

# THE FEAST OF ST ONOUPHRIOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, the feast of St Onouphrios was celebrated at the Holy Monastery bearing his name, which lies at the Gihon valley opposite the Pool of Siloam. This Monastery, dedicated to St Onouphrios of Egypt, is one of the ancient Monasteries of the Patriarchate. It lies on rocks and carved tombs of the cemetery which was “purchased for the burial of foreigners” by the chief priests of the Jews for the three hundred silver pieces the repentant Judas Iscariot, who had delivered the Lord, had returned to them (Matthew 27, 6-8).

At the church of this Holy Monastery, founded long ago by Archimandrite Metrophanes, Guardian of the Holy Sepulcher, in 1893, His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem led the Divine Liturgy. Co-officiating were the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias and Patriarchal Commissioner; Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Elder Sacristan; Priest-Monk fr. Christodoulos from the Metropolis of Patras, Priest-Monk fr. Ieronymos from the Archbishopric of Cyprus; the very Reverend Archimandrite Ieronymos, hegoumen in Fhes and Vice-President of Financial Affaris; Archdeacon fr. Athanasios and Priest-Deacon fr. Eulogios.

Monks and nuns participated in this divine Liturgy in devoutness and reverence, together with laymen and laywomen, pilgrims, and residents of Jerusalem and the Hill of St Sion.

To this pious congregation, His Beatitude Theophilos preached the Word of God, an excerpt of which is cited here:

*[...] Hosios Onouphrios, Our Father, set deification as his only purpose in life, bearing in mind the words of the Great Athanasius, that God was humanized, became a human after us,*

*so that us humans would become deified.*

*This is precisely the purpose of the descent, on behalf of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Paraclete, namely the Holy Spirit, upon the world through His holy Church, to make us into vessels of the perceptible and heavenly light, that is the Holy Spirit, as was the case with our Hosios Onouphrios according to his hagiographer: "A light that is perceptible and heavenly you have received in your heart, of the undefiled Trinity you have become a vessel, Onouphrios. And now among the angels you are counted, crying Alleluia".*

*[...] Our Church, my dears, promotes we would say in a special manner the great figures of the martyrs and ascetics of Christ's love. And this, so that it may be known and revealed to men that the man who does not accept the light of Christ, namely the Holy Spirit, shall remain in darkness".*

*"I", says Christ, "have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness" (John, 12, 46). I have come to the world to be a spiritual light for this man, so that no one of those who believe in me should stay in the moral darkness of sin and fallacy. [...]*

After the Divine Liturgy, a procession followed to the graves of the Monastery's proprietors and other men entombed there, where a supplication was made for the repose of the souls of the Fathers there entombed and of the recently departed Nun Serapheima.

After the procession and the apolysis of the Divine Liturgy, there followed a brief reception at the quarters of the Mother Superior, the Very Reverend Paisia.

**From the Secretariat General**

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# **ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO H.E. BIDZINA IVANISHVILI, PR. MINISTER OF GEORGIA.**

*Holy City of Jerusalem, 25 June 2013.*

*Your Excellency, Mr. Prime Minister,*

*Madame Khvedelidze,*

*Esteemed Members of your Delegation,*

*Your Eminences,*

*Reverend Fathers,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We welcome you, Your Excellency, on this, your first visit to our Patriarchate as you visit Jerusalem, the Holy Land, and the State of Israel. It is our prayer that your trip may be as much a spiritual one as a political one, and that you may find refreshment as you visit the Holy Places.

Your visit here is of considerable significance both for the Georgian people as well as for the peoples of our region, especially the Christian community of the Holy Land. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Mother of All the Churches, is the most ancient, continuous, religious institution in the Holy Land, and has a deep and historic relationship with the Georgia.

It is Saint Nina, Equal to the Apostles and the Enlightener of Georgia, who, according to the tradition, is the link between

us. A relative of Saint George and a niece of Patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem, as a young woman Saint Nina set out from this city and eventually found her way to Georgia. There she healed and converted Queen Nana, after which the country received the Christian faith, and became one of the earliest Christian nations. As a consequence, throughout the centuries the Church of Jerusalem and the Church of Georgia have enjoyed close ties.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem occupies a unique position, and carries out a particular mission, on behalf of the Christians of this region, and on behalf of Christians from all over the world. As the servant and guardian of the Holy Places, the Patriarchate guarantees the Christian character of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and ensures that the Holy Places remain accessible to pilgrims and people of good will without distinction.

The Patriarchate is a point of special reference for Orthodox Christians; Jerusalem is at the heart of our Orthodox faith because the Holy Places are near and dear to every Orthodox Christian. Thousands of pilgrims come here every year, and are a reminder of the beautiful words of Psalm 41:

***“As the deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God.***

***My soul thirsts for God, for the living God”, (Ps. 41; 1 -2).***

Here pilgrims encounter sacred history made real, and derive spiritual refreshment from their devotions at the Holy Places.

For Orthodox Christians, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem also stands as a unique witness to the unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Our Oneness is fully expressed and demonstrated here, as we gather under our wings, Orthodox Christians from all over the world. Here indeed we live the spirit of the Feast of Pentecost that we are currently celebrating, as those who enjoy full and complete

unity and at the same time rejoice in our cultural, linguistic, and national diversity. An essential part of our mission is to embody and preserve this unity in diversity.

You are most welcome, Your Excellency, and we wish you every success in your mission to our region. In token of the close historic and spiritual ties that bind the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to Georgia, we would like to bestow on you the Cross of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. With it, come our fraternal greetings to our brother, His Beatitude Patriarch Elias, and our prayers for all the people of your beloved country.

Thank you.

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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## **HOLY SPIRIT MONDAY CELEBRATED AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On the Monday of the Holy Ghost, the 11<sup>th</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, the Pentecost was celebrated at the Patriarchate in special honour of the Holy Ghost, sent by the Father through the Son to the holy disciples and apostles.

I. At the Holy Sion

The feast, dedicated par excellence to the All-holy Spirit, was celebrated at the Holy Sion, where the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles.

From the previous evening, the Vespers was held, led by the Most Reverend Dorotheos, Archbishop of Avila, at the chapel standing in the cemetery of the Holy Sion, followed by a reading out of the Genuflection prayer.

On the day of the feast, Archbishop Dorotheos led the Matins and the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Holy Trinity within the building housing the Patriarchal Hieratic School.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the procession began with the reading out of the first wish at the Church, the second at the chapel-catacomb – which a fortnight ago was broken into by young religious Jews – with a supplication at the Tomb of David and the reading out of the third wish at the Hyperoon, where the All-Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles.

From there, the procession returned to the Church, passing through the Cemetery and extending a supplication for the repose of the deceased.

## II. At the Russian Church of the Holy Trinity

In the New City of Jerusalem, at the Church of the Holy Trinity of the Russian *Missia*, the Divine Liturgy was held in celebration of the Monday of the Holy Ghost, led by His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, and co-officiated by the Grand Chancellor, Archbishop of Constantina Aristarchos, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Ieronymos, Hegoumen in Fhes and Vice-president of the Committee on Finance, the Very Reverend Ieronymos, representative of the Archbishopric of Cyprus and other priest-monks, presbyters and deacons.

During the *Koinonikon* of the D. Liturgy, His Beatitude proclaimed the word of God to the congregation. This is an

excerpt from His speech:

*“In other words, the Church is the body, namely the supplement of Jesus Christ as a human being. It is the supplement of Him Who as God replenishes everything to their every need and provides each of His creations with anything they may require. This great sacrament of the Holy Pentecost, explicitly the descent of the Holy Ghost from heaven in the form of tongues of fire upon the holy disciples and apostles, declares the ineffable condescension and philanthropy of God towards us humans.”*

Archimandrite Theophanes translated the speech to Russian. (See link: [en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ru/2013/06/24/8959/](http://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ru/2013/06/24/8959/))

After the Divine Liturgy, the Head of the Russian Missia hosted a reception in honour of the Patriarchal delegation and other guests from the Russian-speaking, Arab-speaking and Greek-speaking congregation.

Offering a toast at the table, His Beatitude wished that the Holy Ghost replenish the mind, the soul and heart of each and every man, and guide the Church of Christ to the whole truth.

**From the Secretariat-General**

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**PRIME MINISTER OF GEORGIA**

# VISITS PATRIARCHATE

In the afternoon of the Monday of the Holy Spirit, the 11<sup>th</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, the Prime Minister of Georgia, His Excellency Mr Bidzina Ivanishvilli, on a visit to Israel, arrived at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem accompanied by a delegation of approximately thirty five of his associates, including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Diaspora.

The Prime Minister and his retinue were received at the Hall of the Throne by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of the Guardians of the Holy Sepulcher, including the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Capitolas and Patriarchal Commissioner; the Grand Chancellor Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina, the Most Reverend Methodios, Archbishop of Thavorio, and the former Protosyncellus of the Holy Archbishopric of Cyprus, f. Ieronymos.

Welcoming the Prime Minister of Georgia, His Beatitude addressed him in English as follows (see link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2013/06/25/2550/> ) and conferred upon him the supreme honour of the Patriarchate, namely the Cross of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher, for the reverence he extends towards the Holy Sepulcher and for his pioussness. A fine icon of St George and a cross were offered to the Prime Minister's wife.

Deeply moved, the Prime Minister thanked His Beatitude, saying that the honour conferred upon him was reflected onto the Church and the nation of Georgia, and that this honour would be for him a source of strength for the accomplishment of his mission and the creation of conditions of cooperation between Church and state. He then offered HB a plaque bearing the picture of an ancient temple of the Church of Georgia, conveying the wishes of His Beatitude Elias, the Patriarch of Georgia, and an invitation to visit the country of Georgia.



Finally, he thanked HB for welcoming Georgian pilgrims to the Holy Land and supporting Christians on an international level.

After his visit to the Patriarchate, His Excellency the Prime Minister of Georgia, accompanied by His Beatitude, visited the All-holy Church of the Resurrection and paid his respect to the Holy Sepulcher and the Horrendous Golgotha.

The Prime Minister's call was concluded with a visit to the Chapel of Adam.

**From the Secretariat-General**

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# **HIS BEATITUDE ADDRESS TO MR. BAHIJ MANSOUR AMBASSADOR TO THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS.**

Koufr Yassif, Friday the 21th of June, 2013

Your Excellency (Mr. Bahij Mansour),

We would like to extend our sincerest appreciation for the honor of joining you in your bittersweet farewell from your position as the director of Interreligious Affairs in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We also bid you wishes for success as you take on your new role as Israel's ambassador to the Caribbean Islands.

Throughout your years of service you have been a true asset to Israel's various communities, and especially attentive to the

needs of our Christian communities. Your absence will surely be felt. As a result of your dedication to harmonious coexistence, you have managed to cultivate and promote relations amongst Israel's religious establishments, Druze, Muslim, and Christian communities, which are based on mutual respect.

We hope and pray that your new assignment will be a continuation of achievement, and that you meet it with the same fervor that you have possessed throughout your extensive diplomatic career. Your contributions will undoubtedly be significant.

May God enlighten the path ahead of you, and grant you success and longevity in your life and in your paramount career.

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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# **CELEBRATING THE SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

The Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Samaritan Woman on Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> of May/ 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2013, at the pilgrimage site of Jacob's Well.

On the word of the Old Testament and the Gospel of John in the

New Testament (Jn, 4, 1-38), the Well was dug in the land of Samaria by Jacob the patriarch between the mountains Yeval and Yoresin.

At this precise Well did the Samaritan woman, who arrived here from the town of Sychar in order to draw water, come upon the Lord who, as by fishing, initiated her into Himself as Christ and changed her life so that she would depart from sin and receive holiness and this very testimony. Indeed, she is commemorated within the cycle of movable feasts on the fourth Sunday after Easter.

It is in this Pilgrimage site that, in the course of our days, the neomartyr St Philoumen of the Holy Sepulcher died a martyric death. The site has been laudably exalted since a few years by its Hegoumen, the Archimandrite father Ioustinos by means of the construction of a magnificent Church, an ornament to the city of Neapolis. Here, on the aforementioned day, His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, officiated the divine liturgy together with Patriarchal Vicar, Esychios, the Right Reverend Metropolitan of Kapitolias; His Eminence Aristarchos, the Archbishop of Constantina and Grand Chancellor; His Eminence Damaskinos, the Archbishop of Ioppi; His Eminence Theophylaktos, the Archbishop of Iordanis; his Eminence Philoumenos, the Archbishop of Pella; Hieromonks of the Holy Sepulcher and Priests of major parishes from townships adjoining Neapolis, such as Raphidia, Toumba and Zampapde, in the presence of the faithful who had reached Neapolis from adjoining towns.

During the *Koinonikon* of the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude proclaimed to everyone the word of God in the Greek language.

This is an excerpt from His speech:

*Today, on the fifth Sunday after Easter, the Church of Christ celebrates the feast of the Samaritan woman in this very site where also lies the Well of Jacob the Patriarch.*

*This site is of special importance, for it is not only a historical and sacred one, but also a site evangelizing the testimony of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that God is a spirit and those that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (Jn 4, 24). In addition, the spiritual well built upon the actual Jacob's well, namely the holy Altar of this splendid Church in honour of St Photini, the Samaritan Woman, attests to the Word of our Savior Christ to the Samaritan Woman and to any man with a thirst for the salvaging truth, that: "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jn 4, 13-14).*

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a litany thrice around the Holy Church.

After the litany, the proprietor and hegoumen, Archimandrite f. Ioustinos, hosted a festive meal for His Beatitude, His Retinue and scores of people.

**From the Secretariat- General**

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## **GRADUATION CEREMONY AT ST DEMETRIUS SCHOOL**

At 5:00 pm of Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup> of May/1<sup>st</sup> of June 2013, the graduation ceremony of 20 graduating students took place at the hall of ceremonies of "St Demetrius" Patriarchal School, in the presence of His Beatitude Theophilos III, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem; the Consul General of Greece in

Jerusalem, Mr Soterios Athanasiou and his honorable wife, a Greek Language teacher at the School; the representative of the Republic of Cyprus to the Palestinian Autonomy, Mr Antonios Samoutis, the representative of the Palestinian Autonomy Minister of Education, Mr Samir Gabriye, the Chairman of the School Board of Patriarchal Schools in Israel; the Most Reverend Esychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolia, the Grand Chancellor Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina; the Patriarchal Commissioner in Irbet, Jordan, His Eminence Philoumenos, Archbishop of Pella; Archdeacon f. Athanasios, Hierodeacon f. Eulogios, the School's Principal Mr Samir Zananiri, teachers at the School and the graduates' parents and other relatives.

The building of the School of "St Demetrius" which was essentially the latest expansion of the Patriarchate towards the Jaffa Gate, served as the Patriarchate School from which most of the either departed or living guardians of the Holy Sepulcher had graduated until the year 1970, when the School was transferred to the building now standing out on top of the Hill of St Sion.

The premises of the Hieratic School were offered from 1985 onwards by Diodoros, the Late Patriarch of Jerusalem, for the accommodation of a Preschool, an Elementary School, a High School and a Lyceum, maintained by the Patriarchate under the name "St Demetrius", owing to the existence within the school complex, of an ancient Chapel in honor of the glorified great martyr St Demetrius the Myrrh-Bearer.

The well-organized ceremony began with the prayer "Christ is risen" in Greek and "Al Massih Kam" in Arab, followed by recitations of the National Palestinian Anthem and the Greek National Anthem.

The School Principal, Mr Samir Zananiri went on to extend his gratitude to His Beatitude for the moral and material help offered by the Patriarchate to the School, to Mr Hanna Amire,

Chairman of the Committee on Christian Affairs, for the financial aid provided by the Palestinian Autonomy towards repairs and renovations at the School, and also praised the graduates for their performance and ethics, wishing that they successfully pursue their studies and perform well in society.

Two graduates offered flowers to his Beatitude and the Chairman of the School Board for their support to the School.

Students at the Preschool, Elementary School, High School and Lyceum, boys and girls alike, performed Palestinian dances.

Three representatives of the graduating students spoke on behalf of their peers, one in Arab, one in English and one in Greek, pointing out how difficult it is to be diligent and perform well, and how such difficulties may be overcome with the help of parents and teachers, to whom they extended their deep gratitude.

A touching moment at the ceremony was the presentation of the Principal with an honorary plaque and the "change of guard" between this year's (2012-2013) graduating students and seniors of the next academic year.

The ceremony was concluded with an address of His Beatitude in Arab, as follows at:<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2013/06/01/2429/> stressing the importance attributed by the Patriarchate to the education of youth at schools maintained on its own expenses and the donations of charity foundations where the coexistence of Christian and Muslim students is favored and promoted and greatly contributes to the peaceful symbiosis and cooperation between such fellow students.

The ceremony closed with His Beatitude and the Professors conferring the titles to the graduating students, followed by the Palestinian National Anthem and His Beatitude's prayer for longevity.

From the Secretariat-General

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# **H. B. ADDRESS TO HIS EXCELLENCY VLADIMIR PUTIN THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION-SOCHI (27-5-2013).**

Sochi, 27 of May, 2013

Esteemed Vladimir Vladimirovitch,

Your Holiness,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

*Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!*

*Christos voskresiye! Vayistenu voskresiye!*

It is a great honour for us to be received by you, Your Excellency, here in Moscow, and as we are here with you, we recall with great warmth your most recent visit to the Holy Land and to Jerusalem, when we welcomed you as a pilgrim to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Nativity, and the Baptism Site in Jordan. The Holy Land has always held a special place in the hearts and imaginations of the Russian people, and we know of your commitment; and devotion.

Just as the light from the Holy Fire was brought to Russia just a short time ago at Pascha, so we bring with us the blessings and the light of the resurrection from the empty Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this light is the hope of the world.

We are here on our eirenicon – our visit of kinship to our Sister Church of Russia – and we are also here to give spiritual encouragement to all the Russian peoples. The mission of the Church always faces great challenges, even in the best of circumstances, and we know that this is a time in which the religious traditions and moral values of the Holy Orthodox Church of Russia are under some pressure.

We come in our turn, as you know full well, from a region that is volatile and where many communities, among them Christian communities, face real danger. We remain steadfast in our mission to proclaim with all the means in our power the saving message of our faith, which is nothing less than the love and reconciliation of God. It is crucial for the integrity and the future of the Middle East that we maintain genuine mutual respect between faiths, cultures and ethnicities in our region.

We would like to assure you, Your Excellency, of our appreciation of your tireless efforts in defending Christian moral values and in supporting the Russian Orthodox Church as she works for the unity of the Russian peoples.

We appreciate deeply your concern for Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and we repeat our thanks to you for all that you have done on our behalf. We value your attention to help to contain those forces that threaten the peace and stability of the world, and especially of the Middle East. We know that you bear a heavy burden of leadership.

We know that you uphold the sacredness of Jerusalem by encouraging pilgrimages of the Russian people to the Holy



Land. Pilgrimages are crucial for us, for they accomplish two things. On the one hand, pilgrimage to the Holy Land opens to the faithful and to others of goodwill the mystery of God and the reality of our sacred history. And on the other hand, pilgrimage also safe-guards the Patriarchate, and encourages our local Palestinian Christian communities, spread across the Jurisdiction of the Patriarchate in Israel, Palestine, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and Qatar, to know that they are not forgotten as they face huge challenges.

Thank you again for your warm welcome. Please allow us, in recognition of your leadership and your work on behalf of the Church in the Holy Land, to bestow on you the Order of the Holy Tomb. And we pray for God's blessing on you, your family, and on all the people of your beloved Russia.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Christos voskresiye!  
Vayistenu voskresiye!

Thank you.

His Beatitude

**Theophilos III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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**H . B .            ADDRESS            AT            THE  
INAUGURATION   &   PRESENTATION**

# OF THE EUCHARISTIC SYMPHONY DVD.

Holy City of Jerusalem, 16 May 2013

Your Excellency, Father Pierbattista

Mademoiselle Nebel,

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

*Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!*

*Al- Masiach qam! Hakken qam!*

We are delighted to welcome you today to the new Bookshop of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the opening and dedication of which we recently celebrated. This Bookshop is a visible extension of the mission of the Patriarchate, and its prominence here at the Jaffa Gate is a sign to all pilgrims and visitors both of the Christian character of Jerusalem and of the religious, cultural and ethnic diversity that is such a vital component of our common life in the HolyCity.

We are gathered here today for the purpose of celebrating a wonderful endeavor. For today we are launching the DVD of the World Premiere of the Eucharistic Symphony, which took place in the Garden of Gethsemane on 22 September 2012. This symphony was composed by Father Armando Pierucci and the production of this DVD has been ion the capable hands of Mademoiselle Veronique Nebel. Through her labour of devotion,

all those who love the Holy Land, and who work for peace, justice and mutual co-existence, may be inspired by this remarkable event. We thank you most warmly for your work.

This Eucharistic Symphony is important for two reasons.

First, it emphasizes the truth that at the heart of the Christian life is the Eucharistic Liturgy. It is the Eucharist that makes the Church, and it is right that a symphony that gathers Christian voices should have at its heart this great action of the Church in which earth and heaven are joined.

And secondly, by gathering voices from twelve different Christian liturgical traditions, we could have no more eloquent testimony to the rich diversity of the life of the Christian communities of the Holy Land. Jerusalem is a city of many voices, voices that, by God's grace, are made for harmony. It is this harmony that must always be at the heart of our common witness to the Gospel in the Holy Land, and in desiring to promote "increased mutual awareness" between Christian Churches and for the respect of religious freedom" , this project has an admirable goal.

This is a critical period in the history of our city and region, and we are glad to support a project that seeks to uphold the fundamental values and values of our heritage.

Once again, we thank you. Mademoiselle Nebel. for your work in making the Eucharistic Symphony available in this way, and we invite you all to Stay after this time of opening remarks to view excerpts from the DVD in the Bookshop.

**Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!**

**Al- Masiach qam! Hakken qam!**

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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**PASCHAL GREETING TO H.B.  
NOURHAN MANOUGIAN, ARMENIAN  
PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM.**

Holy City of Jerusalem, 8 May 2013

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Dear Members of the Brotherhood of Saint James,

*"It is the day of the Resurrection.*

*Let us shine brightly for the festival, and also embrace one another-And thus let us cry aloud,*

*Christ is risen from the dead; by death he has trampled death,*

*and to those in the tombs he has granted life", (Anastaseos imera).*

We greet you, Your Beatitude, in the light and the grace of this Joyful Feast of Feasts, when the Church rejoices in the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over the power of death. This day of resurrection is, therefore, a day of new birth for humanity and the world, for the gate of heaven is now open to all.

We are especially glad to share in this celebration with you, Your Beatitude, on this first Easter after your election. We have worked together in the past, and with your election we look forward to a deeper and stronger relationship between our two Brotherhoods as we move in to the future.

We have been greatly encouraged during this Holy Week and Easter celebration that all has gone smoothly and well in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and in the Holy places, and we cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of the message to the world of our peaceful coexistence. The eyes of all look to Jerusalem in hope, and we are the servants and guardians of those places that are signs to them of this hope: Our privilege comes with a great responsibility.

We know of Your Beatitude's commitment to this mission- In this time of challenge and uncertainty in our region, our mission is of even greater importance than at any period in the past. The future well-being of the Christian presence in the Holy Land, and the future assurance of the Christian character of Jerusalem, rest on our work together for the sake of these fundamental objectives.

So we are encouraged, and we wish to express to Your Beatitude our commitment to do all in our power to show a united Christian witness at this delicate time in our history, so that the world may see Jerusalem to be a city of genuine coexistence and enduring peace-"

May Christ, our true God, who is risen from the dead, prosper this work by his grace, and may His glorious resurrection from

the dead give us courage and confidence in our mission.

We assure you, Your Beatitude, of our prayers for you and for the swift confirmation of your election. And we pray for God's grace on the Brotherhood of Saint James and the entire Armenian community of the Holy Land.

**Christ is risen! He is risen Indeed!**

Thank you.

His Beatitude

**THEOPHILOS III**

Patriarch of Jerusalem