of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection and within the Service of the Great Compline, the Canon of the Theotokos was sung and the First Part of the Salutations to

the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary was recited by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who officiated the whole Service; singing on the right was the Choir Leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos, and on the left Mr. George Alvanos with the help of Archimandrite Demetrios. Present were the noble congregation of monks, nuns and laity, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and other members of the Greek Consulate.

At this Service, His Beatitude gave a Sermon to the faithful as follows:

*“The Archangel was sent from Heaven to cry ‘Rejoice!’ to the Theotokos. And beholding You, O Lord, taking bodily form, he stood in awe, and with his bodiless voice he cried aloud to her such things as these: Rejoice, you through whom joy shall shine forth. Rejoice, you through whom the curse will vanish. Rejoice, the Restoration of fallen Adam. Rejoice, the Redemption of the tears of Eve.”*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Noble Christians,*

*Our Holy Orthodox Church, as a caring mother, invites us to participate in the joy of the glorious feast of the Resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. For this reason it has appointed the holy and Great Lent, the fasting period before Easter. And fasting, according to the hymn writer of the Church is “the mother of chastity, the judge against sin and pleader of repentance, the life of the Angels and the salvation of the people”.*

*The Ever-Virgin Mary became abettor and participant for the salvation of the people, by becoming a chosen vessel and a vessel of the Holy Spirit, or to be more precise, Theotokos and Mother of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

*The incarnation of God the Logos from the pure blood of the Most Blessed Mary through the Holy Spirit, redeemed our human nature from the curse, that is, the curse of Eve, through which sin and death entered the world in the first place.*

*In other words, according to St. Maximus, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary "by giving birth to the incarnate Logos and Son of God, contemplated on earth the mystery of the recreation of our human nature and the salvation of all the world, which is our Lord Jesus Christ and God, He who united with Himself those who had been separated from Him, and vanished the curse of the world". Behold therefore, why the hymn writer exclaims through the Angel's voice to Theotokos Mary: "Rejoice, you through whom joy shall shine forth. Rejoice, you whom the curse will vanish". And furthermore, "Rejoice, the Restoration of fallen Adam. Rejoice, the Redemption of the tears of Eve".*

*Through His salvific crucified blood and resurrection from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, in his deified human nature resurrected together with Him the nature of the fallen Adam. Through His resurrection, Christ becomes the new Adam, the restored to his former glory man. While Theotokos and Virgin Mary becomes the new Eve, the one who obeys to the Will of God the Father: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38) said Mariam to Archangel Gabriel. That is why again the hymn writer says to Theotokos: "Rejoice, you through whom creation is renewed".*

*Our Holy Church honours exceedingly the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, because without her participation, on her Annunciation by Archangel Gabriel, the unfathomable bounties of Christ, meaning the mystery of the Divine Providence and the salvation of man, would have remained unknown to us humans, just as St. Paul preaches, that by revelation Christ made known to him the mystery (Eph. 3:3), and adds: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the*

*fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:8-11).*

*And Church, again according to St. Paul, is the body of Christ (Col. 1:24), while Christ “is the head of the body of the Church” (Col. 1:18). This means that while the bodiless God the Logos, Christ, receives a body from the Virgin Mary, likewise, the Church receives its worldly existence from Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, as St. John of Damascus praises her: Rejoice our Lady Theotokos, through whom for our sakes, the bodiless receives a body, the pre-eternal receives a beginning, and the One who cannot be contained is contained in you.*

*In other words, my beloved ones, the Theotokos and Mother of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ is distinguished not only as Mother of Jesus Christ, but also as Mother of the Church. Thanks to Theotokos Mary we have received the name Christian nation of her Son and God and we have nationalized in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, as St. John of Damascus exclaims: “Rejoice, the one by whom we have been named Christian nation of your Son and God. Rejoice, the one by whom we have been nationalized in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church”.*

*The Church of Christ and His people rejoice in the Most Blessed Theotokos, because she intercedes to her Son and God for all who resort to her motherly help and protection. The hymn writer of the Church writes; More honourable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the heavenly hosts, most praised Theotokos; we sinners confess you are our true salvation and in you we find protection in our temptations; therefore do not cease interceding for us, as you are the stronghold and refuge of our souls.*

*The more honourable than the Cherubim and most praised Theotokos let us implore, so that by her Motherly help and protection we may go through the fasting period of the holy and Great Lent, in repentance and renewal of our souls, and that way we may be found worthy of the joy and the enlightening power of the never setting and eternal light of the glorious resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.*

From Secretariat-General

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