

CUTTING ST BASIL-PIE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On the evening of Monday the 31st of December, the last day of the year 2013/13th of January 2014, the custom of cutting St Basil-pie was observed at the Hall of the Patriarchate.

His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, led the ceremony that had as participants the Greek Consul-General to Jerusalem, Mr Georgios Zacharoudiakis and his associates, Hagiotaphite Fathers, Greeks hailing from the Greek Parish in Jerusalem, members of our Arab-speaking congregation in Jerusalem, and pilgrims.

To this distinguished guests, His Beatitude delivered an address on the dawn of the new year 2014. This is an excerpt from His address:

[...] The festive reception of the new year, which coincides with the Despotiki (of the Lord) Feast of the Circumcision of Christ, our Lord and Saviour, is calling upon us to consider our works and deeds of the past year, and exclaim alongside the wise Paul: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3, 13-14).

It is precisely this principle, namely the movement towards a blessed life, living and behaving according to Christ, that we are called upon to set as our purpose at the beginning of the new year of Christ's Virtue, where the domain of His eternal Kingdom will hopefully be blessed and glorified; Amen.

In Arabic, the address may be reached here:
<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2014/01/13/3155>

The ceremony was followed by the Apolytikion of the Circumcision of Christ and the Apolytikion of St Basil, at the end of which His Beatitude proceeded to cut St Basil-pie, wishing that the New Year 2014 be favourable and peaceful. The pie was distributed among the guests, who paid their respects and reciprocated wishes for a happy new year.

During the distribution of the pie, students at the Patriarchal School chanted the New Year's Carols. They went on to sing the Carols to Hagiotaphite Fathers and the Greek Parish, and save the contributions they were generously offered by their hosts.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/jN2HfK7F938>



CHRISTMAS ADDRESS OF H.B. PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS III TO THE COMMUNITY OF THE ARMENIANS.

Jerusalem, 9 of January 2014

Your Beatitude, Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers and brothers of the Armenian Fraternity of Saint James,

“Christ is born; glorify Him. Christ is come from heaven; go

and meet Him. Christ is on earth; arise to Him. Sing to the Lord, all you who dwell on earth; and in gladness, O you peoples, praise His

Birth. For He is glorified”

With this hymn of Saint Cosmas, the Church melodist, we greet you in this festive Christmas season, for indeed, Christ is come from heaven to be born in the cave of Bethlehem. Indeed, Christ is on earth, for He is waiting to be born in our cave, i.e. in our heart.

We praise Him, for once again this year we have gone to meet Him in His physical place of birth, where He was manifest into our human history in the cave of Bethlehem, marked by the magnificent Constantinian basilica, which continues to stand as a beacon of the divine light to the world. We also have gone to meet Him in the spiritual cave, i.e. the divine altar, for through Him we offered our humble gifts, i.e. a sacrifice of praise to God the Father; the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name (Heb. 13:15).

We glorify Him, for as Saint John says, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father”, (John 1:14).

It is precisely this glory of the begotten Son of God in which we now rejoice this Christmas season, especially in our contemporary world in which our fellow man is enduring injustice, persecution, starvation, displacement from their homelands and humiliation.

We, who are privileged to be servants and guardians of the Holy Land and its holy sites that bear witness to the sacred history, i.e. the divine oikonomia, and more specifically the history of salvation have been called by the Holy Spirit to be messengers of peace and reconciliation. For together with the angels we can “bring the good news of a great joy, which will

come to all the people, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:14).

Your Beatitude, as we prepare to celebrate the feast of the Divine Epiphany in the Jordan River, and you also prepare to celebrate Christmas in Bethlehem, in the very cave of our Lord's nativity, We, along with our Brotherhood of the Holy Tomb and our Rum Orthodox community, wish you from the bottom of our hearts, a Merry Christmas, a blessed holiday, and a peaceful new year.

"For he is our peace, and he came and evangelized peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Eph. 2:17), so that the peace of God, which passes all understanding will keep our hearts and our minds in our newly born Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:7).

Blessed Christmas and a happy new year. Thank you.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

**CHRISTMAS ADDRESS OF H.B.
PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS TO ALL
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES, ON THE**

OCCASION OF THEIR VISIT TO THE ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE.

Jerusalem, 9 of January 2014

Your Beatitudes,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father” (John 1:14).

It is this glory of the begotten Son of God in which we now rejoice at the time of this Christmas season. We have been blessed and privileged to celebrate God’s full manifestation into our human history in the very place where the Incarnation of the Divine Logos, i.e. the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, took place in the cave of Bethlehem, where the magnificent Constantinian basilica continues to stand as a beacon of the divine light since the early years of Christianity.

The city of Bethlehem, crowned by this basilica, has become the physical and spiritual symbol of God’s philanthropy, that is to say, of His peace and justice on earth and of course of hope to all men and all nations, especially to those who are enduring injustice, inequality, persecution, slavery, starvation, humiliation, displacement from their homelands, and from all contemporary Herods, that is, “all workers of iniquity” (Luke 13:27).

The Holy Ecumenical Church of God and particularly the local Church of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, which are in fact the body of Christ, who is extended into the ages, bears witness

to the Incarnate Hope and Justice that was born from the pure blood of the all blessed Virgin Mary, the Theotokos of Nazareth.

It is precisely this witness that the "Holy Jerusalem" i.e. the mother of all Churches, has been called by the Holy Spirit to evangelize, as Saint Paul says, "And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified" (Rom. 9:30).

Dear brothers and sisters, our gathering today here at the Patriarchate adds to our celebration of the Christmas feast and the new year, as the Psalmist says, "Behold now, what is so good or so pleasant as for brothers to dwell together in unity," [Ps. 132 (133):3]. For according to the Lord, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

Furthermore, this Christmas celebration is also a reminder of our pastoral care and responsibility as spiritual Shepherds in encouraging and leading our respective flocks, especially in our Middle East region, who are being "snatched and scattered by the wolves" of the darkness of this world. For our common shepherd, Jesus Christ says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

Indeed, today Christ, our Shepherd, is born. And indeed, He is the good Shepherd who does not abandon His own and those who know him, and even those who are aspiring to Him.

Let us pray to the newly born Son of God, and together with our Church Father Saint John Chrysostom:

Christ our God, the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, you have fulfilled all the Father's dispensation. Fill our hearts with joy and gladness, always, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Blessed Christmas and a peaceful new year. Thank you.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

ADDRESS OF H.B. TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTONOMY AT A RECEPTION ON THE OCCASION OF CHRISTMAS 2013

Bethlehem, 24 December 2013/ 6 January 2014

Your Excellency, President of the Palestinian State

Honorable Representative of the King of Jordan,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The city of Bethlehem is the physical and spiritual symbol of God's philanthropy, namely of peace and justice on earth, but also of the hope of any man and people. Especially those suffering injustice and persecution, slavery and hunger, those displaced from their paternal homes by contemporary Herods, the "workers of iniquity" (Luke 13, 27).

This we say because the historical event of Christmas, the incarnation and humanization of the Logos God, expressly defeated and exposed the arrogance of the lords of this dark

world, on the word of the Apostle Paul (Ephes. 6, 12).

The feast of Christmas, Mr President, is not exclusive to our Churches, but a feast of all men, especially the faithful of the three monotheist religions, chosen for the Holy Land by divine providence in order to coexist in peace and concord, "And those he predestined", says the wise Paul, those he also called". (Rom. 8, 30).

The Cavern of Bethlehem wherein lies the Church of Constantine the Great, now in the process of renovation, where the worship is performed of the God of love, peace and justice through the centuries since the Birth of Jesus Christ, serves as undeniable testimony of the diaconate and mission of our Greek Orthodox Patriarchate; testimony respected by caliph Omar ibn Khatab and his successors to this day.

Your presence and participation, Mr President, as well as that of the representative of His Majesty the King of Jordan, in this celebration offers clear proof of the unity of our peoples and also of our religious Communities.

We wish that the God of peace, born in a cavern, grants your Excellency enlightenment from above, health in body and soul, and the administrative power to lead the struggling Palestinian people to the realization of the sacred right of complete national freedom and independence.

Many happy returns, in peace.

In the Holy City of Bethlehem, Christmas 2013

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

HIS BEATITUDE ADDRESS AT THE HOLIDAY RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF ISRAEL

Jerusalem, 30 December 2013.

Mr President,

Our Fellow Heads of the Churches and Religious Leaders,

Esteemed Members of the Government,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this festive and holy season, we greet you with words from the Psalmist:

May God be gracious to us and bless us

and make his face to shine upon us,

that your way may be known upon earth,

your saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God;

let all the peoples praise you. (Ps 67:1-3)

Here in the Holy Land, where humankind and God have conversed for millennia, we understand our life and mission to be a witness to “the way of God upon earth,” and “God’s saving power among all nations.” Jerusalem and the Holy Land are a beacon of hope to the world, and no more so than at this time of the year. We thank you, Mr President, for gathering us

all together on this special occasion, so that we may be reminded of our common purpose as the many communities that call this land our home.

We take this opportunity to express our appreciation in particular to you, Mr President, for the determined and strong voice that you have been raising in condemning the waive of "Price Tag crimes" in our country, and especially in Jerusalem. All such acts are abhorrent, whatever their target, and undermine the efforts of all those in our country who are working for reconciliation and peace. And those despicable acts that are directed against Holy Sites and cemeteries are not only intolerable deeds of desecration; they are unworthy of our contemporary, technologically advanced society that seeks to be built on the principles of mutual respect, freedom of worship, and peaceful co-existence.

Today more than ever Jerusalem and the Holy Land are the destination of so many. We welcome pilgrims of every faith and religious tradition, and the Holy Land continues to exercise a tremendous influence on the human soul. This factor alone makes our attentiveness to the integrity of Jerusalem, the Holy Land, and the Holy Places of supreme importance. For in this regard we who live here are privileged to be part and parcel of this unique multi-cultural and multi-ethnic heritage.

It is precisely for this reason that we are all required to take renewed steps to ensure the safety and well-being both of pilgrims and of the members of our communities, and to guarantee their rights and privileges that are sanctioned by our common sacred history. We are especially to be attentive to this at the times of religious festivals, so that all those who wish to do so may have access to the Holy Places and participate in worship.

In our capacity as the Heads of the Church communities understand all too well the complexity of managing large

numbers of people in small spaces, and we commend the police authorities and the security forces for their hard and responsible work. However, in order to avoid repeating the mistakes of bitter experience, there is more that can be done both to facilitate access to the Holy Places for pilgrims from a distance as well as from our local communities and to deepen our commitment to the democratic value of freedom of worship. For such great religious events by their nature are the best means for building peace and eradicating prejudice.

In this way, more than any other, shall we serve and guarantee the fundamental nature and mission of the Holy Places. For the Holy Places are neither tourist attractions nor archaeological wonders. They are first and foremost the physical expressions of the divine-human encounter and the marks of our sacred history, and so they are always primarily places of worship that gather people together in the same purpose. Our common task, as religious and civic leaders, is to maintain this true character of our Holy Sites, so that all may drink deeply of their spiritual waters.

As we celebrate this festive season and look forward to the New Year, let us re-dedicate ourselves to the fundamental principles of mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, and the equal care of all our people, that the light of this Holy Land may shine brightly in a dark world to give hope and life to all.

May God bless you, Mr President, in all the work that you are doing for all our communities, and may God bless our beloved Holy Land. We wish you a happy New Year.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS CELEBRATED IN SHEPHERDS VILLAGE

On Sunday the 16th/29th of December 2013, the Feast of the Holy Forefathers was observed in commemoration of the Forefathers, according to the flesh, of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lived before the Law and under the Law, namely Abraham the Patriarch, his son Isaac, David the righteous king, and the prophet Daniel and his three children who transformed the fire into dew. The feast was observed at the church dedicated to them, in the Village of the Shepherds – Beit Sahour.

In this Village, named after the Shepherds who, urged by angels, proceeded to see the infant Jesus lying in the manger, the Patriarchate preserves a very ancient Greek Orthodox (Rum Orthodox) Community, numbering today approximately seven thousand members.

His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, was warmly received by the priests of this Community, Boy Scouts, Commissioners, and the people, before leading the Matins procession and the divine Liturgy. Co-officiating were the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias, His Eminence Dorotheos, Archbishop of Avila, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and deacons. The Community Choir chanted while a great crowd of Orthodox people participated in piety.

To the pious congregation, His Beatitude Theophilos preached

the Word of God. This is an excerpt from His speech:

[...] The unspeakable and indeed great and paradoxical mystery of the incarnation of the Divine Logos, namely our reformation and that of our Forefathers, is proclaimed today by the present festive gathering in this holy site, where the Shepherds living in the fields nearby were terrified when they listened to this angelic hymn: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests" (Luke 2, 14). "And it came to pass" says the Evangelist Luke, "as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us" (Luke 2, 15).

This very fact, my dear brothers, which the Lord made known to us is none other than the Nativity of Christ, our God and Saviour, from the pure blood of the All-Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. This same fact is a folly and a scandal to the whole world "lying in wickedness" (I John 5, 19), whereas for the world of the Church, it is a great and paradoxical mystery. And this because, according to the Evangelist John, "we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life" (1 John 5, 20).

[...] Today, the festive commemoration of the Holy Forefathers and Prophets, is intended for this sacred purpose, namely the preparation and arrangement of the cavern within us, in other words the spiritual cavern of our heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5, 8) says the Lord. "Put to death, therefore" preaches the wise Paul, "whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry; rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice,

slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (Col. 3, 5-10).

The entire speech may be read in Greek here:
<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/gr/2013/12/29/10276>

And in Arabic here:
<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2013/12/29/2996>

At the end of the divine Liturgy, a reception was held at the Events Hall, followed by lunch at the town's hotel, hosted by the Community.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/T87QmCJcIEI>



THE FEAST OF ST NIKOLAS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday the 6th/19th of December 2013, the feast of St Nikolas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra, Lycia, was celebrated at the church dedicated to him in the town of Bet-Jala, which lies between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, to the right of Rachel's tomb on the way from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.

In this town, which numbers approximately fifteen thousand inhabitants, Christians and Muslims alike, the Patriarchate has always maintained a Greek Orthodox Arab-speaking community

(Rum Orthodox), of about seven thousand members.

To this community, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, arrived on the morning of the aforementioned day, and was received at the hegoumen's quarters by Archimandrite f. Narkissos.

From there, His Beatitude proceeded to the Church of St Nikolas, where he was welcomed by priests at the entrance.

His Beatitude led the Matins service and the Divine Liturgy. Co-officiating were the Patriarchal Commissioner, the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias; the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina; the Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem, His Eminence Theophylaktos, Archbishop of Jordan; and the Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod, His Eminence Demetrios, Archbishop of Lydda; the vicar priests of Bet-Jala, fathers Nikolaos, Georgios, Joseph and Paul; Archdeacon f. Evlogios and deacon f. Martyrios. The church choir chanted in the Byzantine style under the direction of Mr Ibrahim Karkar, in the presence of a great crowd of Orthodox faithful.

To this congregation His Beatitude preached the Word of God. This is an excerpt from His speech:

[...] "The great, indeed, gift that the Lord offered through His incarnate presence in the world, is the peace and the light of His *theognosia*, the knowledge of God. And Christ came", says the Apostle Paul, "and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near" (Ephes. 2, 17). And Jesus Christ says: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn, 8, 12).

It is precisely of this light and peace of the mystery of the divine economy that our father Nikolaos became both a communicant and a teacher. [...]

In other words, St Nikolas proved himself to be a true disciple of Christ, namely an apostle and preacher of His Gospel in the example of the Apostle Paul, who says: "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ" (II Cor. 4, 5-6).

And this we say, my dears, because our holy Hierarch had been in word and deed a fervent guardian and advocate of the pure and healthy teaching of the Gospel, which is the proper and salvaging, or better said, the healing faith of the one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; of the faith, we repeat, which was clearly inscribed by the Fathers of the Church, successors of the holy apostles, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, in the first Ecumenical Synod which convened in Nicaea, Asia Minor, in 325 AD, under the great and pious emperor St Constantine the Equal of the Apostles.

During this Ecumenical Synod, as is well known, Bishop Nikolaos of Myra, Lycia, bravely opposed the heretical teachings of Arius who in essence denied the divinity of the incarnate Logos, our Lord, Jesus Christ, from the pure blood of the Ever Virgin Mary. For this reason, St Nikolas was named the Canon of the Orthodox Faith, namely the Christian faith." [...]

A great crowd proceeded to receive the holy Communion and the antidoron from the hands of His Beatitude, along with His blessings.

At the conclusion of the divine Liturgy, a procession took place around the Church and in the chapel of St Nikolas, specifically a cavern underneath the Church.

A reception followed at the hall of the Church, where the Patriarchal retinue and others were hosted to lunch offered by

the hegoumen and the Bet-Jala Community Council.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/yIxJQ0SM2Ls>



H. B. THEOPHILOS III ADDRESS TO THE COUNCIL OF THE GERMAN EVANGELICAN CHURCH.

JERUSALEM, Sunday 15 December 2013.

Your Eminence Bishop Younan Mounib,

Reverend Dr. Nikolaus Shneider, Head of the Council of the
Evangelical Church in Germany,

Reverend Propst Wolfgang Schmidt,

Dear friends,

Christ is born; glorify Him!

Christ comes from heaven; go and meet Him!

Christ is on earth; be exalted!

Sing to the Lord, all the earth!

And praise him in gladness, O you peoples,

for he has been glorified!

With this Church hymn, we celebrate the Christmas season.

It is an honor for Us to have been invited to be with you here tonight at this distinguished ecumenical gathering, so close to the very place of the crucifixion, that is to say, the place of redemption.

The supreme gift our Lord has given us with His incarnate presence in the world and redemptive work is "His peace." For as Saint Paul writes, Our Lord Jesus Christ reconciled all things to himself, whether things on earth, that is to say whether men with God and men between themselves, or those things in heaven, that is to say, the angels whom he reconciled with all of us" (Coll. 120). This great gift, he had already foretold to His disciples just before His Crucifixion, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you" (John 14:27).

Your pilgrimage in our beloved Holy Land during this Christmas season is highly appreciated. For we, the Church leadership of Jerusalem, together with our communities, look at it as a tangible sign of the solidarity that is provided by our ecumenical fellowship.

However, this fellowship is not exclusive, but rather, inclusive. For we do not speak on behalf of ourselves alone in saying that regardless of our affiliation, we are all sons of Abraham. Jerusalem, together with Bethlehem, are reminders to all of us that the Almighty God is the God of reconciliation and peace.

This very Christmas holiday is precisely the time to realize that the knowledge of God's will is imperative in order to work toward peace and reconciliation for the people of our Holy Land and for the people of our neighboring countries who

are now severely suffering under unspeakable persecution.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder. His name will be the Angel of Great Counsel, for I shall bring peace upon the rulers, peace and health by Him” (Isaiah 9:6), declares the great Prophet Isaiah today and right now.

As the world looks to our Holy City of Jerusalem during this holy season for light, for hope, and for peace, let us pray that the light of the Incarnate Divine Logos would prevail and dwell in the hearts of all of us, and especially of those who have been given the power from above to lead our world.

Merry Christmas and God bless your mission.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

REMARKS AT THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE IN JAFFA.

Jaffa, Sunday, 8, December 2013

Mr. Mayor,

Your Eminences,

Distinguished Civic and Community Representatives,

Esteemed Leaders of the Religious Communities,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

We greet you with joy today as we gather here in the Season of Light, when the faithful of different traditions look to God for that divine illumination that only God can bestow. As we move from the lights of Chanukah to the lights of Christmas, we are reminded that the human spirit longs to be joined to God, and that true enlightenment comes only from the Creator of light. For the Lord says, *"I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life"* (John 8:12).

We bear in mind that here in Jaffa the population is especially known to be comprised of Jews, Christians and Muslims living side by side. The search for divine illumination is at the heart of our respective traditions, and the future belongs to those who build communities of mutual respect, trust, and peaceful coexistence. We pray that the Almighty God, who is the Lord of light, illuminate the minds and warm the hearts of all of us, especially political leaders both globally and locally so that the light of peace amongst people of different faiths would prevail.

With the Psalmist we sing, *"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?"* (Ps. 26 (27):1) and *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light upon my path"* (Ps. 118 (119):105. In this season, and especially during crucial and challenging times for our region, we are made deeply aware that we are all called to follow that light from God, which leads us into a deeper relationship with Him and with our fellow human beings. For mere human light can often blind us,

but God's light reveals to us the path of eternal human destiny, which we all share.

May the lights of this tree be a constant reminder to all who look upon it of God "who is our everlasting Light" and "our Glory."

May God bless you!

His Beatitude

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

THE FEAST OF ST PHILOUMENOS THE HIEROMARTYR AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday the 15th/28th of November 2013, the Hieromartyr Saint Philoumenos the Hagiotaphite was commemorated one day in advance due to pastoral reasons.

The feast was celebrated at Jacob's Well, where the then Hegoumen, Archimandrite Philoumenos, had suffered a martyr's death on the 16th/29th of November 1979. Following a decision in 2009 of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Saint's martyrdom was added to the Synaxarion of Hieromartyrs (Martyrology).

His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, led the divine Liturgy on the morning of the aforementioned day. Co-officiating were the Most Reverend

Kyriakos, Metropolitan of Nazareth; the Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem, His Eminence Theophylaktos, Archbishop of Jordan; and the Most Reverend Isaiah, Metropolitan of Tamassos and Orinis, visiting from the Church of Cyprus. The liturgy was held in the presence of a crowd of local Orthodox faithful from the region of Samaria but also from Jerusalem, and pilgrims from Greece, Russia, Romania as well as a group from Cyprus, led by the Metropolitan of Tamassos, Isaiah. The choir chanted under the direction of the Head Cantor of the All-Holy Church of the Resurrection, Archimandrite Aristovoulos, in Greek, Arabian and Russian.

During the *Koinonikon* of the divine Liturgy, His Beatitude preached the Word of God in Greek. This is an excerpt from His speech:

[...] Christ's martyrs occupy a prominent position in the ranks of saints of the Church. And this because their blood, shed for the light of truth in Christ, has made them communicants of Christ's redeeming blood, "who hath purchased the church of God, with his own blood", (Acts 20, 28). After all, those without hope, and without God in the world, according to the wise Paul, "who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ...consequently, they are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household", (Eph. 2, 12-19).

In other words, my dears, the blood of the martyrs is what has made them fellow citizens of the first-born saints and members of Christ's household. And this is exactly what the memory of the holy martyrs calls upon us, to become fellow citizens of the saints and members of Christ's household. "Have you honoured the martyr by presence? Honour him, too by correction of kin. Because to honour the martyr is to emulate the martyr", says the Holy Chrysostom. And this because: any disorderly attachment to the body and to the vanity of this world is a burden and a weight that hinders us from running the good race, the race "marked out for us" (Hebr. 12, 1)

“throwing off the burden of the living things and their concerns, and with them negligence and sloth”, says the commentator Ecumenios.

Martyr Philoumenos whom we celebrate today, having joined the cloud, namely the crowd of the martyrs of the Church of Christ, is not only a witness of this world, but keeps witnessing in heavens in favour of truth and the redeeming faith in Christ, though invisible amongst us.

The divine Liturgy was followed by lunch, hosted by the founder of the Church that stands on Jacob’s Well in the name of St Photini of Samaria, Hegoumen, Archimandrite Ioustinos.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/QCWHbViSWRw>

