

# THE REPATRIATION OF THE RELICS OF SAINT SAVVA THE SANCTIFIED

On Wednesday, October 13/26, 2022, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem celebrated the feast of the repatriation of the relics of our Holy Father Savva the Sanctified.

On this holiday, the Church of Jerusalem celebrates the fact that the holy relic of Saint Savva, preserved incorruptible and intact to this day, was taken by the Crusaders to Venice and was returned under the authority of the Roman Church to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem on October 26, 13 1965. A solemn reception was then held for the holy relic at Jaffa Gate. After this, it was placed for veneration at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for a week and then returned to the place where it belonged, the Lavra, which Saint Savva founded, for the sanctification and help of its monks and pilgrims.

On the eve of the feast, Vespers was officiated by His Eminence, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and at night there was an all-night vigil, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, along with Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Arab-speaking Priests. The chanting was delivered by Archimandrite Antypas from Mount Athos with Hierodeacon Simeon and his helpers in Greek on the right and Archimandrite Philotheos and his choir in Arabic on the left, at the presence of pilgrims from Greece, Romania and from Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the

honour of his name: make his praise glorious" (Ps 66,1-2) the psalmist proclaims.

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The grace of our Holy Father Savva the Sanctified has gathered us all in his holy Lavra to celebrate the great event of the repatriation of his holy relics.

Our Father Savva became a citizen of the desert and "an angel in flesh" because he applied in both theory and action the urging words of Saint Paul: "ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3, 1-4).

Having as a foundation Paul's healthy words, "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3, 1-2), Saint Savva showed Godly zeal and self-denial on the one hand, and on the other, he excelled among his co-ascetics the monks, because he was "strengthened with might by [God's] Spirit in the inner man" (ref. Ephes. 3,16).

In addition, Saint Savva was called "sanctified" because he sought the sanctification according to the saying "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12,14). "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification (1 Thess. 4,3), Saint Paul preaches again.

Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself says in His prayer to God the Father about His disciples and those who believe and

follow Him: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17,17). Here the truth is Christ's Spirit, the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit is the truth" according to the voice of John the Evangelist (1 John 5,6), Saint Cyril of Alexandria interprets.

In the reply of the Holy Church Fathers about what the sanctification of those who love God means, Saint Basil the Great says: "Sanctification means to devote ourselves to the Holy God wholeheartedly and without separation at all times, through the care and study of the things pleasing to Him". And Saint Gregory the Theologian says: "Sanctification is living along with God".

In other words, without the sanctification by the power of the Holy Spirit, man is unable to see God, namely the unapproachable light. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8,12), the Lord says. And the Saint's hymnographer says that the God-bearing father was seen from his early infancy to be a sanctified vessel, our Father and a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, my dear brethren, our Father Savva was seen and appeared to be a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Behold the true testimony and the visible proof before our eyes, his incorrupt and fragrant full body of his relics. Behold the light, the true light, the light of life "Thou art near, O Lord; and all thy commandments are truth" (Ps. 119,151), David chants. "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?" the Prophet Jeremiah announces (Jeremiah 23,23).

With today's feast of the repatriation of Saint Savva's relics from Venice of Italy at the place of his monastic striving, all of us are called to draw nigh to God, because He is a God that is near us. The way of our approaching the good God and friend of man is shown to us by Saint Savva the sanctified through the words of Saint Paul "dearly beloved, let us

cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7,1). Many happy returns."

After the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, a monastic meal followed.

Giving thanks to God, His Beatitude received the thanks of the Fathers of Saint Savva's Lavra and returned to Jerusalem.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE FEAST OF THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Tuesday, September 14/27, 2022, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was celebrated by the Patriarchate.

On this holiday, the Church has primarily the commemoration of the Lord Jesus Christ raised on the Cross for our salvation, but also the memory of the elevation of the wood of the cross, when it was found under Saint Helen and raised by the Archbishop of Jerusalem Makarios in sight and worship of the pilgrims and thousands of pilgrims for the Consecration ceremony of the Church of the Resurrection.

This world-historical event was celebrated with Vespers in the evening and with a Divine Liturgy on the morning of the feast in the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection.

Great Vespers and the Divine Liturgy were officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Co-

celebrants to His Beatitude for the Divine Liturgy were their Eminences; the Metropolitans Isychios of Kapitolias and Timotheos of Bosra, Panteleimon of Xanthi and Peritheorion – visiting from Greece –, Panteleimon of Maronia and Komotini, the Archbishops, Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sebasteia, Demetrios of Lydda, Nectarios of Anthedona, Bishop Parthenios from the Church of Achrida, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the ministering Priest of the Russian speaking Community of the Patriarchate in Ein Karem Archimandrite Nikolai and Ioannis from the Church of Romania and other priests from many Orthodox countries.

The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Gotsopoulos with the Patriarchal School students. Both services were attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and a very large congregation of pilgrims.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by the exaltation of the Holy Cross according to the following formality:

From the Holy Gate of the Catholicon of the Church, His Beatitude blessed the Holy Entrance and the procession was led by H.H.B., with the participation of Archpriests, Priests and deacons, the people following in front of the Sacred Edicule on the right and through the Seven Arches it went to the chapel of Saint Helen. From there it went down to the Cave after the incense offering at the Altar of the Armenians and the Throne of Saint Helen. At the Cave of the Finding of the Sacred Wood, the exaltation of the Cross was held according to the Typikon of the Church and the apolytikion “God save thy people” was chanted three times before the placement of the Cross at the point of its finding and it was exalted at the four parts of the horizon. The Troparia of the feast were chanted and from there, the litany went out, passing through the Seven Arches, marching three times around the Holy Sepulchre, the Sacred Wood bearing on the heads of the High

Priests, and concluded to the Horrendous Golgotha.

There, the Holy Cross was once again raised by His Beatitude to the four points of the horizon for the sanctification of the faithful and of the whole creation.

After the Exaltation ceremony was completed, the Holy Cross was placed on the Holy Table of Golgotha and the Bishops and the Consul General of Greece venerated it and the faithful received the flowers of the Holy Cross for their sanctification in thanksgiving and praise to God.

After the ceremony was over, the full congregation went to the Patriarchate Reception Hall, where a fasting feast was served, and His Beatitude spoke with the following address:

“The cross is a trophy for Christ; it was set on the ground once and for all and the devils are always driven away by its force. Where are the killings of idols and animals in vain? Where are the temples and the fire of unbelief? Everything was extinguished by holy blood and fell. And the cross is a powerful force, an invisible arrow, an immaterial medicine, a luscious wound, a dazzling glory” Saint John of Damascus says.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece, Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

Today the new tabernacle, the holy Church, which our Lord Jesus Christ made “paradise intelligible” celebrates the universal exaltation of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross, through which the extinguishing and falling of the tree of knowledge were accomplished.

The truly universal and blessed event was celebrated by the holy Church of Jerusalem, the participation of High Priests and priests of the brother Orthodox Churches and the presence

of pious pilgrims, in a thanksgiving gathering at this place, where Saint Helen found the Cross, as well as at the place where the wood of the Cross was solidified, that is, on the Horrendous Golgotha, where He was crucified.

“A trophy for Christ, the cross ... was always extinguished by a holy blood and fell,” Saint John of Damascus preaches. And this, because the Son and Word of God, Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name (Philip 2,6-9), according to Saint Paul.

Through His humiliation unto death, death and the cross, “Christ freed us from the law of sin and the death of corruption” (Cf. Rom. 8:2). So here is the omnipotent power, the weapon against the devil, the immaterial medicine and the astonishing glory but also the beauty of the Church, which is founded on the sacrificial and crucified blood of Christ. Because of this, the Cross of Christ is the inexhaustible source of the power of the Church.

On the Cross and through the Cross our Lord Jesus Christ defeated the devil and provided our souls with His Peace. He is “the God of love and peace” (2 Cor. 13:11). Through His blood on the Cross, Christ made peace on earth and in heaven (cf. Col. 1:20), the wise Paul preaches again.

The exaltation of the Holy and life-giving Cross, that is, of Christ, calls us, my beloved brothers, as faithful members of His body, to fight on the one hand against our personal passions and on the other hand for the restoration of the broken unity of the one Holy Catholic Church and of the Apostolic Orthodox Church, listening to the commandment of blessed Paul, “studying to keep the unity of the Spirit in the

bond of peace", (Eph. 4,3)

After the hymn, we say: "Today the Cross is lifted up and all the world is sanctified. For Thou, while throned with the Father and with the All-holy Spirit, by stretching out Thy hands thereon, hast drawn the whole world to Thyself, that it might know Thee, O my Christ. Therefore, vouchsafe divine glory to them that trust Thy goodness" and grant peace in our region and in the whole world. (Matins, Exapostelaria). Many and peaceful returns. Amen."

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS IN SAHNEEN**

On Wednesday, September 8/21, 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Nativity of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

On this feast, the Church commemorates that the Theotokos is a gift of God to her childless parents Joachim and Anna and to all humanity, because from her, the Redeemer of the world, Christ, was made flesh by the Holy Spirit.

This feast was celebrated in the Greek Orthodox Community of the city of Sahneen in Northern Israel, in the region of Acre – Ptolemais, in the magnificent and huge Holy Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos, erected by the Community with the significant financial contribution of the Patriarchate.

The feast was celebrated with a Divine Liturgy, the first in the Holy Church after the consecration ceremony, which was



held by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, Metropolitan Hesychios of Capitoliass, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nektarios, Archimandrites Artemios, Meletios and Marcellus, many Priests from the North Galilee district of the Patriarchate and from other regions, the Head of the Russian MISSIA in the Holy Land, Archimandrite Alexander, Fr Issa Musleh, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Dositheos. The chanting was delivered by the Acre Byzantine choir under Archimandrite Philotheos as the service was attended by the representatives of the local authorities, the Spiritual Father of Saint Savvas Lavra, Archimandrite Eudokimos, the honorary presence of Mr Samer Khouri, son of Mr Said Khouri, who have been great financial donors of the construction of this Church, the former Mayor of Bethlehem Mrs Baboon, Mr Caesar Marjieh, the religious leader of the Druze Mr Tarif, the Ambassador of Greece to Tel Aviv Mr Kyriakos Loukakis, the Ambassador of Russia, the Ambassador of Bela Russ, the Cypriot Mr Mihail who made the wooden ikonostasion, a group of pilgrims and many faithful Christians from Sahneen and other cities of Israel and Cana of Galilee.

On this very important occasion of the consecration, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos delivered the following Sermon, which was read by Fr Issa Mousleh:

“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. (Ps. 84, 1-2).

Beloved brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

We rend glory and thanks to the Holy Triune God, who deemed us worthy today, to celebrate the consecration of this magnificent Church in your beautiful city of Sahneen, in

honour and commemoration of the Nativity of the Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, chanting along with Saint Andrew of Jerusalem: "In thee O Immaculate Maiden, is the mystery of the Trinity praised and glorified. For the Father was well pleased and the Word dwelt among us, and the Divine Spirit overshadowed thee" (Matins, Ode 6, 2<sup>nd</sup> canon, glory).

We begged this divine Spirit Who overshadowed the Virgin Mary, the living temple of God's Word so that it would also overshadow this house of God.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), says the Lord. Nevertheless, "the place where thou standest is holy ground" (cf. Acts 7:33), namely the place of worship and gathering, where "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Hebrews 2:12, Ps. 22:23). And according to God-inspired Ezra: "'And now our God has chosen us to lead us to salvation and give us support in his sanctified place, enlighten our eyes and give life to children in the service of our passions", (2 Esdr. 9,8). And according to our Lord Jesus Christ: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

During His incarnate Divine Providence, the Son and Word of God "hath filled all things with His light, and by His Holy Spirit, He hath renewed the whole world. For a house is founded to the Lord's praise and glory, wherein Christ our God, for the salvation of mortals, doth consecrate and hallow the hearts of all His faithful flock" (Minaion Sept. 13, Kathisma 1 of Matins).

This glory of the Holy Triune God and the unity of faith in Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us bless and praise every day in this holy tabernacle of the glory of the Lord, of this newly built Church, established in honour of the Nativity of the Blessed Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary,

about whom the hymnographer Sergius of Jerusalem says: "Come all ye faithful, let us run to the Virgin. For behold, she is born who was foreordained before her conception to be the Mother of our God: the jewel of virginity, the rod of Aaron, that sprang from Jesse's root, the preaching of the prophets, and the scion of righteous Joachim of Annal. She is born, and with her, the world is made new. She is brought forth, and the Church is arrayed with her proper majesty. She is the holy temple, the vessel of the Godhead, the virginal instrument, the royal bridechamber wherein was accomplished the wondrous mystery of the ineffable union of the natures that come together in Christ. As we worship Him, we praise the all-immaculate birth of the Virgin" (Great Vespers, Aposticha, Glory).

Behold the glory and richness of the God-human body of the Church, but also of its sanctification on earth, as the hymnographer says, "heaven is the Church, shining with many lights, appeared everywhere, illuminating the faithful; in which we cry out; establish this house, Lord."

Indeed, the Church enlightens all believers by the power of the Holy Spirit, because as the Apostle Peter says; "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Peter 5:10). Moreover, in the house of God we are called to "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17) the psalmist says. And Saint Paul entreats us, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

And this is so because the Church of God is a place of worship, that is, a place of a mystical converse between God and man, according to what is written in the Holy Bible, "And

the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle" (Exodus 33:11). In other words, the house of God is a place of prayer, which according to Saint John of the Ladder, is in its quality a communion and union of man with God, and in its power, the conciliation of God, food of the soul, enlightenment of the mind, proof of hope and solution of sorrow.

On this solemn and historic day for the city of Sahneen and its inhabitants, on the occasion of receiving from the truly admirable and now consecrated house of God, erected on the initiative of the pious Rum Orthodox flock of ours, which enjoys a peaceful co-existence with its fellow-religious compatriots, we boast in Christ, and after Saint Paul: "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Romans 5:2-4).

The Godly zeal and the reverence of the people of God for the Theotokos and Mother of God, through whom the earth and the heavens are joined and the natives were regenerated and from decay we were renewed and we became gods, built a temple as a house of prayer; where we receive invisibly the grace of the Holy Spirit.

We express our warm gratitude to everyone who in various ways cooperated and contributed to the achievement of this important project, especially to the local Council of the city of Sahneen and its honourable Presidents, to the blessed Mr Said Khoury and his beloved son, Samer Khoury, to our sister Church of Moscow and the charitable Russian foundations and finally to the tireless dentist Mr Magid and his family.

Let this work be for the glory of God and the praise of the

city of Sahneen and its peace-loving people. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). May it once again be the worshipful house of God, a symbol of faith, love, hope, peace, justice and security "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33), Saint Paul preaches.

Let us thank our Lord God, saying: "Christ the true light, the light that illuminates and sanctifies every man coming into the world, let the light of your face shine upon us, so that in it we may see the unattainable light; and direct our steps to the work of your commandments, by the prayers of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, whose nativity we celebrate and that of all the Saints". Amen.

The Head of this Community, Archimandrite Fr Andrean Aleme, was awarded an honorary cross by His Beatitude.

At noon, the Community hosted a meal for His Beatitude and His entourage and many others, during which His Beatitude again spoke as follows:

"And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it" (Ps. 90:17).

Beloved brethren in Christ and Fathers,

Honourable Ladies and gentlemen,

Respected members of the Ecclesiastical Council,

Honourable Mayor and distinguished guests,

The city of Sahneen rejoices and is glad because the Lord God has enlightened the work of the hands of our pious Rum Orthodox Community. And we say this, because such works, like today's magnificently consecrated Church, are on the one hand a jewel for the wider area of your city, on the other hand,

they highlight the cultural progress of the religious communities living here peacefully and harmoniously. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

This magnificent Church, along with the other houses of prayer are a true testimony that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). The words emanating from God's mouth are none other than divine love, peace, justice and mutual love and love for those who hate us, "love your enemies, bless those who curse us, do good to those who hate us", (Matthew 5:44), the Lord orders.

The Run Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the mother of the Churches but also the first religious and ecclesiastical institution, has not ceased throughout the centuries to preach and confess and promote the divine values and commands, which elevate the human being, the part that is made up of flesh and soul. The Lord says: "What is a man profited if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" (Matthew 16,26). For these reasons, we all greet all of you who honoured Us with your presence for this historical event of the Consecration of this house of prayer and from the bottom of our hearts, we thank the respected members of your Community for the Abrahamic hospitality they provided.

In addition, we pray that the Lord God through the prayers of the blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary will overshadow and protect this city, its people and the Christian flock. Many happy returns, spiritual and fruitful. Amen".

After the banquet, His Beatitude visited the City Hall of Sahneen.

The Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary was also celebrated in an Episcopal Divine Liturgy at the shrine of the Theotokos' Tomb in Gethsemane, presided over by His Eminence

Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba under the chanting of the newly arrived students of the Patriarchal School of Zion, led by Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos.

After the end of the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen, His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Hellenoupolis hosted a reception at the hegoumeneion.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS IN BEIT JALA**

On Sunday, September 5th/18th 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Nativity of our Lady and Immaculate Mary in the Holy Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Beit Jala.

During this feast, the Church remembers that the Theotokos is a gift of God to her childless parents, Joachim and Anna, and to all humanity, because from her the Redeemer of the world, Christ, was made flesh by the Holy Spirit.

This feast was celebrated with a warm welcome of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theofilos, under the abbot of Beit Jala Archimandrite Ignatios, the Priests, the Local Authorities and the Bodies of the Scouts of Beit Jala before the Divine Liturgy, which was officiated by His Beatitude. Co-celebrants of His Beatitude were their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias and Archbishop Methodios of Tabor, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the Hegoumen of Saint George Al Khader, Archimandrite Porphyrios, the Community

Priests, Fr Pavlos, Yusef and Issa. The chanting was delivered by the Community Byzantine Choir in the presence of the entire congregation of Beit Jala and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“May the Lord give you a sign; behold, the Virgin will bear and bear a son, and you shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14), exclaims the prophet Isaiah.

Beloved brethren in Christ,

Dear Christians,

The grace of the Holy Spirit brought us all to blessed by the Lord city of yours so that after the holy and righteous Godfathers Joachim and Anne we celebrate the beginning of our salvation, the only Theotokos and Mother of God.

Today we also celebrate the pure Virgin who sprang from the root of Jesse, the source of Life, that is, the Mother of the Son and Word of our Lord God, Jesus Christ, as the hymn of the Church says “Today God, Who resteth upon the noetic thrones, hath made ready for Himself a holy throne upon the earth. He that established the heavens in wisdom, hath prepared a living Heaven in His love for man. For from a barren root He hath made a life-bearing branch to spring froth for us, even His Mother: O God of wonders and hope of the hopeless, O Lord, glory to Thee” (Great Vespers, Sticheron 1).

The sign that Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would give you is none other than the holy throne, which God prepared for Himself on earth, the Virgin Mary. This is the sign by which the Lord made His Saviour known before the nations; He revealed His righteousness according to the psalmist. His Saviour is the incarnate One from the pure blood of the Virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit, God the Word our Lord Jesus



Christ, whose saving work concerns the whole human race according to the testimony of the Evangelist Luke "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God ", (Luke 3,6/ Is. 40,5).

Through the birth of the Virgin Mary, the renewal of the world came with her. And this is because in this virgin Mary the regeneration of the old Adam and the recalling of Eve were born. This was the source of incorruption and the release of decay, through which we were made gods and redeemed from death according to the hymn. Through the Virgin, in other words, the lifting of the curse of the first-born and the giving of the blessing, as this is expressed by the hymn saying: "Thy Nativity O Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to the whole world; for from thee hath dawned the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, annulling the course and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting" (Apolytikion).

Eternal life was given to us humans through the Theotokos, who, according to Saint John of Damascus, the Theotokos is the one who binds people tightly to God and the one with whom the heavens and the earth were united, returning the things of men to God and the things of God to man.

Today we celebrate a paradox, indeed a miracle, glorifying and praising God the Father, Who revealed to you a hidden mystery of eternal times, (Cf. Rom. 16:25), that is, the predestined Mother of God for our salvation. The paradox of this mystery is not understood "in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the evidence of the Spirit and power, so that your faith is not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (1 Cor. 2, 4-5), Saint Paul preaches. According to Saint John of Damascus: "By faith, we understand that all things have been made from nothing into being by the power of God; and all things divine and human we accomplish by faith. And faith is consent without much examination". This means that the knowledge of God or the knowledge of divine things is not scientific knowledge, which is acquired through research and

research methods; it is a gift and at the same time an experience and the fruit of faith. This is why the psalmist begs, saying: " Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me"(Ps. 51:12); interpreting David's word, Hesychius says: "Right spirit is the Spirit of God and not the vital spirit in you. [Prophet David] wants this Spirit of God to be initiated in the most vital parts inside him. For Spirit is the true salvation, namely Christ. " All creation blesses the virgin born of the barren Anne, and especially the holy Church of Christ because she (the virgin) fulfilled the promise given to the prophets (Acts 13:32) "Lord my God, I will praise you; I will praise your name because you have done wonderful things, an ancient true will", (Isaiah 25,1), exclaims the prophet Isaiah.

Saint Cyril of Alexandria says that our Saviour wanted to give those who knew Him extraordinary grace, that is, the grace to be with Him and see His glory because He says " for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John 17,24), thus showing that the power of the mystery concerning the Saviour is the most ancient, and the way of our salvation, which was accomplished through his mediation, was known in advance, [foreseen by God the Father]. Especially those who know themselves are granted the grace that the Saviour willed from his conscience and they see his glory: "loved He says before the foundation of the world", its antiquity, however, shows the power of the mystery in itself, and that the way, accomplished through Christ's mediation, remains foreknown to the God and Father of our salvation".

Of this way, indeed of our salvation, accomplished through the mediation of Christ, a humble subject and accomplice was the Virgin, born of the righteous Joachim and Anna. For we too, after the hymn, cry out and say: "Thou art become a golden censer, for the Fire dwelt in thy womb, even the Word by the Holy Spirit; and He is seen in man's form, O pure Birth-giver of God" (Ode 6, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canon, Both now). The one and only who

introduced Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls". Amen. Many happy returns".

This was followed by a litany of the Holy Icon, a treat in the event hall of the Church and a meal for the Patriarchal Entourage under the Community, where once again His Beatitude spoke as follows:

"Thy Nativity O Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to the whole world; for from thee hath dawned the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, annulling the course and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting" (Apolytikion).

Beloved brothers in Christ, Your Excellency Mr President and respected members of the Ecclesiastical Council and other holy institutions,

Today, we enjoyed the sacrament of the divine and bloodless sacrifice, that is, the Holy Eucharist the proclaimed joy to all the world by the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary.

The Theotokos and Mother of God the Word and of our Saviour Christ, but also Mother of the Church of Christ was destined and chosen by God the Father before the foundation of the world to give us this joy in the Holy Spirit.

Our holy Church of Christ, being the Body of Christ is the vine and we are its branches, as the Lord says: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned"(John 15,5-6).

Indeed, my beloved brothers, we who are clothed with Christ in holy baptism, those who receive the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, have become branches of the true vine, that is, of Christ. For we are called to abide in Him.

The Lord says, " He that abideth in me, and I in him " (John 15:5).

We say this in order to emphasize that the Church of Christ, and especially the Church of Jerusalem, is the protection and safe haven of those who praise and magnify the Mother of God, by whom the Sun of righteousness rose, our Saviour Christ, but also the physician of souls and bodies; So along with Saint John of Damascus we say to the Virgin Mary:

"Rejoice thou who are full of grace the most joyous name and thing of all joy, from whom Christ was born into the world, unrepeatable joy, the hospital (=healer) of Adam's sorrow. Many and blessed returns. Amen.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM ADDRESSES THE VII CONGRESS OF THE LEADERS OF WORLD AND TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS**

The two-day interreligious event kicked off this week in Kazakhstan's capital of Nur-Sultan. Government officials and spiritual leaders from around the globe gathered this week in Kazakhstan for the 7th Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

The interreligious event themed 'The Role of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in the Spiritual and Social Development of Human Civilization in the Post-Pandemic Period'

included representatives of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Shintoism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and other religions, including His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem, the Head of the Catholic Church Pope Francis, Egypt's Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Sheikh Ahmed El-Tayeb, among others.

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III gave the following speech:

*"Mr. President,*

*Mr. Secretary,*

*Honoured Fellow Participants,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*We wish to express our gratitude to the leadership of this Congress for your invitation to address this distinguished gathering of religious leaders and scholars from all over the world. We are gathered here in a season, unprecedented in our lifetime, of widespread and deep conflict and war, economic instability, the displacement of populations, the ongoing consequences of pandemic, and profound political and social divisions in almost every corner of our world.*

*And we gather here primarily as those who are representatives of our several religious traditions. At the heart of all great historic religious traditions are the values of peace-making, justice, and reconciliation. All religious traditions have at their heart the supreme value of peace: peace between God and humanity, peace within the human family, and peace between humanity and creation.*

*An Orthodox Christian perspective on peace and peace-making begins with the peace that is at the heart of God himself. As we read in the New Testament, "blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Mt. 5:9). Indeed,*

*according to Saint Paul, from God comes perfect peace, the peace that “surpasses all understanding” (Phil. 4:7). Peace is the foundation of all divinely-ordered relationship.*

*We who come from Jerusalem – which means “the foundation of Peace” – understand the power of peace which gives birth to co-existence, mutual respect, and harmony. Peace is the mother of harmony, because if there is no peace in the human heart, where the spirit of God dwells, there can be no peace among fellow human beings or among the rest of creation. This yearning in our human nature for peace draws us, whatever our religious tradition, away from the pettiness of the self-interest that leads to violence and conflict to a new and radical restraint and to a concern for the other, the stranger, the one in need.*

*Peace is born of compassion, and to seek peace is an act of the will on the part of the believer. As it is said in the Holy Bible:*

*let them turn away from evil and do good;*

*let them seek peace and pursue it. (1 Pet. 3:11)*

*And it is also written:*

*Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;*

*righteousness and peace will kiss each other. (Ps. 84 [85]:11)*

*Here we see the power of peace and peace-making that is a divine commandment, and therefore we are to take this into serious consideration and translate it into real action.*

*The reality on the ground is that we are confronted by indisputable challenges. The whole of humanity is under real threat. Therefore it is our moral mission and our moral obligation as religious leaders to do our utmost to help our civic and political leaders to take into account the*

*importance of peace. For God is a “God not of disorder (which is ἀκαταστασία in Greek), but of peace” (1 Cor. 14:33). Furthermore we should be reminded that we must “pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace” (2 Tim. 2:22) and that “peace and security” (1 Thess. 5:3) are at the heart of God’s will for the human family.*

*There is no denying that humanity throughout the ages has suffered from war and violence. War and violence are not from God, and this is why the great Prophet Isaiah is exhorting us to remind us of our responsibilities, and not to be idle, by telling us:*

*they shall beat their swords into plowshares*

*and their spears into pruning hooks;*

*nation shall not lift up sword against nation;*

*neither shall they learn war any more. (Is. 2:4)*

*This is not just a poetic sentiment; this is a divine challenge to all who hold positions of authority. So the impossible becomes possible.*

*May Almighty God, the God of peace, from whom we learn the power of peace, enlighten our minds and guide our thoughts during this Congress, and may God give us the strength and the wisdom to return to our countries and communities renewed in our commitment to be messengers of God’s peace-building in our time.*

*Thank you again for hosting us.”*

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# THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, August 15/28, 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, that is, of her Ascension into heaven by her Son, who from His right-hand remains in perpetuity for the sake of the Church and of all humanity, always reaching "of all those who are in harsh circumstances, in sorrow and in need".

This feat was celebrated in the Gethsemane Church of the Dormition and in the Theotokos Tomb with a Divine Liturgy.

This Liturgy was presided over by the H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Metropolitan Timotheos of Bosra, the Archbishops, Aristarchos of Constantina and Makarios of Katar, the ministering Priests of the shrine, Archimandrites Meletios and Dionysios, Arabic-speaking Elders and priests of other Orthodox Churches, of the Patriarchate of Moscow and Romania. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and a visiting Byzantine choir from Greece, under Mr Ioannis Plevritis. The Liturgy was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and a large congregation of faithful Christians, coming from the occupied territories and pilgrims from Greece, Cyprus, Romania and foreign countries.

Before the Holy Communion H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theofilos delivered the following Sermon:

"The Most High hath hallowed His tabernacle" (Psalm 45,5). "The mountain of God is a butter mountain, a curdled mountain, this is the mountain wherein God is pleased to dwell", (Psalm 67, 16-17), exclaims the praiser of the blessed Theotokos



Saint John of Damascus, invoking the psalmist.

Beloved brothers in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

We, as the other Apostles, gathered here, in the village of Gethsemane, to honour the memory of the venerable metastasis of our most glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary, but also to venerate her Sacred Tomb.

*“How the source of life is transferred to life, passing through death! How she who in her birth overcame the limits of nature now submits to its laws and submits to death the immortal body. For this [the body] must lay off mortality and put on incorruptibility, because the Lord [the sovereign] of nature did not refuse to submit to death. He perishes according to the flesh and with death He abolishes death and with corruption, He grants us incorruptibility and makes His death the source of the Resurrection”, St. John of Damascus exclaims with admiration.*

*Indeed, the Virgin Mary was shown to be the source, that is, the Mother of life, and Life, in this case, is Christ according to his word: “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25), “I give thee life eternal” (John 10:28). And according to the testimony of Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist, he who is united by faith to the Son of God and has Him as his own, has the true and eternal life. “He who has the Son has life” (John 5:12). How much more “has the life of the eternally gracious and blessed in women Mary (Lk. 1,25), from whose pure blood the Son of God became incarnate through the Holy Spirit and her Son.*

*Today the Holy Church of Christ solemnly celebrates a paradoxical miracle in Gethsemane where “the source of life”, according to the hymn, “is placed in a monument, and the tomb becomes a stairway to heaven”. Today the Theotokos and Mother of God, the exalted throne of the Most High moved from earth*

to heaven. "For through her the salvation of all mortals hath come. We have not the strength to look upon her, and it is not possible to render her worthy honour" (Glory of Vespers, grave tone). "Today she committeth her soul full of light, not the immaculate hands of Him that was incarnate of her without seed" (Entreaty, both now).

In other words, the Immaculate Virgin Mary is also the "living after death" and this is because her death was, on the one hand, a life-giving death, on the other hand, it introduced her to the glory and life indeed of her Only Begotten Son, "He who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34), according to the divine Paul. That is why she saves through her Son, the faithful people of God, as her hymnographer Saint Cosmas, says: "The bounds of nature are overcome in thee, O immaculate Virgin: for thy childbirth is virginal, and thy death is the espousal of life. O thou who after childbirth art virgin, and who after death art living, do thou, O Theotokos, ever save thine inheritance" (Katavasiae, Ode 9).

We, who honour her venerable Dormition, beseech the Ever-Virgin Mother of God, who has saved the human race torn from the ancestral decision [=sin], to intercede with her Son and God, the Lord and our Jesus Christ, for the salvation of our souls. Amen. Many Happy returns!"

Many of the faithful received Holy Communion.

After the Divine Liturgy, His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Hellenoupolis hosted a reception treat in the hegoumeneion with fruit and refreshments.

In honour of the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, Divine Liturgies were held in the celebratory town of Abboud, by His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios of Sebasteia and in Ain Arik, by His Eminence Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, August 6 / 19, 2022, the Despotic feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord was celebrated at the Patriarchate. During this holiday, the Church remembers that our Lord Jesus Christ before His passion took three of the pre-qualified disciples, Peter and James and John, and they went up to Tabor, where He was transfigured before them.

There, He hid His human nature for a little while and revealed to the disciples His divine nature in its brilliance, shining more than the sun and His clothes were now white as snow and was seen with the prophets Moses and Elias, conversing with them about His passion, which would happen in Jerusalem in the near future. Then a bright cloud overshadowed them and yet the voice of the Father was heard "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am blessed, you are listening to Him" ☩☩ and Peter asked Him to build three tents for them to stay there, (Matt. 17, 1-5). The Lord revealed this vision, showing the glory of His Resurrection, to strengthen His disciples during the time of passion and to show the original beauty of man before the fall, the lost and able to be regained by men in Him. After this, the Lord took His disciples and came down from the Mount.

This event was celebrated on Mount Tabor with an outdoor All-night Vigil, presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theofilos. Concelebrating with Him were their Eminences, the Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Bishop Sergius of Estonia of the Moscow Patriarchate, Archimandrite

Parthenios, Archimandrite Alexander from the Russian MISSIA in Jerusalem, many visiting Priests from the Patriarchates of Moscow and Romania, many Priests from the Jerusalem Patriarchate, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Hegoumen of Acre Archimandrite Philotheos and the choir established by him as a large congregation of faithful Christians attended the service.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Being perfect God, Thou becamest perfect mortal, mingling manhood with the entire Godhead in Thine own hypostasis, which Moses and Elias saw in its two natures on Mount Tabor”, Saint John Damascene proclaims (Minaion, Ode 3, Canon 2, Troparion 3).

Beloved brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

Today the Holy Church of Christ most joyfully celebrates the commemoration of the Holy Transfiguration of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, that is why we also, both the clergy and the people came to this holy place of Mount Tabor, to exclaim along with the Apostles; thou art blessed the God of our Fathers.

“What a great and terrible spectacle is seen today! The visible sun shone down from the heaven, but from the earth, the incomparable spiritual Sun of Righteousness shone out like lightning upon Mount Tabor” (Minaion, Ode 6, Canon 2, Troparion 1), Saint John Damascene says, marvelling at the event of the Transfiguration of our Saviour Christ. Indeed, “now the unheard-of is heard; for the Son, Who without father came from the Virgin, is gloriously testified by the Father’s voice to be God and man, the same unto the ages” (Ode 7, Canon 2, Troparion 3).

Because Christ spoke many times to His Disciples about His Passion on the Cross, His death and the three-day burial, and about His glorious Resurrection, as well as about the martyrdom which His Disciples would face at the end of their lives; and because He wanted to show them what exactly is His future glory, Who is “the beloved Son of God the Father” (cf. Matt. 17:5), He took with Him “Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him..., and a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face and were sore afraid” (Matt. 17:1-6).

Interpreting these Gospel words, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: “We say that the Transfiguration of Christ happened without casting off the human form of His body, but with the cladding of some luminous glory, which transformed the colour of the unworthy form of the flesh to an inner appearance, just like Saint Paul says: “It [the body] is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power” (1 Cor. 15:43). Therefore, the body is naked flesh, not completely covered neither with glory, nor with natural brilliance, but it has simplicity and lack of divine glory along with infirmity. At the time of the resurrection, there will be a complete change of glory according to the divine nature, and not a change of form. Because it is then that it will be luminous with the cloak of the divine glory: “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:43).

Noteworthy of today’s feast is the fact that “He Who Is, today was transfigured upon Mount Tabor before the disciples, Having taken on the nature of man, He showed in Himself the original beauty of its image” according to the hymnographer (Great

Vespers, Aposticha 1). In other words, our Saviour Jesus Christ revealed to His disciples the unspeakable greatness of His divinity, which is the uncreated light, as the Evangelists narrate: "And [Jesus] was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:2). Interpreting this phrase from the Gospel, the connoisseur of the divine illumination of the uncreated light, Saint Gregory Palamas, says: "But what is this cloud, and how did it overshadow them, while it was so luminous? Could it be the uncreated light, in which God dwells, the light that He is clothed upon like a garment? Because it is said: "He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies" (Psalm 18:11). And as the Apostle says, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. 6:16). Therefore, here, both light and darkness are one and the same, the light that overshadows due to its extreme brilliance".

Of this very divine luminous power of the working of the unapproachable and uncreated light of the Triune Divinity did the Prophets and Apostles who were present on Mount Tabor become communicants and seers, and along with them all the righteous and the Saints of the Church of Christ.

Let us pray then, my dear brethren, to our God and Saviour Christ, Who was transfigured on this Mount, that the light of His face may also shine upon us and we may be deemed worthy of the vision of His unapproachable glory. And let us say along with the hymnographer: "O changeless Light of the Light of Thine unbegotten Begetter, today, O Word, have we now seen in Thy Light's manifestation the Father and Holy Spirit as Light on Tabor, guiding with light all creation" (Exapostilarion). Amen! Many Happy Returns!"

Likewise, a morning Divine Liturgy was celebrated by the Most Reverend Metropolitan of Nazareth Kyriakos in this holy Church, fully consecrated by the rector Archimandrite

Hilarion, who also hosted a meal at lunchtime.

This event was also celebrated in the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ramallah, presided over by the Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, under the hospitality of the active Hegoumen Archimandrite Galaktion and the participation of a large congregation who prayed in contrition.

It was also celebrated at the Tomb of the Theotokos in Gethsemane, presided over by His Eminence, Archbishop Theodosios Sebastia, under the hospitality of His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Hellenoupolis and attended by a large congregation of monks, nuns and pilgrims.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE FEAST OF SAINT JOHN THE NEW HOZEVITE**

On Tuesday, July 28/August 10, 2022, the memory of Saint John the New Hozevite, from Romania, was celebrated in the Holy Monastery of his repentance, of Saint George and John the Hosevites.

Saint John was added to the Saints of the Church of Jerusalem by its Synodal decision and by a special canonization ceremony in the Holy Monastery of Hozeva on January 18th / 31st of the year 2016, designating July 28th as the day of his commemoration.

This year, the commemoration of Saint John was celebrated with an All-night Vigil, which was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration

of His Eminence, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the Archimandrites John and Abraham from the Patriarchate of Romania, the Hieromonk of the Monastery, Archimandrite Chrysogonos, and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by the Monks of the Brotherhood.

Before the Holy Communion, H.H.B. delivered the following Sermon:

“Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart” (Psalm 97:11), the psalmist proclaims.

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Noble pilgrims

The full of the divine grace memory of our Holy Father John the New Hozevite has gathered us all in this Holy Monastery, to glorify in Eucharist the One who has glorified His Saint, according to Saint Paul’s words: “whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Romans, 8:30). Inspired by the sacred desire for the desert life, our Father John left his homeland Romania and dwelt in the desert of the River Jordan, where the hermitages of the Monastery of Saint George the Hozevite are. “I”, Saint John says, “did not want high positions, nor did I desire wealth. I always had only the desire for the desert inside me like a flame”.

This unquenchable flame of his desire was kindled by David’s words: “Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness. Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes” (Psalm 119:123-124). In other words, Saint John fled to the desert seeking his salvation, both through strict asceticism and through the study of God’s law, that is, the Holy Scriptures, invoking the Apostle Paul saying: “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and



do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:8-11).

Our holy John succeeded in his fierce desire, to win Christ, but also to know the power of His Resurrection. This fact is also demonstrated by his Holy and Incorruptible relic before our eyes, as well as by the medicinal fragrance emanating from this. In addition, this fact, namely, the incorruptibility and sanctity of the relics of our Holy Father John, is an answer to the prayer of the psalmist who says: "Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation" (Psalm 85:7).

The chosen servant of God John, through his ascetic struggle in the desert but also through his preaching in written word, emerged as the Holy Apostle, a sincere and perfect worker of the Gospel of Christ. We say this because our Divine Father through us men and specifically through Saint John manifests the fragrance of the power of his knowledge in every place, as the Divine Paul preaches saying: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place" (2 Cor. 2:14).

Indeed, my beloved brothers, this holy place of Hozeva, which has revealed the illustrious multitude of holy and righteous ascetics and spirit-bearing Fathers, became a place, where the Son and Word of God and Son of the Ever-Virgin and most blessed Theotokos Mary, our Lord Jesus Christ reveals "the savour of his knowledge by us in every place" (2 Cor. 2:14).

Therefore, we who honour the commemoration of His Saint, cry aloud with Saint Paul: "O the depth of the riches both of the

wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

Let us beseech God, who works all things for all" (Cf. 1 Cor. 12:6), so that our Lord Christ, the true God, Who is risen from the dead, through the intercessions of the Most Holy Theotokos and of the today celebrated Our Holy Father John the New Hozevite, may direct our hearts to the love of God and to the obedience of Christ (Cf. 2 Thess. 3,5) and to the communion of His glory. Amen. Many happy returns".

Welcoming H.H.B., the Hegoumen and renovator of the Monastery, Archimandrite Constantinos addressed the Patriarch as follows:

"Your Beatitude, Father and Master, with Your Holy Entourage,

We celebrate once again the memory of Saint John the New Hozevite, whose incorrupt relic is treasured in the Holy Monastery of Hozeva, a refuge and comfort for all of us.

The times we live in are harsh and the need for inspiration and spiritual prototypes is imperative. Such a prototype is Saint John the New Hozevite, who, throughout his life was distinguished by the founding virtue of the Monks; the Humility that raises up high!

And while possessing so many virtues, he never boasted about them, according to Chrysostom's words: "This is humility, when one has the chance to boast, he brings himself down, and humbles himself, and finds balance" (Saint John Chrysostom, Homily on Genesis, Vol. 92, p. 167,29).

Also, applying to himself the phrase, "let us not believe ourselves to be superior, but consider all people superior to us" (Saint John Chrysostom, Homily on Genesis, Vol. 92, p.167,24), he found the precious Pearl, our Lord Jesus Christ!

The aforementioned facts are clearly displayed in the Saint's letter of some Monk of Mount Athos in 1957, and reveal his

character. He wrote among other things:

“I received your fraternal letter, but my situation did not allow me to answer you... I beg you to forgive me because, in addition to my illness, my carelessness contributed to this!... But I wonder how from the heights of the spiritual mountains you descended so low, as to my poverty, to benefit! I am poor and penniless, brother! I have spent my whole life in vain!... However, for the effort and willingness you have, I will write to you what I always say to myself... First, sell what you have, sacrifice whatever ability (you think you have) and erase everything you know except our holy Faith! And buy the field that has the treasure in it! The “field”, my brother, is the pure heart like a baby, the lack of malice and the simplicity of the Lord. Entrench it well and then dig there continuously with the Spirit Knife. If the soil is hard, wet it regularly with the water of tears and sweat so that it softens! And then the treasure will be seen. The prayer of the heart! Be careful not to bring it to the surface, because it disappears! May your mind only be nourished, brightened and secretly elevated where your soul desires!... Forgive me, brother, and help me with your holy prayer, because I am very weak, mentally and physically”.

Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

Pray that, through the intercessions of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos of Hozeva, and those of Saint John the New, whom we honour today, we may experience the humility that raises up high, and be deemed worthy of the endless joy of Paradise, always by the prayers of Your Beatitude, Amen!”

Fr. Konstantinos submitted to the website of the Patriarchate the following detailed biography of the Saint, supplementing the text of his canonization, and posted there for those interested to read it:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/blog/2016/01/31/day-of-canonization-of-st-john-the-new-chosebite-at-choseba-monastery/>

and benefit from it, which took place on January 18th / 31st of the year 2016:

### ***“Biography of Saint John the New Hozevite***

*Elias Iakov (passport name) was born in the village of Horondistea, in Botosani county, Romania, in 1913 to Maximus and Ekaterini. Due to the fact that he was orphaned by both parents, he was raised until the age of 11 by his pious grandmother Maria, who instilled in the child’s soul the Divine Teachings. After she slept in the Lord, he passed into the guardianship of an uncle and lived a hard childhood in the midst of contempt and deprivation, but with hope firmly oriented to the Lord Jesus, Whom he actually saw with his own eyes on Easter 1927, when he was crying inconsolably at the grave of his parents. The Lord said to him in a sweet voice:*

*“Don’t cry my child and don’t be sad, because yes, I am with you. Christ is Risen!”*

*Studious and intelligent, after seven years of studies – in conditions of incredible poverty – in 1932 he graduated from the Lyceum with honours. Between the two options: continuing studies in Theology, or joining the Monastic order, the holy desire of Monasticism, following a Divine Prompting, prevailed. The Grace of God guided his steps in 1933 to Neamts Monastery, where he became a monk in 1936, and was given the name Ioannis. An ardent desire to worship the Holy and Life-giving Tomb, led him the same year to Jerusalem, where with the blessing of the blessed Patriarch of Jerusalem, Damianos, he served as a monk in the Lavra of Saint Savva for ten years. A model of a subordinate, he gave himself up to monastic striving and after a blessing, he lived for seven years (1947-1952) in the Romanian Hermitage of the Holy Forerunner*

*in Jordan, under particularly adverse living conditions.*

*Based on his ordination letter preserved in the Archives of the Holy Monastery of Hozeva, his transfer to the river Jordan was preceded by his ordination as Deacon and Priest. Archimandrite Victorinos, head of the Romanian Representation in Jerusalem, had requested his ordination to the Romanian Patriarch Nikodimos. He, in turn, put the request to the Patriarch of Jerusalem Timotheus I, who accepted it. The first ordination was held on April 21, 1947, in the Holy and Life-giving Tomb of the Lord by His Eminence Archbishop Panteleimon of Naples and the second on April 28, 1947 by the His Eminence Archbishop Epiphanius of Philadelphia.*

*Expelled from the Romanian Monastery of the river Jordan, in 1952, as a nightingale that loves the desert, he settled with his co-ascetic Ioannikios (also of Romanian origin) in the Lavra of Hozeva for one year and six months. Then, seeking complete isolation to indulge in even higher spiritual struggles, he went alone to the hermitage of Saint Anne, which belongs to Hozeva. Only "the Lord saw" what he experienced and what experiences the Saint lived there, "alone with God only". Every Sunday he went to the Coenobium to participate in the Divine Liturgy and to receive the absolutely necessary food, which the love of the Hozevite Fathers offered him. He himself diligently hid his ascetic struggles, choosing the way of life of the ancient Abbas, the "surreptitious living". An excellent connoisseur of Greek, immersed in the Patristic texts, he translated a sufficient number of divinely inspired works into Romanian (they were published for the first time in 1968) and indeed the Salutations of the Most Holy Theotokos. Besides possessing a poetic talent, he left a rich collection of poems, of an exceptional height of meaning, the largest part of which has been translated into Greek.*

*On August 5, 1960, he slept in the Lord at the age of only 47 years, due to his failing health. His departure, which he had foreseen, was one befitting the righteous; Just a few minutes*

*after the Holy Communion, as described by an eyewitness, the already blessed Father Basilios Vakras.*

*In October 1979, after miraculous signs, his relics was found incorrupt by the Hegoumen of the Hozeva Monastery, blessed Archimandrite Amfilochios. On the 28th of July 1980, with the holy Patriarchal blessing of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Benedictus, his incorrupt relics was transferred from the Skete to the Holy Monastery, where it is kept today in the Catholicon Church, as a precious treasure and the source of many miracles! Glory and wealth of the Hozevite Fathers, of the Hagiotaphite Fathers in general, but also of the entire Church in service!*

*On Sunday, January 18/31, 2016, his canonization was announced in a solemn Divine Liturgy, which was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.*

*His commemoration is celebrated on July 28th/August 10th, the day of the translation of his holy relics”.*

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a monastic meal.

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE FEAST OF SAINT MARY  
MAGDALENE THE MYRRH-BEARER**

# AND MARCELLA OF CHIOPOLIS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, July 22/August 4, 2022, the memory of Saint Mary Magdalene was celebrated in the Patriarchate. This feast was solemnly celebrated at Saint Mary Magdalene's Holy Monastery of the Russian Mission (MISSIA) of the Russian Diaspora ROCOR in Gethsemane.

On this occasion, the Patriarchate was represented by H.H.B., our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, accompanied by His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Archdeacon Mark through his address in English:

"Dear Archimandrite Roman,

Dear Mother Abbess Elizabeth,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of this Sisterhood,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We greet you on this happy feast of Saint Mary Magdalene, your patron, and we recall the words of Saint John's Gospel, where we read:

*"Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord', and she told them that he had said these things to her".*

So, by God's providence, Saint Mary Magdalene, the Holy Myrrh-bearer, being the first to see the risen Christ, became an evangelist of the passion and condescension of our Lord and so is celebrated as Equal-to-the-Apostles.

Saint Mary Magdalene obeyed the commandments of our Lord, and so it was granted to her, along with the Mother of God, to be the first witness of the resurrection. Saint Mary Magdalene was given the privilege to behold the risen Lord with her physical eyes; we, in turn, experience the risen Lord with the eyes of the heart and follow her example. We, to whom the *Diakonia* of the Holy Places has been entrusted, especially this place dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene and so is where we venerate her, are called to be a witness of the Light of the resurrection in our own way. So, we sing with the hymnographer:

*With others standing at the Saviour's Cross  
weeping and suffering with the Mother of God,  
glorious Mary Magdalene offered praises, saying:  
what is this strange wonder?*

*He chooses to suffer who upholds the whole creation.*

(Kontakion)

The celebration of Saint Mary Magdalene has brought us together today as a sign of our oneness and unity in Christ. This unity is precious, and we who are called to be the servants and guardians of the Holy Places have a special responsibility to preserve and deepen the unity of the Orthodox Church. Just as Saint Mary Magdalene brought the news of the resurrection to the disciples and so strengthened them in unity, so must we, to whom so much has been given, be those who witness the resurrection and build up the Church's unity in love.

*The One who upholds the whole creation* has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9), and we pray to Almighty God, dear Father Roman and Dear Mother Elizabeth, for God's blessing upon this place and this community, that



you may be a dwelling place of the *martyria* of our Orthodox faith and a beacon of hope to a world that is hurting and in despair.

Thank you.”

This holiday was celebrated in the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection at night as a small internal Parresia of the Brotherhood of the Church of the Resurrection with the procession of the left hand of Saint Mary Magdalene the Myrrh-bearer.

On this day, the feast of the Holy Virgin Martyr Markella of Chiopolis was also celebrated, and a Divine Liturgy was held in her Holy Chapel, located in the Holy Monastery of Saint Spyridon in the Old City of Jerusalem by the Master of Ceremonies, Archimandrite Bartholomew after the care of Archimandrite Sergios.

From Secretariat-General

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# **THE BLESSED PROFESSOR OF THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL OF THE NATIONAL KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS, GEORGIOS GALITIS HAS SLEPT IN THE LORD**

On Thursday, 15/28 July 2022, the elderly Professor Georgios Galitis slept in the Lord. The blessed Professor specialised

in the New Testament and taught ecclesiastical education at the Theological School of the Kapodistrian University of Athens.

On Saturday, 17/30 July 2022, his funeral service was held at the Holy Church of the Dormition in Anthousa of Attiki, led by the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, His Eminence Metropolitan Theodoritos of Laodikeia, with the co-prayer of Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki, their Eminences the Metropolitans; Chrysostom of Messinia and Chrysostom of Mani, at the presence of the departed's daughters, Giouli, Peli and Lydia, his sons in law, Mr Paraskevopoulos, Mr Kyrvasilis and Mr Karakolis, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, the representative of the Archdiocese of Athens, His Grace Bishop Philotheos of Oreon and the Professors of the Theological School of the University of Athens.

The obituary was delivered by the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, His Eminence Metropolitan Theodoritos of Laodikeia.

The departed to the Lord, dearest friend and respected Professor, had been a collaborator and supporter of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem for a decade, an advisor in multiple Theological and Ecclesiastical issues and a representative in Inter-Orthodox and Inter-Christian Conferences, as per the detailed address below, of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, which was read by the representative of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Athens Archimandrite Raphael:

“Your Eminences, Holy High Priests,

In great sadness, we were informed about the blessed Professor of Higher Education Theology, pilgrim Georgios Galitis' departure to the Lord.

We have had close ecclesiastical cooperation with the departed

for many years. We held meetings since his teaching as a Professor at the Aristoteleion University of Thessaloniki and later at the Kapodistrian University of Athens whenever he attended the Church services at the Dependency of the Holy Sepulchre in Athens.

We are witnesses of the fact that the blessed Professor Georgios Galitis was governed by a deep faith in the Incarnate, Crucified and Resurrected Lord and by devotion to His Teaching in the Gospel and His Body, the Church. Having this faith as a compass, he became a genuine and tireless teacher of Orthodox Theology science. He presented this in interpretation in his multiple distinguished Theological writings and also presented it in Inter-Orthodox and Inter-Christian Conferences, as for many years, he was the representative of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches and in meetings of the Orthodox Churches for the preparation of the Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church in Crete.

He zealously fought for the unity of the Orthodox Churches through his writings in the edited by him magazine "Anaplasia" and worked with a great interest for the reopening of the Theological School of the Cross in Jerusalem.

God blessed him with longevity, pious children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and fortified him with patience and endurance during his illness.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem gratefully keeps the memory of the cooperation with him alive, and offers its deep condolences to his most pious wife, daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and the other relatives, and prays from the Horrendous Golgotha so that the One Who has authority over the living and the dead, the Immortal King and Righteous Judge, our Lord God Jesus Christ, may give him rest in the land of the living, along with the righteous, and "lay up for him a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8) and may comfort

with His strengthening comfort all those who honour his memory by their presence in this funeral service.

Everlasting his remembrance!”

**From Secretariat-General**