

THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE MONK PANTELEIMON

The Funeral Service of the Holy Sepulchre Monk Panteleimon Andronikos was held on the morning of Wednesday, August 3/16, 2023. He slept in the Lord on Thursday, July 28/August 10, 2023, due to a heart attack in his hometown Kythera. The Funeral Service was held in the holy Church of Saint Theodore in Kythera under the fraternal care of the Holy Metropolis of Kythera and Antikythera in consultation with H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The night before that, the complete Monastic Funeral Service was sung to the deceased.

The funeral service was presided over by His Eminence the Metropolitan of Kythera and Antikythera, Seraphim, in the concelebration on behalf of the Patriarchate of the Elder Sacristan of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, the Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Athens Archimandrite Raphael and priests of the Metropolis of Kythera, as the service was attended by many faithful, fellow citizens of the deceased, honouring his memory.

The obituary was delivered by the Elder Sacristan as follows:

“Your Eminence Metropolitan of Kythera and Antikythera Seraphim,

Reverend Pastor of this Holy Metropolis,

Respected fathers and beloved brothers

The venerable Primate of the Church of Jerusalem, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III

commissioned us to represent Him together with the Archbishop of Hierapolis during the funeral service of the blessed monk Panteleimon and to place before Your venerable face, Metropolitan of Kythera, His thanks and gratitude, but also the sympathy of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood for all you did for the blessed one, and to all those who honour his memory with their presence in this funeral service. We also convey to the relatives and friends His sincere participation in their mourning and His wholehearted Patriarchal wishes for the repose of the soul of the blessed one, in the land of the living and in the tents of the righteous.

A sacred duty, but at the same time a sad one, led our steps to this holy Monastery of Saint Theodore in Kythera, in order to send to eternity the now-blessed Holy Sepulchre Monk Panteleimon, who "through death passed into life" and was transplanted from the earthly army to the triumphant Church in the heavens, from the earthly to the heavenly, from the perishable to the imperishable, from the temporal to the eternal to the bosoms of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, where "there is no pain, no sorrow, not sighing, but eternal life".

And where the soul of the departed dances in heavenly chambers, we, some sensibly and others intellectually, stand at this sacred moment in the circle of his honourable tent, to honour him for the last time, to give him our thanks for his many years of ministry in the Holy Land and to send him forward with faith and expectation of the Resurrection of those who sleep in the Lord and the "life of the age to come".

Humanly, we are saddened by the separation and the deprivation of his physical presence. We are comforted, however, by the exhortation of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, "Brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant of those who are asleep so that you do not grieve like the rest who have no hope. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so may God raise up with him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus" (Thessal. 4, 13-14). And the late Panteleimon lived in Christ

Jesus and in Christ Jesus he fell asleep.

The late Panagiotis Andronikos of Nikolaos and Maria was born in Kythera on March 24, 1944. The first encyclical lessons were taught in Kythera. He went to the Holy City of Jerusalem on September 21, 1979, and lived in the Holy Lavra of Saint Savva the Sanctified. He was ordained a monk on August 15, 1981, by his Elder and Spiritual Father of the Lavra Archimandrite Seraphim, taking the name Panteleimon. From July 23, 1984, until his last day, he served with dedication and patience as a minister of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and a watchful guardian of the Holy and Life-giving Tomb of the Lord. Throughout his ministry, he showed hard work, consistency and commendable responsibility. In him, the pilgrims saw a man of God. Because he was friendly, welcoming, cheerful, eloquent, rough and at the same time sweet, steadfast and honest. He embraced them all with love and simplicity, communicating Christ to them and writing His divine messages in their souls.

In particular, he relayed to them his experiences from his ministry at the Holy Sepulchre, the infinite miracles he experienced and his struggles for the preservation of the Holy Places. He distributed to everyone blessed oil and candle wax from the Holy Sepulchre, to have them as a blessing in their homes. That is why he was loved and appreciated by all. And here now the blessed one has left for endless eternity in the middle of summer, and is being buried today, one day after the Theotokos feast of the Dormition, and "he hastens to the grave, without taking care of the things of futility and hard-working flesh".

Therefore, all of us, let us address a fervent request to the All-Good and Omniscient God, with the supplication of the hymn:

"May Christ, grant you rest in the land of the living, and the gates of Paradise will be opened for you, and the kingdom will

be shown to you, and you will be spared the sins of your earthly life friend of Christ.”

May his memory be eternal.”

The local Metropolitan also spoke, praising the monastic and Holy Sepulchre zeal of the deceased and his offering to the Holy Places and his hometown.

As soon as the Funeral Service was dismissed, the ascetic and fighting monk Panteleimon, who turned to the Lord, was buried in the Cemetery of the Monastery of Saint Theodore in Kythera.

May his memory be eternal!

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINT JOHN THE NEW HOZEVITE ASCETIC AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, July 28/ August 10, 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our Holy Father John the new Hozevite from Romania, at the Holy Monastery of Hozeva, located at the bank of Brook Chorath, near Jericho.

On this feast, the Church, and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates that Saint John came to the Holy Land from Romania in the middle of the 20th century, and lived in utmost asceticism and humility at the Holy Monasteries of the Jordan River area, and in that of Saints George and John the Hozevites, he slept in peace and was deemed worthy to work miraculous signs, that is why he was canonized among the

saints by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 2016.

The feast of the Dormition of Saint John was celebrated with an all-night vigil at the Holy Monastery of Hozeva, and the Hegoumen and renovator of the Monastery, Archimandrite Constantine welcomed H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who presided over the vigil with the following address:

“Blessed Father and Master,

The glorious feast of Saint John the New Hozevite, who came from Romania, has dawned for another year. The holy hymnographer characterizes him very successfully as the father of peace and silence and of prayer.

If we delve into the above characterizations, we will clearly perceive the work of each Monk, who, through his silent preaching, renounces the entire world. The monk leaves the world not motivated by hatred, but by love for God first and for his fellow man. He listens to the misery and pain of his brothers and effectively helps through prayer and almsgiving. And how does the monk perceive the world one could ask. But precisely through quietness and silence and prayer”, which were dominant throughout the life of the honoured Saint.

God does not ask the monks to go out into the world to help people walk, but He asks them to give them the light with their experience to lead them to eternal life. Should not the lighthouses always be placed on the rocks? What; should they go to the cities to be added to the traffic lights? The lighthouses have a different mission, the traffic lights have another. The monk is not a traffic light to be placed in the city at one end of the street and to light the passers-by so that they do not stumble. It is a distant Lighthouse, set high on the rocks, which with its flashes illuminates the seas and oceans so that the ships can be guided and reach their destination towards God”.

Blessed Father and Master,

Being such a man, a torch flamboyant in life, Sant John even after his dormition, through his intercessions, helps, comforts, inspires, sweetens the pain, and heals the illnesses of souls and bodies, as testified by the thousands of pilgrims of every race and language, who visit him, but as we also testify that as we have been greatly benefited by the Saint many times.

Welcome!

Let us commence the feast!"

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolias and Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina. The chanting was delivered by Leonidas Doukas, Christos Stavrou, Gregorios Zarkos, Nikolaos Papadimitriou, Vasilios Papadimitriou, Pavlos Papadimitriou, as the service was attended by monks of the Monastery and other Monasteries from Jericho and Jerusalem.

His Beatitude delivered the following sermon before the Holy Communion:

"For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light (Ps. 36,9).

Because You, Lord, are the source of life and with Your own light we will see the true light, exclaims the psalmist.

Beloved brothers and fathers in Christ,

The Grace of the Holy Spirit, who enlightened and sanctified and directed the footsteps of the holy Prophets Helijah of Thesbis and John the Forerunner in this holy place of Hozeva, brought us all together so that we solemnly honour the memory of our holy Father John the New Hozevite.

Our Holy Father John had been seized by Divine zeal since his

childhood, left his homeland Romania and came to the Holy Land, where he retreated and hid himself like another Elijah in the caves of Brook Chorath, near the River Jordan (3 Kings 17:2-3) and where Saint George from Leukara of Cyprus founded his Monastery, which became a fountain of divine healings for those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ who said, ““He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7,38).

This living water is none other than the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Son of God and our Saviour Christ according to the testimony of the Evangelist John (John 7, 39). This very Spirit is the source of light, as the Lord says “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).

On this word of the Lord, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: “Whoever follows me, i.e. whoever walks in the footsteps of my teachings will not be in the dark but will obtain “the light of life”, i.e. he will achieve the revelation/manifestation of the mysteries concerning me and the revelation, able to lead to eternal life”.

And we ask ourselves, what is eternal life? “Eternal life is the transcendence of the death of corruption, that is, of sin through the death of incorruption, that is, the death of the Risen Christ. In this death of Christ, our Holy Father John became a communicant and sharer, who listened to the order of Saint Paul saying: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection” (Romans 6,3-5).

Our sanctified Father John not only walked in newness of

life but also fore-tasted the future resurrection of Christ, as his incorruptible and fragrant whole-body relic testifies before our eyes.

The incorruption of his body was achieved by the spirit-bearing John, listening and applying in theory and practice, the exhortation of Saint Paul: "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). Interpreting this word of Paul, Saint Chrysostom says: "What is rational worship? The things of the soul, the things of the Spirit (God is Spirit, and those who worship Him, shall worship Him in Spirit and Truth), (John 4:24); what is not seen in the body, what is not seen in the organs, is not in the places, which are leniency, sobriety, mercy, non-judgment, long-suffering, humility... "I want mercy and not sacrifice" (Hesiah 6:6)... and there are other miracles, indeed the holocausts, the bodies of the holy martyrs; there is a saint and a soul and body; that smell of fragrance is great". [And in more detail; what is rational worship? Those that are offered with the soul, with the spirit (because the Lord said "God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him, do so in Spirit and in truth"), meaning what is not needed by the body, by organs, by places. And such are; leniency, temperance, charity, non-judgment, tolerance, humility, "I want mercy and not sacrifice"... however, there are other sacrifices, the real holocausts, the bodies of the holy Martyrs. Both the soul and the body are holy there, they have a great fragrance.

Indeed, my beloved brothers, our celebrated Father John loved God with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his mind (cf. Matt. 22,37), thus becoming a sacrifice pleasing to God. Because even the psalmist exclaims, "God is wonderful in His saints" (Psalm 67:36).

The Father of the Church, Saint Chrysostom, points out the value and power of rational worship, which leads the faithful

Christian to the purification of the heart (God, create in me a clean heart – Psalm 50,12) and consequently to incorruption, says: “You can too if you want this sacrifice to be repeated.. Let your body die and crucify, and you also shall receive the crown of this martyrdom”, [and simpler; you can too if you want to offer your body as an instrument and then will you yourself receive the crown of this martyrdom].

Our holy Church of Jerusalem boasts of boasting in Christ (Rom. 15,17), because the Monastery of Hozeva, by the intercessions of the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and of the today honoured Saint John the New, continues to be a lodging of the holy and righteous men of God, and those who practised and are practising their monastic striving in this Monastery and Lavra “these are shining lamps everywhere on earth”, according to Saint Chrysostom.

We thank the Holy Triune God and after Saint Paul, we say: “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen” (Eph. 6:24). Many happy returns.”

After the dismissal of the vigil, there was a monastic meal.

From Secretariat-General

THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF THE BLESSED ARCHIMANDRITE

PHILOTHEOS OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE BROTHERHOOD

At 11:00 am on Saturday, June 11/24, 2023, the funeral service for the repose of the soul of the blessed Archimandrite Philotheos Vardakis of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, who served as an Episcopal Commissioner at the Province of Acre – Ptolemais of Northern Israel and slept in the Lord on the evening of Thursday 9th / 22nd June 2023, after falling from scaffolding while repairing the wall of the Holy Church of Saint George in Acre.

The Funeral Service was presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with the Holy Sepulchre High Priests and Hieromonks, in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, Jerusalem faithful and Greek Orthodox Arabic-speaking Priests and the faithful people, who came from the communes of the region of Acre.

The obituary was delivered by the Elder Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina as follows:

“The sudden and violent departure to the Lord of our beloved brother Archimandrite Philotheos, Hierarchical Commissioner of the Metropolis of Ptolemais – Acre, gathered us together in mourning around the completion of his funeral service. We stand in tears before his corpse, just like the Lord stood in tears before the tomb of this four-day-dead friend Lazarus, whom He resurrected from the dead. Our soul is captured by fear and cowardice before the mystery of death, but never despairing, since even our Lord was afraid before His death on the cross and begged the Father, “If it is possible, let this cup pass from Him”. Cowardice before death is one of the ineradicable human passions, which the Lord condescended to, becoming Incarnate for our salvation. Circling the dead body

of our beloved brother, we are “sad for the parting” and hear the words of the hymnographer, “I mourn and weep when I think of death”.

Nevertheless, while we humanly contemplate these things, it does not distract our attention that death was redeemed through death, namely the death on the Cross of the Son of God, the God-man Jesus Christ. Our Lord willingly accepted death and through His death, He redeemed our death. He died as a man and rose as a God-man. Life arose from the grave, the grave shone bright with life. In the power and light of the Resurrection of Christ, death is only the separation of the soul from the body. It is sleep. Death is the sleep of those who sleep in hope of the resurrection. As the Holy Bible says: “those in the monuments are raised”. Those who believe in Christ pass to eternal life in the soul and in the spirit and enjoy the joy of the uncreated works of the Holy Trinity.

Moved by this faith, our deceased loved one, born in 1962, left his hometown of Charakas, Monofatsiou, Heraklion, Crete, at the age of twelve, and came to the Holy Land, in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and studied at the Holy Zion Priestly School with care and conduct excellent and praiseworthy – the speaker had this student for six years. After graduating, she accepted the monastic schema in 1979 and joined the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood. He ministered initially as a deacon and then as a Hieromonk in various ministries assigned to him, such as that of the Hegoumen of Beit Jalla, the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of Saint Charalambos, the Hegoumen of Hoseva and the Hegoumen of Haifa. He was sent by the Patriarchate for theological studies in Belgrade and after transferring universities, he graduated from the Theological School of the University of Thessaloniki.

In the years 2001 and 2002, he served as the Patriarchal Representative of the Metropolis of Ptolemais – Akris, and from the year 2003 until his death as the Hierarchical Commissioner of this Metropolis, which had under its spiritual

and pastoral responsibility twelve communes; Acre, Abelin, Sakhnin, Kufr – Yasif, Kufr Smea, Rame, Pkea, Sfaamer, Baane, Zdeide, Tarshiha, and Maker. In these, he developed in consultation with the Patriarchate for over twenty years a remarkable and praised Pastoral work of spiritual Orthodox catechesis and excellent teaching of Byzantine Music by a group of male and female Byzantine chanters, spreading contrition to the souls of the faithful in the Patriarchal liturgies of Tabor, Nazareth and others. He was esteemed and loved by all.

His main concern was the dignity of God's house and for this reason, we can pray for him saying "Sanctify them, Lord, who love the dignity of your house". In this work, he was prematurely interrupted by death, when he accidentally fell from the scaffolding, from which he was building the wall of the Holy Church of Saint George in Acre by his own hands. Asking myself why this happened to him like this, I said that "as unsearchable is His will". The Lord only knows!

Nevertheless, I found comfort in recalling that in the year 1979, the Archimandrite Modestos met his death, just after rescuing a pilgrim during the pilgrimage baptism in the Jordan River. In 1990, the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of Hoseva, Archimandrite Anthony, while repairing the narthex of the Church, met his death by landslide stones that covered him. Saint Athanasios the Athonite met his death with other monks from the collapsed dome of the Catholicon of the Great Lavra Monastery, which he had climbed to inspect.

Worthily commemorating his good works in his Funeral Service today, we beseech the Most High to consider him and forgive him as a human being who sinned intentionally or unintentionally and rank his soul among the faithful and righteous in Paradise. So be it".

The deceased was accompanied by their Eminences, the Archbishops Theofanes of Gerassa and Makarios of Qatar, and

all congregation to the place of his burial in the Holy Zion Cemetery.

May his remembrance be ever-lasting!

From Secretariat-General

THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF THE BLESSED METROPOLITAN CORNELIUS OF PETRA

At 10:00 am on Monday, 2/15 May 2023, the funeral service of the blessed Metropolitan Cornelius of Petra was held at the monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, presided over by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the participation in prayer of the Hagiotaphite Hierarchs, His Eminence Metropolitan Epiphanius of Ledra from the Church of Cyprus, Hieromonks and local Priests. His memory was also honoured by the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the representative of the Moscow Patriarchate Archimandrite Dometianos and members of the faithful of Jerusalem and other cities.

The obituary was delivered by Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina as follows:

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Reverend Chorea of the Hierarchs,

Consul General of Greece,

Dear Fathers,

Dear Christians,

The departure to the Lord of our beloved and respected brother, His Eminence Metropolitan Cornelius of Petra, drew us from our earthly cares, brought us to contemplation, and invited us to his tabernacle, so that we may pray for the repose of his soul in the ascending course of his soul to heaven and the Throne of the Most High. Carrying out this human and ecclesiastical duty, our hearts are burdened by the sorrow of separation and we stand in awe before the mystery of death, which has found us. But after the hymn of the Church, we exclaim, "What is this mysterious thing about us, how did we surrender to corruption, how did we associate with death?" In order to overcome this embarrassment, the fact that our Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, bearing our human nature and sharing it, shed tears at the tomb of his four-day dead friend Lazarus and raised him from the dead comes as a reinforcing tale.

Likewise, "born in agony" in the garden of Gethsemane, reflecting on the cup of death of Him, however, fulfilling the Father's will, He willingly came to death and even to the Cross for our sake. Through His death, He trampled over death, defeated death, rose from the dead, and "gave us eternal life, that is, after our earthly tabernacle is removed, life after the saints and righteous in the land of the living. Sorrowing, nevertheless, "not like the rest who have no hope", as the apostle of the nations says, but turning to our sorrow the hope in the Risen Lord, we send forward our brother, Metropolitan Cornelius of Petra, adding to our prayers, in consequence, the things of his life from his young age until today.

We remember that he was born in the commune of Magarikarion of Messara, district of Monofatsi, Heraklion, Crete, in the year 1936.

As soon as he graduated from the Elementary Education of his birthplace, he was on his way to the Holy Land. When he arrived in Jerusalem, he studied in the Priestly School of Saint Demetrius, like most of the Hagiotaphite Fathers. After graduating, he joined the Brotherhood as a monk and was ordained a Deacon, and served in various ministries. He was then sent to Halki's Higher Theological School of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. After graduating from it, he returned to Jerusalem, was ordained a Priest, and was sent for further education to the Institute of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Geneva. After his return, he was appointed a member of the Holy and Sacred Synod, Archivist and Editor-in-Chief of the magazine "New Zion" and Head of the Patriarchal School. In 1976 he was elected and ordained Archbishop of Sebasteia and appointed Patriarchal Representative in Bethlehem. In 1991 he was promoted to the Metropolitan of Petra and was appointed President of the Ecclesiastical Court of First Instance serving in this position after consistently and accurately applying the rules of the Church and the written laws of the state. He was the Patriarchal Commissioner and Custodian of the Throne of Jerusalem in 2001 and 2005 contributing very much from this high position to the maintenance of the necessary ecclesiastical balance, stability, and peace in critical periods of the life of the Patriarchate and the Brotherhood.

In all the ministries assigned to him, he served with zeal and dedication, having as his guiding principle the interest of our Holy Common and the protection of the rights of the Patriarchate and our nation in the Holy Land.

We, therefore, beseech our merciful and gracious God, that he may show the good things of his works, forgive him whether he sinned voluntarily or involuntarily, and grant him the kingdom of God and eternal life in the enjoyment and rejoicing of the light of His face. So be it. Everlasting his remembrance."

Escorted by His Eminence the Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa,

the departed to the Lord, dear and respected Hagiotaphite brother of ours, the blessed Metropolitan Cornelius of Petra, was buried at the cemetery of the Patriarchate on the hill of Zion.

Everlasting his remembrance!

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR GEORGE THE TROPHY BEARER AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, April 23/May 6, 2023, the memory of the holy great martyr George the Trophy Bearer was celebrated by the Patriarchate.

On this feast, the Church recalls in its memory that Saint George was by origin Cappadocian by father and Palestinian by mother. He served as a tribune, i.e. a centurion, in the Roman army, hiding his Christian identity at first, revealing it later, confessing Christ, being tortured and testifying for Him in AD 303 during the reign of Diocletian.

His holy relics were taken by his servant to Lydda, his mother's homeland, and were then kept in the Holy Church erected in his name by Saint Helen.

His commemoration was celebrated:

- In the Old City at the Monastery dedicated to him which is also called 'the hospital', with Vespers on Friday

afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning, which were officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, with the co-celebration of Hieromonk Sila, Priest Athanasios and Hierodacon Simeon. The chanting was delivered by Mr Demetrios Manousis with the help of the Patriarchal School of Zion students, as the services were attended by a large congregation of monks, nuns, pilgrims and the representatives of the Greek Consulate in Jerusalem, Mrs Christina Zacharioudaki and Mrs Constantina Gyftou.

His Eminence delivered the following sermon to this congregation

“Reverend Abbess, nun Pansemni,

Your Excellency, Mrs Christina Zacharioudaki,

Dear priests,

My beloved brothers in Christ,

Living in the middle of the season of spring we enjoy the joy of the beauty of blooming nature. This is God’s gift to us humans, just like the rain of the last days, a sign of His love for us. Living in the midst of the Easter season, we share in the spiritual joy and rejoicing of Christ’s Resurrection. We are touched and excited by the joyous, paschal hymns of the Church. Despite this, the Church gives us today one more source of joy and happiness. It provides us with the memory of one of its great martyrs, Saint George the Trophy Bearer. the memory of Saint George becomes the reason for our assembly today, for the celebration of the divine liturgy, for sharing in the holy eucharist and for our sanctification and salvation. Within this rich spiritual liturgical bank, the narrative of the martyr’s life has its place for the additional nourishment and strengthening of our souls.

The memory of the Church, which is the synaxarion, maintains that Saint George lived during the time of the Roman emperor Diocletian. On his father's side, he was from Asia Minor, Cappadocia. On his mother's side, he was Palestinian. He served in the Roman army. When persecution was unleashed against the Christians, he did not accept to receive rewards, positions and offices, in order to deny Christ. Instead, he confessed and proclaimed his faith in Christ. He remained relentless in promises, undaunted in threats and rigid and inflexible in torture. His strong faith in Christ overcame sickness and the pains of nature. With the grace of Christ, he remained unharmed from all the tortures, with the result that many people saw and believed in Christ, including Diocletian's wife Queen Alexandra. More still believed, when the Saint entered a temple of idols and with his prayer, he overthrew the statues of false gods. Then his executioners and the demon worshipers could not stand it and brought him to the emperor Diocletian and demanded his condemnation. The emperor ordered his beheading by a sword, as well as that of Queen Alexandra, who in the meantime surrendered her soul to God in prison.

Today, the Church presents Saint George to us as an example of strong faith in Christ, an example of patience and determination, an example of charity to the poor, because he distributed his property to them according to a covenant, which he gave to his servant, before his martyrdom. He entrusted him with the transfer of his relics to his mother's hometown, Lydda. At the place of his burial, a magnificent church was later built by Saint Helen, the inauguration of which is celebrated on the other feast of the Saint on November 3.

The grace of the Holy Spirit, which raised up Saint George and all the martyrs, remains active in the Church throughout the centuries. It is this grace that also highlighted the new martyr George, Cypriot by origin, who was working in Acre and did not accept to change his faith when this was proposed to

him by the Turkish pasha in 1752. His tomb at the door of the monastery and his relic, which is offered today for worship, are a blessing for the Orthodox community and for the whole city of Acre.”

The Episcopal Entourage and the congregation were offered a reception by the Abbess, nun Pansemni, who has restored the holy icons of the Church.

- At the holy monastery dedicated to him in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning, was led by Archimandrite Amphilochios, with the attendance of faithful Christians who honoured the Saint. The full congregation was offered a reception by the renovator of the Church, reverend Abbess, nun Marianna.
- At the Holy Church dedicated to the Saint in Arce-Ptolemais, with a Divine Liturgy that was officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios of Sebasteia, with the co-celebration of the Patriarchal representative Archimandrite Philotheos, at the attendance of a large congregation of the Orthodox faithful of this city.
- At the Holy Monastery of Saint George Al Khader of the Bethlehem area, led by the Patriarchal Representative in Bethlehem, His Eminence Metropolitan Benediktos of Diocesarea, with the co-celebration of Archimandrite Ignatios and local Priests, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.
- At the Holy Monastery of Saint George in Lydda, where the Divine Liturgy was presided over by Archimandrite Marcellus.
- On Sunday, April 24th / May 7th, 2023 in the Holy Church of the Delegation of the Patriarchate of Romania in the Jewish quarter of the religious Jews of the New City of Jerusalem, presided over by His Eminence, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, with concelebrants, the Head of

the Delegation Archimandrite Theophilos and his assistant Archimandrite Ioannis, who at noon hosted a meal in honour of the Episcopal Entourage. His Eminence delivered the solemn sermon to the congregation, speaking through the following address as follows:

“Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, Representative of His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel in the Holy City of Jerusalem,

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

Reverend Christians

We are gathered today to celebrate in a Paschal and Eucharistic manner the great mystery of philanthropy our Risen God and Saviour Jesus Christ and the commemoration of the Holy Great Martyr George the Trophy Bearer.

The memory of the Saints of the Church, especially of its Great Martyrs constitutes the irrefutable testimony of Christ’s resurrection and our hope in Christ, as Saint Paul also proclaims: “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15, 20-22). “Behold, the spring of grace has risen, the Resurrection of Christ has shone all over; and with this now, the feast day of George the Martyr and the light-bearing day; let us all celebrate in joy, shining in a godly manner,” the hymnographer says.

The martyrdom of the blood of Christ’s friends, and that of the great martyr George the Trophy-bearer, constitutes a strong and irrefutable eternal testimony in the historical course of the human race, that the death of Christ, and consequently His Resurrection, corresponds to the existential death of man, on the other hand, it determines the fullness of the man living in Christ under the view of his being made in the image and likeness of God. (Gen. 1,26). This is what the

renowned Father of the Church, Gregory the Theologian, says in this regard: "He impoverishes my flesh, so that I may be enriched by his Divinity. And the full is being emptied. He is emptied from His own glory on a small scale, so that I may partake of His fullness. What is the wealth of goodness? What is this mystery about me? I partook of the image and I didn't save it. He partakes of my flesh, so that he may save the image and immortalize the flesh".

The great George, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, and having his mind set on heavenly things, brought himself before his persecutor and idolater Roman Emperor Diocletian, and after boldness said, in accordance with the testimony of his servant Pasikratus: Be ashamed ye who maddeningly disobey the only Son of God, the Creator and Master of everything, while you deify the impure demons making idols of them without breath, without hearing and attribute honour to them. If you believe in my words, leave the darkness and draw nigh to the divine light, and leaving the fallacy, come to the truth, which is a blessed life and you will be granted unflinching glory. Your glory is even flimsy and vain and grass withered nearby. I do not tolerate being complacent when Deity is cursed... For me the first and most honourable name, Christian and servant of Christ, by whom also in the present life we go through honest and unhindered and after the release from here, in the future, eternally we reap the indestructible and blessed ending".

This confession of George clearly reveals that the faithful witness and friend of Christ was a co-martyr of Christ, indeed an imitator of the passion of our Saviour Christ, Who gave His life for the life of the world. Moreover, the Christian is the living witness in this world of the true Light, the one who dispels darkness, as the Evangelist John preaches: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1, 4-5).

To this we also have come today, representing His Holy Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, conveying His Patriarchal prayers and blessing, that you, Reverend Theophilos, Holy Representative of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania, continue and increase the mission and ministry of the Representation of the brotherly Church of Romania in the Holy Land for the salvation of souls and glory of the Triune Name of our Holy God.

Christ is Risen!"

From Secretariat-General

THE EPITAPH SERVICE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Holy Friday evening, April 1/14, 2023, the magnificent and contrite Epitaph Service was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In this service, the Church commemorates the Deposition from the Cross of the immaculate body of the Lord, by Joseph from Arimathaea, and the Lord's burial at the Tomb near Golgotha.

The service began at the Catholicon with the Canon of Holy Saturday Matins, while the officiating of the service, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and the High Priests with the Priests got dressed.

Then the procession around the shrined followed, and at the Horrendous Golgotha, the Gospel narrative of the crucifixion was read, before the silk corporal was lifted up from the Holy

Altar.

The High Priests carried the silk corporal at the Deposition slate, where the Gospel narrative of the Lord's deposition from the Cross by Joseph and Nicodemus was read.

This was followed by a litany three times around the Holy Sepulchre, as the silk corporal was being carried by the High Priests.

The lamentations followed, with the incense offering at each stasis.

Before praises, His Eminence Geronda Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina delivered the following sermon:

"Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

Reverend Chorea of Hierarchs,

Mr Consul General of Greece,

Reverend Fathers,

Reverend pilgrims,

Indeed great, wondrous and beneficial are God's works for man. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen" according to Saint Paul (Rom. 1,20). With His creatures, God also gave man the knowledge of His eternal power and perfection. And these, "God, hath spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:2), since the beginning of the creation of the universe. God came down to earth from heaven. Having reconciled with men, "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3,16). He appeared among men, incarnate, in human flesh. The Only-Begotten Son of God also became the son of man, son of the Virgin, through the Holy Spirit. He was made known as God-man in one hypostasis, with two natures, wills and actions. In Christ Who appeared and was seen on earth, "God

was manifesting all things”.

Having come to earth, Christ revealed the Father to us, while all things that He did, were done by the goodwill of His Father. He said that “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5,30). Christ’s actions are His Father’s, for He said, “I and my Father are one” (John 10,30). Being the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets, Christ our God fulfilled all providence of the Father, He did not abolish but completed the Law of Moses. He set us free in liberty (cf. Gal 5,1) from the ordinances of the Law. Instead of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” (Exodus 21,24), he taught and applied love, not only for our fellow men but also for the enemies. By His divine power, He cured the sick, gave sight to the blind, mobility to the paralyzed, He raised the dead. He inaugurated the time of the kingdom of God, the time of the Gospel, the Law of Grace, “to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4,19). He called unto Himself “all that labour and are heavy laden, to give them rest” (cf. Matt. 11,28). Those who are hungry and thirsty and foreigners and prisoners, He named “His brothers”, “the least of these” (cf. Matt. 25, 31-46). He did not allow the adulterous woman to be stoned to death but sent her forth to live a new life. He did not condemn the thief on the cross next to Him but made him the first to enter paradise, setting repentance as the key to enter therein. To what cause all these? For man to be saved, especially since He said, “the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (Mark 2,27). The supreme value for the Most High is man, so that his soul may not be lost.

And because, as the Church sings these days, “He becomes everything in order to save man”, he even willingly suffered the Cross. “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die”, according to Saint Paul, “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:7-8). Through His Cross, Christ went down to Hades and sought the led astray Forefather and all his

descendants. His descent into Hades is also His resurrection, as the Orthodox icon of the resurrection denotes. This mystery of the Cross, according to Saint John of Damascus is the greatest and most wondrous of Christ's miracles. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (1 Cor. 1,18), as Saint Paul says, for those who by their own free will walk in the path of their demise, it is foolishness. The Cross of Christ is "unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. 1,23), because, the crucified Christ is a stumbling block for the Jews who are waiting for Christ as the Messiah, as an earthly king, a stumbling block upon which they stop and do not believe, while for the idolater Greeks, the crucified God who did not win over His enemies is presented as a foolish idea. However, for the Jews and the Greeks who believe, the crucified Christ is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1,24) and the salvation.

This Cross of the Crucified and Resurrected Christ does His body, the Church carry. The Resurrected Christ for the Church is the Crucified Christ, "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified" (Mark 16,6), said the Angel to the Myrrh-bearing women. Christ is always projected by the Church behind the Holy Altar, as its Crucified Bridegroom. Just as the Lord's earthly life was crucified and resurrected, likewise, the life of the Church on earth is crucified and resurrected. The Church is not praising itself, it does not boast, but suffers, co-suffers with the suffering man, the man who suffers from his passions, from the lack of a direction in life, from the exploitation by the "leaders of this world", and by the bloodshed, at times among brothers, in the battlefields, where the human life is not being considered important.

Co-suffering with all who suffer around the world, especially with the children of its local flock, among whom and the large crowds of the reverend pilgrims, the Church of Jerusalem, the Holy Zion, "the mother of Churches, who was the first to

receive the remission of sins through the resurrection”, has the privilege the blessing, to testify and preach Christ Crucified and Resurrected to all the places where the Lord appeared in the flesh, and at this hour, during this modest contrite service, of the Holy Epitaph, in remembrance of the Lord’s burial and the descent into Hades, which is presided over by the Holy Primate of Jerusalem, His Beatitude the Patriarch Theophilos, it prays for the peace and good state of the whole world, and for the peace and the unity in Christ of the Orthodox Churches, for the praise of our blessed nation and the glory of our Triune God. Amen.”

The rest of the service continued before the Holy Sepulchre and finally, the silk corporal was placed on the Holy Altar. Finally, bells tolling, the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate.

From Secretariat-General

THE NAME DAY OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS

On Wednesday, the 9th / 22nd of March 2023, the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was celebrated internally, on the commemoration of the holy Forty Martyrs, who martyred in the lake of Sebasteia of Pontus in the year 320 under Licinius, with the Service of Matins, Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts, at the Holy Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, of His Beatitude.

After the Divine Liturgy in the Epitropicon, His Beatitude received the congratulations of the Brotherhood and its wishes for health, prosperity and longevity.

On Saturday, March 12/25, 2023, the Name Day of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was celebrated with transference on the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs, in accordance with the Status Quo of the Church of Jerusalem as a "Paresia" with Great Vespers on Friday afternoon at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, after which the Fourth Stasis of the Salutations to the Theotokos was held, presided over by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos.

On the morning of the main day of the feast, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth, Isychios of Kapitolias, Benedictos of Diosaecarea and the visiting Nikolaos of Mesogaia and Lavraiotiki from the Church of Greece, the Archbishops, Theophanes of Gerassa, Damascene of Yaffo, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Isidoros of Hierapolis, Philoumenos of Pella, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, Archimandrite Mattheos among the other Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, the representative of the Moscow Patriarchate Archimandrite Alexander, the representative of the Romanian Patriarchate Archimandrite Ioannis, Arab speaking Priests and others, Archdeacon Mark, Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Byzantine choir under the lead of the President of the Byzantine singers of Greece, Mr Georgios Naoum, with the help of Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Gotsopoulos. The service was attended by a large congregation of local faithful and pilgrims, with the honorary presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

the Ambassador of Russia Mr Victorov and the Ambassador of Georgia to Israel Mr Lasha.

After the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, a Doxology was held for His Beatitude's Name Day.

The service concluded with the return to the Patriarchate Reception Hall, where His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina addressed His Beatitude as follows:

"Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

Ascending the spiritual steps of time and of the Holy and Great Lent for the reception of the Holy Pascha, we find the feast of the Holy Forty Martyrs as an oasis of spiritual refreshment and mental recreation. They confessed Christ, exposed to the cold of the lake Sebasteia of Pontus, persevering all night, having their legs broken in the morning and thus exercising well and being crowned during the reign of Licinius in AD 320. The blood of these as well as of all the martyrs is joined with the blood of Christ on the cross and establishes and strengthens the body of the Church, the ark of salvation for the people. Thanking them for their martyrdom, the Church perpetuates the name of each one and is strengthened by their example and intercessions on its behalf to the Lord.

In honour of their martyrdom, especially of their co-martyr, Saint Theophilos, in whose name Your Beatitude is honoured, the Church of Jerusalem, Mother of the Churches, in accordance with its Status Quo, held a solemn feast at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, co-celebrating with the Bishops of the Patriarchate, the Hieromonks of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the clergy of the Patriarchate, with the participation in prayer of the monks and many pilgrims and in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, the Ambassador of Russia and the

Ambassador of Georgia and diplomatic representatives of other states and many faithful people.

Having prayed for the health and stability of Your Beatitude in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, we came to this holy "house" of Ours, so that we may congratulate You on Your Name Day and ascribe to You all that is auspicious, true and honest, due to You, presumed from Your works.

First of all, it should be noted that Your Beatitude took the initiative of cooperation with the Christian Churches of the Holy Land in order to support not only the rights of their Holy Places and properties but also the identity of the existence and residence of Christians in their birthplace. This happened in collective events, such as in the full gathering of the Christmas tree in the Imperial hotel of the Patriarchate in Jaffa Gate, the hotel threatened by the corrupt agreements concluded against it in 2004. In the unreserved support of the other Churches as well as in reciprocity, Your Beatitude visited the place that received sabotage of its tombs, the cemetery of the Anglican Church on the hill of Holy Sion and the chapel of the Franciscans in the area of Praetorio, in which the relief icon of Christ was broken by extreme fanatical Jewish elements, who didn't even hesitate to attack the Holy Tomb of the Theotokos last Sunday, the day of the Adoration of the Holy Cross. Your Beatitude courageously supported these rights of the Christians in the established meeting of the New Year of the Churches after the President of the State of Israel Mr Herzog.

After the Leaders of the Local Churches, Your Beatitude also worked tirelessly to preserve the Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Status Quo of the Temple of Solomon in cooperation with the King of Jordan, who has the custody of the Muslim and Christian Holy Places in the Holy Land. In order to support and promote the interests of the Patriarchate and all the Christians of the Holy Land, Your Beatitude undertook an overseas trip to the United States of

America.

In the pilgrimage sector, with a view to preserving our rights, Your Beatitude cooperated primarily with the Franciscans for the consolidation of the subsoil and the maintenance of the floor of the rotunda and the Seven Chambers of the Church of the Resurrection based on a scientific study by the Sapienza University of Rome.

In particular, Your Beatitude worked for the preparation of studies and the finding of resources for the consolidation and beautification of the dedicated area of the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection and its sacristy and for the reopening of the Museum of the Patriarchate in cooperation with the businessman and Governor of Mount Athos Mr Athanasios Martinos.

Included in this renovation program are the already completed conservation works of precious old icons and the disassembled parts of the chandelier of the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, found in the Brotherhood's refectory above the Cathedral of Saint James the Brother of God, since the time of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophanes. The work was completed by specialist conservators who came from Russia under the guidance of the icon and book conservator from Cyprus, Mr Stavros Andreou, who is also continuing his work in the antiquities of the rich Library of the Monastery of the Cross. In this Monastery, which housed the famous Theological School of the Holy Cross, Your Beatitude is already preparing, in cooperation with the Universities of Athens and Thessaloniki and the Church of Cyprus, the establishment and operation of a Centre for Biblical Research Studies.

Despite the economic difficulties of our time, there was no lack of financial support for the flock, within the limits of the Patriarchate's capabilities, in the maintenance works of its holy Churches, such as Kufr Smea and

Sakhnin, and elsewhere, and the guidance of Your Beatitude of them as well as that of the pilgrims, once again flooding the Patriarchal Hall and the Holy Shrines after the severe test of the Covid virus. In these pilgrimage meetings, which were attended by accompanying High Priests from all the Orthodox Churches, Your Beatitude did not cease to emphasize the need to continue the Orthodox dialogue for the restoration once again of the lost Orthodox unity and communion in Christ.

The aforementioned, Your Beatitude, are only a few Analects, emanating from the spiritual waist of the Church of Jerusalem, empowering us, the Hagiotaphite Fathers, so that we work and cooperate, complementing each other and creating pastoral or renovation work, each of us at the place of his ordination, enriching the consignment of our Fathers.

Raising the glass, Your Beatitude, I wish, on behalf of the Holy and Holy Synod and the entire Brotherhood, health, stability, longevity and receiving the Divine energy and strength from above, so that you may continue Your God-pleasing and precious Patriarchal Pastoral work towards the building of souls, praise of the Church of Jerusalem and of our race and glory of our Triune God. So be it.”

The Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras as follows:

“Your Beatitude

Your Eminences,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Participating in today’s celebration is a special honour and joy for all of us, as the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the venerable Flock, among them those serving at the Consulate General of Greece in Jerusalem, are honouring the Name Day of the Primate of the Church of Jerusalem, His Holy Beatitude,

the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

Your Beatitude,

On behalf of the Greek State, we express to you, the respect, love and gratitude of our country both for your varied pastoral work and for the important national work of preserving and highlighting the Holy Places in the Holy Land.

At the same time, I would like to express the like-minded support of our Motherland to our respective Patriarchate, especially in the current climate of growing intolerance, condemning, unequivocally, the recent attack on the Holy Shrine of the Mother of God in Gethsemane, as well as the, unfortunately, growing wave of violence against Christian places of worship in Jerusalem.

For Greece, the defence of the institution of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, its rights, as well as the customary Status Quo, is a top priority.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem is a constant point of reference for Hellenism everywhere, a witness and beacon of our centuries-long presence here and a Shepherd of the Greek Orthodox faithful in the Holy Land.

For all of us, the Holy Foundation is associated with the preservation of the integrity of the Holy Places of Christianity, which it defends with devotion and self-denial.

Today's feast is a timely occasion to reflect on all that we "heard of", "we heard and our hands were lifted up", according to the Biblical verse.

Your diligent efforts for the restoration and promotion of the Holy Shrines of our Faith and for the spiritual guidance and well-being of a flock that is undergoing significant challenges and trials highlight the timeless importance of the Sacred Foundation, for maintaining the necessary balances in

the environment of the Holy Land.

Your words and work are undoubtedly an expression of love, anxiety and prayer for the future of the Christian Presence in the Holy Land, which includes both the pain and agony of the Cross, as well as the hope and light of the Resurrection.

In the midst of these challenges, both you and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood are strengthened by genuine faith and the authenticity of the Christian experience, so that with knowledge and understanding of the circumstances, with vigour and determination, you can take care of the present and the future of the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Your unceasing prayer and ministry at the holy altar are a source of spiritual nourishment and support for both the clergy and your flock for whom you care tirelessly.

Your Beatitude,

In the turbulent Holy Land, where life encompasses, every day, pain and hope, death and life, in tangible and not distant terms, this high mission does not allow "sleep in the eyes" and "sleepiness in the eyelids" for the Pastor and Church leader.

Allow me therefore to express to you, both on my behalf and on behalf of my associates, our recognition and appreciation of the important work being done here, as well as of the devotion, zeal and self-sacrifice of the Members of the Brotherhood for the protection and preservation of the Holy Shrines, virtues which we have seen many times and in various ways during our regular visits here.

On this festive day, I express our most sincere and heartfelt wishes for health, longevity and support from the Lord, so that you can continue to carry out your high mission to the Glory of God, for the well-being of the Patriarchate, the Holy Congregation of the Holy Sepulchre, of Your Greek Orthodox Flock and peace in the region. Many Happy and Blessed

returns.”

His Beatitude returned their wishes with His following address:

” Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified” (Ps. 70,4).

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

Today is the holy and wonderful feast of the holy athletes in the city of Sebasteia, the holy great Forty Martyrs, whose memory is honoured with rejoicing and gladness by our holy Church of Jerusalem, saying, “let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified” (Psalm 70,4).

This saviour, namely the Gospel of the salvation of Christ, was believed by the Forty Martyrs, who were ” perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10) with boldness before the persecuting idolaters and their tormentors, paying heed to the voice of Saint Paul: “the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils” (1 Cor. 10:20). Moreover, these holy martyrs were inspired by the first martyr Stephen, who, on the one hand, exemplified the love of his martyr’s blood shed for Christ, on the other hand, he preached the testimony of the “Son of man”, who, responding to Pilate, said: ” To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice.” (Jn. 18,37).

To the same voice of the truth of Christ, they became subject but also innate to the likeness of His (Christ's) death concerning His resurrection (cf. Rom. 6,5). Praising the martyrdom of the Forty Saints for the sake of truth, Basil the Great says: "We are not going to admire one, nor two alone..., but forty men, as having one soul in divided bodies, in one sympathy and unity of faith, and they showed one inclination towards suffering and resistance to the truth".

Having in mind, the holy Martyrs of this word of the Lord, that "the Spirit of truth, guide you into all truth" (Jn. 16,13), they did not hesitate nor were they seized by fear of cowardice, but on the contrary, like other three children in the furnace, as if from one mouth they sang and glorified and blessed God, saying: "Do not turn away your mercy from us" (Dan. 3,23).

This mercy of God, who regenerated us in hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (cf. 1 Pet. 1,3) was sought by the brave Martyrs "praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20), hoping for their redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of transgressions, the cleansing, indeed, of their sins, according to the riches of His grace (cf. Eph. 1,7).

This annual solemn feast of the holy Forty Martyrs and especially of their co-martyr Theophilos, whose sacred name is also borne by our Mediocrity, is "a burnt offering of fragrance to their memorial to the Lord" (Leviticus 6:8), and this because, as the psalmist exclaims, "abandoning all the soldiers of the world, the Lord's Forty Athletes worshipped the Master in heaven", becoming citizens of the city of the living God, that is, the heavenly Jerusalem of freedom (cf. Heb. 12:22).

Indeed, the holy Forty Martyrs, the divinely crowned and divinely gathered, who were tested by fire and water, imitating Christ's martyrdom, were shown to be true witnesses

and heralds of His righteousness, as the Apostle Peter preaches saying: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pet. 3:18).

The glorious Forty Martyrs stand out in the midst of "the surrounding cloud of martyrs" (Heb. 12:1) of the Church, because these, as Basil the Great says, not having the same ethnic origin, "each of them came from a different place" were shown to be the nation of God and our Saviour Christ. "Race, the human one, another the spiritual one, one of all. God the Father is common to them, and all are brothers, not born of the same biological parents, but of the adoption of the Spirit in the unity of love joined to one another".

"World of the Church and the joy of the people and the glory of God the strengthener ... the satellites of Christ, the builders of the Churches ... and those who fought to the end against the common enemy of humanity," says the father of the Church, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, praising "the great and according to the blessed (Forty martyrs) phalanx".

Our holy Church of Jerusalem joyfully honouring and upholding the holy commemoration of the holy Forty Martyrs as well as their co-martyr and of the same blood Theophilus, celebrated in the place of the crucifixion and the tomb of the Resurrection of our Saviour Christ, the bloodless sacrifice of thanksgiving, presided over by Our Mediocrity and surrounded by the honourable members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, High Priests, Priests and Hierodeacons, pious pilgrims and pious Christians from our Christian tested flock, who are praying together with us, manifesting thus our admiration to God's Saints. "We," says Asterios Amaseias, "do not worship the martyrs, but we honour them as true worshipers of God; we do not revere people, we admire them for respecting God well in times of temptation."

Moreover, we rendered a thanksgiving doxology to the holy Triune God, in the name of the holy martyr Theophilos, keeping Our holy Name Day, and “we blessed – according to the holy martyr Justin – the Creator of all things through His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit”.

The solemnity of this day of the holy Forty Martyrs and especially of their co-martyr Theophilos does not refer to Our Mediocrity only, but mainly to the Apostolic and Patriarchal institution of the Church of the body of our Saviour Christ, “in whom we have redemption through His blood (Eph. 1:7). ” God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5,8).

This divine and perfect love, which “casts out fear” (1 John 4:8), was noted as light in the hearts and minds of the holy martyrs who demonstrated “the perfect work of love”, according to Clement of Alexandria, that is, “that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 15,6).

This commandment of Saint Paul, ” that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify Christ” (Rom. 15,6), is denounced to all of us and in particular to our brothers in Christ, the honourable Prelates of the Holy Orthodox Churches of those who are in a state of “separating themselves, having not the Spirit” (cf. Jude 19), today and in the midst of the welcome time of repentance and blessed fasting, by the honoured holy Forty Martyrs, “equal in striving and equal in opinion and equal crowns holding” according to their hymnographer.

Having, therefore, accomplices and perceivers “from the adoption of the Spirit in the unity of one another by love”, according to Basil the Great, the holy Forty Martyrs and their co-martyr and our spiritual guardian Theophilos, we beseech them and the Blessed Theotokos and Mother of God Ever-Virgin Mary, so that in peace, temperance and repentance we may reach the glorious Resurrection of God and our Saviour Christ.

Therefore, we call on all those praying with Us and honouring this solemn commemoration of the holy Martyrs, strength from the Holy Cross, illumination from on high, the free gift of the Holy Spirit, the grace of the Holy and Life-giving Tomb, patience and all the blessing of the philanthropic God, expressing warm thanksgiving to those who addressed Us, the Elder Chief Secretary, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, who spoke on behalf of the Greek State, the Ambassador of Russia to Israel Mr Victorov, the Ambassador of Georgia to Israel Mr Lasha, the representatives of the Greek Navy, the Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, representative of the Holy Church of Russia, who relayed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Reverend Archimandrite Ioannis, representative of the Holy Church of Romania, who relayed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, His Eminence, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, His Eminence, Archbishop Damascene of Yaffo, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Yaffo, His Eminence, Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the newly-founded Community in Beersheba, the Reverend Fr Farah Bandour, who spoke on behalf of Saint James' Cathedral parish, the Reverend Archimandrite Ignatios, who spoke on behalf of the Beit Jala Community, the Reverend Archimandrite Philotheos, who spoke on behalf of the communities in the Acre-Ptolemais district, Mrs Panagiota Kafetzi, who spoke on behalf of Saint Demetrios School, Mr Athanasios Abu-Aeta, from Beit Sahour, and all those who participated in this festivity.

Cheers to all!"

At noon, a monastic meal was offered.

From Secretariat-General

THE DOXOLOGY FOR MARCH 25, 1821 AT THE PATRIARCHATE

At 10.00 a.m. on Thursday, March 10/23, 2018, a Doxology was held in the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the occasion of the national anniversary of March 25, 1821, as thanks to God for the national rebirth and liberation from the Turkish yoke and as a petition for the repose of the souls of those who heroically fell on the battlefields of the nation.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos presided over the Doxology, with the co-celebration of the High Priests and Hieromonks of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Evangelos Vlioras and members of the Greek Consulate General. The chanting was delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, and Mr Gotsopoulos in the presence of members of the Greek community and pilgrims.

After the Doxology, all congregation went to the Hall of the Patriarchate, where His Beatitude spoke with the following address:

“What have I to do with Napoleon? However, if you want soldiers to liberate our country, I promise you 5 and 10 thousand soldiers; once we were baptized with oil, we are baptized again with blood and another time for the freedom of our country”. From the memoirs of the Elder of Moria, Theodoros Kolokotronis.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved brethren in Christ,

With infinite gratitude to the Holy Triune God, the pious generation of the Roman Orthodox and our Greek nation honours the anniversary of March 25, 1821, the day of the Annunciation of its liberation from the slavery of the Ottoman yoke.

The global historical event of the Greek Revolution of 1821 demonstrated in practice the greatness of the power of faith in Christ on the one hand and, on the other, of the mindset of the spirit for the God-given good of freedom and an independent homeland. "God... made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation", (Acts 17,26) Saint Paul preaches.

The Hellenistic view of man as "the offspring of God" (Acts 17:29) and especially the hagiographic view that we are God's (cf. 1 Cor. 11:7) is the inexhaustible source that fed both sacrificial dispositions through the baptism of blood and the sure hope through the baptism of the freedom of the country.

The lively desire to seize the most precious treasure of freedom fully justified the holy struggle of the subservient Romans against the overthrow of the long-term Ottoman tyranny. «Άργιε νάλθη εκείνη ή 'μέρα / και ήταν όλα σιωπηλά / Γιατί τ'άσκιαζε ή φοβέρα / και τά πλάκωνε ή σκλαβιά» according to the poet Dionysios Solomos.

Admittedly, the Greek Revolution of 1821 causes admiration but also wonder, because, in the history of mankind, there is no such comparable event. We say this invoking the proclamation of the great national martyr Alexandros Ypsilantis from Iasion on February 24, 1821, in which he declared the following: "It is time to shake off this unbearable yoke, to liberate the Motherland, to descend from the clouds... to rise the sign, by which we always win, I say the Cross, and thus to avenge our Homeland and our Orthodox Faith from the ungodly scorn of the

ungodly”.

No one can doubt that the motives of the pioneers and fighters of 1821 were genuine, that is, pure and spontaneous. This, on the other hand, is confirmed by the motto of the Elder of Moria, Theodoros Kolokotronis, “now the fight is for the holy faith of Christ and the freedom of the country”; as well as the fact that the “oath was taken on the Cross of Christ” according to the will of Riga Feraios.

The rebirth of the Greek race from the ashes of slavery was the result of the principles and inalienable spiritual values of the meeting of the classical cultural heritage and the holy paternal Greek Orthodox Christian tradition, according to which -meeting- the Greek reason granted its place to the divine Word, the one made flesh and dwelling in us (cf. Jn. 1:14).

This means that today’s anniversary celebration of the national rebirth of 1821 is not only about its historical memory but also about its moral significance, that is, about the preservation of the legacy of the Gospel word of Christ and in our contemporary era of the so-called “A new order of things”, according to which, as the great Paul said, “people corrupted in mind and unfit for faith resist the truth” (cf. 2 Tim. 3:8).

Remarkable is the contribution of the Church through its higher and lower clergy to the “overall struggle” against the now unbearable slavery of the non-religious Ottomans. Leading personalities, such as Patriarch Gregory V and Patriarch Cyril V of Andrianoupolis, but also the Archbishop of Cyprus Kyprianos water the tree of freedom with their blood. Apart from the Bishop Palaion Patron Germanos, who blessed and raised the holy banner of the Revolution, the Bishop of Salona Isaiah sacrifices himself in Alamana. Ordinary clerics, such as the fiery Athanasios Diakos and the distinguished missionary of the nation, Saint Cosmas of Aitolos, but also

Hagiotaphite clerics adorn the martyrology of the 21st Revolution.

Our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, obeying the words of the wise Paul: " Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5,1) and dutifully participating in the celebration of the holy memory of the rebirth of the pious Roman race and nation, we went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where we sent forth thanksgiving, praise and glorification to our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us and rose from the dead. We pray for the eternal repose in the land of the living of the blessed souls of those who fought heroically for Faith and Country and fell gloriously in the holy fights of the pious race and nation of the Roman Orthodox and martyred.

For all these, allow us to raise our glass and worthily exclaim:

Long live March 25, 1821!

Long live the pious and royal family of the Roman Orthodox!

Long live Greece!

Long live our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!"

Afterwards, in the hall of the Patriarchate, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Evangelos Vlioras, spoke on behalf of the Greek State as follows:

"Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend High Priests,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In every historical period, there is a key event that marks it and becomes a point of reference for all of us later. March 25, 1821, is this milestone, in the History of Hellenism, the Balkans and Europe, when the Greeks took the heroic decision to rise up, regardless of the adversities, against the Ottoman tyranny and to claim Freedom, paying, without grumbling, the price of blood.

It is therefore a special honour for the Consul General of the Motherland to address the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Hellenism of the Holy Land, on the occasion of the celebration of the National Rebellion of 1821, a struggle, in favour of altars and hearths, a symbol for the Greek Nation that marked the rebirth of the Republic in its cradle and the establishment of the modern Greek state.

The 25th of March 1821, a peak moment of our long national life, was the beginning of an epic uprising against the Ottoman yoke, based on the strength, determination and patriotism of the Greeks. Drawing strength from the heritage and long Tradition of the Nation, the Revolution of 1821 transcended the narrow limits of space and time and emerged as a universal and timeless symbol of virtue and the struggle for the Motherland and Freedom.

So in those times, as in any difficult time, there were many who surpassed themselves and demonstrated heroism, above what we call well-meaning duty. Simple, everyday people, who found themselves suddenly, in the foreground of History, without asking to be heroes and yet they responded to the call, without flinching, without hesitating, leaving an indelible mark on the course, History and life of Hellenism.

With meagre or even non-existent means, with the courage to make up for the lack of armament, they pushed for good the flow of our historical march towards justice and freedom. In

this struggle, all served the idea of freedom, with unique patriotism, self-sacrifice and self-denial.

Theodoros Kolokotronis writes in his Memoirs: “when we decided to start the Revolution, we didn’t think about how many we were, nor that we didn’t have weapons, nor that the Turks were besieging the castles and cities... but like the rain, the desire of our freedom fell upon us”. “The nation owes its resurrection to a miracle and not to logic,” adds General Makrygiannis.

There are countless examples of heroism and sacrifice during our National Rebellion. But let us dwell for a moment on the example of the woman, who became known in our history as “Psorokostaina”, Mrs Panoraia Hadjikosta from the Kydonies of Asia Minor. When her city was destroyed by the Ottomans and her husband was killed, she fled to Nafplio.

At that time, the Revolution was being tested by the rampage of Ibrahim, who, in addition to the other disasters, left in his wake hundreds of orphans who gathered in Nafplio. Despite her problems, Panoraia asked for and took under her protection orphan children. To feed them, she went from house to house begging. She had neglected herself to such an extent that the children teased her and called her “Psorokostaina”.

In 1826 a fundraiser was held for the Martyred Messolongi in Nafplio. Panoraia was the first to deposit what she had left, her silver wedding ring and a penny, for the Fight. After the establishment of the Orphanage in Aegina by Ioannis Kapodistrias, she offered to wash the clothes of the orphans without any remuneration. At the funeral of Panoraia Hatzikosta, it was the children of the orphanage who accompanied her, as an honorary pallbearer, to her last residence.

The Revolution of 1821 and its happy outcome is the great historical achievement of our country which, according to

Odysseus Elytis, "is small in space but infinite in time". "A stone cape in the Mediterranean", according to Giorgos Seferis, who in the spring of 1821 defied the facts that did not favour the fight and threw himself wholeheartedly into the fire.

National anniversaries are useful for all of us, and especially for the young when we realize the need to renew with boldness and determination our adherence to the ideals for which the fathers of our freedom fought and the realization that justice, progress and our well-being can only be obtained by our own efforts.

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The revolution of March 25, 1821, is a milestone in the modern history of the Nation and the cornerstone of our national identity. The heroism, self-sacrifice and determination of the Fighters of the Revolution, define the context of our struggle to preserve the moral and spiritual values that constitute a free, just and democratic Motherland.

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, as a constituent part of our Orthodox faith and our Greek legacy, has been and still remains, the guardian of the moral and spiritual values of the Greek and Orthodox witness in the Holy Land and is a valuable source of inspiration and a great example of determination and commitment to preservation, for two millennia, of the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy Shrines of our Faith.

His high spirit and his struggles, under adverse conditions, to this day, are for all of us an invaluable national asset

and a source of inspiration and encouragement.

For all of us, this special anniversary is an excellent occasion to reflect on our responsibilities and to renew our commitment to the ideals, for which the defenders of our freedom fought, “...unmoved by debt”, ideals for which we must always strive for and never take them for granted, not forgetting that the price of freedom is always very high and that our Country can be proud because there are always those who pay for this price.

With these thoughts in mind, I invite everyone to exclaim:

Long live March 25, 1821!

Long live Greece!”.

From Secretariat-General

EVENT AT ZION SCHOOL FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATION OF WORLD GREEK LANGUAGE DAY

On the evening of Thursday, January 27/February 9, 2023, an event was organized in the hall of ceremonies of the Holy Zion Seminar School of the Patriarchate in honour of the Greek Language Day which has been established in recent years.

This event was organized with the cooperation of the Greek Consulate General in Jerusalem and the Dragoman of the Patriarchate and School Managing Director, Archimandrite Mattheos. The event was presented by the Consul General of

Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Evangelos Vlioras, with the following preface:

“They gave me Greek as my language, the poor house on the sandy beaches of Homer. My only concern is my language on the sandy beaches of Homer...”

Your Excellency,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Greek language holds the precious and rare privilege of belonging to only 5 languages, out of the 6,500 official languages spoken today, which demonstrate an uninterrupted presence of 4,000 years of oral and written existence in the history of the human race. Notable is the fact that up to 5 centuries ago the Greek language was also an international language of communication.

But language is not just a tool for communication and transmission of information. It is a carrier of culture and historical memory. Within the linguistic shapes and forms that sometimes become oral narration, sometimes written testimony, poetry, essay or song, are hidden the anxieties, the desires, the joys, the values and the history of a people who, according to our great poet Odysseus Elytis, has the privilege to call the sky “heaven” and the sea “sea”, as Homer and Plato called it two and a half thousand years ago.

So we speak a language that only a few million people speak for two and a half thousand years without interruption and with minimal changes. This fact captures the peculiar dimension of our country, which, according to Elytis, is “small in terms of space and vast in terms of time” and confirms the saying of the linguist Yiannis Psycharis, that “language and homeland are the same”. At the same time, the Greek language, as the language of the Gospels, makes the

Greek language, and by extension Hellenism, a universal and timeless point of reference. In recent years, our national poet Dionysios Solomos highlighted the values of Hellenism as a universal cause, having nothing else in mind "beyond freedom and language". This universal dimension of the Greek spirit, as spread through the Greek language, is reminded and honoured by the establishment of the Greek State on February 9, the day of commemoration of Dionysios Solomos, as the International Day of the Greek Language.

Highlighting, promoting, and strengthening the learning and dissemination of the Greek language abroad are top priorities for the Greek State, not only because the language is a connecting link between the motherland and the diaspora, but also because the language, like Hellenism, is a living, dynamic and constantly evolving element. It constantly renews itself, adapts to changing conditions and assimilates new influences. Thus, the Greek language is the thread that holds us and brings us from the world of myth to the world of artificial intelligence and the internet.

As stated by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Katsaniotis, in his message for the International Day of the Greek Language: "From the 'golden Mycenae' and Linear B", the speech of Homer and the great Tragedians, until today, in the age of information, digital technology and social media, the Greek language is alive and active, producing history, culture and science".

We can only grasp the thread and continue the course with a deep awareness of the responsibility imposed on us by our centuries-old linguistic tradition and history.

On this occasion, I would like to express special thanks to Professor Mr Nikos Michaelidis for the keynote speech of the event, H.H.B. the Patriarch of Jerusalem for His blessing for the event to be held at the Patriarchal school of Holy Zion, and of course the Managing Director of the School, Fr

Mattheos, the children and the teachers and all those who worked for today's event.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for your presence at the event tonight."

The main speaker on the subject of the Greek language was the anthropologist professor Mr Nikolaos Michaelidis of the University of Missouri, USA, with his lecture to be posted shortly.

Among the guests were; the representative of H.H.B. the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the French Consul in Jerusalem Mr René Troccaz and the Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus in Ramallah Mr Assos, members of the Greek Consulate and the Greek Parish of Jerusalem and the Arab-speaking flock, teachers and students.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINTS GEORGE AND JOHN THE HOZEVITES

On Saturday, January 8th/21st, 2023, the memory of Saints George and John the Hozevites was celebrated by the Patriarchate in the Holy Monastery of Hozeva, located on the left bank of the Brook Horrath in its Jericho flow.

On this day, the Church remembers that Saint John came to the Holy Monastery of Hozeva, having resigned his Bishopric in Caesarea, and became a pole of spiritual attraction, and Saint George came from Lefkara of Cyprus and renovated the Monastery

after the Persian invasion of 614 AD.

The memory of these holy men was honoured with an all-night vigil after the preface by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Constantine of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the following address:

“Rejoice, rules of extreme humility,”

“Rejoice, images of clear wisdom”,

Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

And Your honourable Entourage,

We have gathered once more to celebrate the annual memory of the two Holy Founders of the historical HozozHoHeva Lavra, George and John, and the three thousand Hozevite martyrs the day after tomorrow.

Their virtues are many! Based on the most meaningful, excellent spiritual teaching of our Holy Father George, a virtue above all:

Holy humility!

In the teaching of the Saint to the Hozevite Monks, “About pride”, we read:

“Humility, humility, exaltation (that is, boasting) has the Only Begotten Son of God, who humbled Himself to death, death on the Cross... I tell you, brothers, that there was no Greek or Jew or Samaritan who had true humility and he is not loved and much loved by God and men... so let us acquire these virtues: humility and reverence. Struggle, brothers, supporting each other in humility.”

This is what our Holy Father George taught the Hozevites. Not only did he teach, but also practiced!

Both Saints John and George were possessed, not only by

humility but above all, by extreme and genuine humility. The distinct, indeed, difference between the two concepts is clarified by our Holy Father Nikitas Stithatos in the second hundred of his chapters:

“Humility is achieved by all suffering and by the external efforts of virtue... Humility, however, is what is divine and heavenly and is born... through the influx of the Holy Spirit”. (Philokalia, volume 4 p.86,87, 1st edition 1987, “The Orchard of the Virgin Mary”).

The sublime precisely humility, which is completely lacking in our days, please pray, Your Beatitude Father and Master, that we may all acquire it. And indeed, we may walk in life with moderation, in the bond of the Lord’s love, Amen”.

Consequently, the all-night vigil followed, officiated by His Beatitude, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Archbishops, Aristarchos of Constantina, Isidoros of Hierapolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the Hozevite Hieromonk Chrysogonos, at the changing of Mr Stavros Christos, cantor in the Church of Saint Paraskevi of Attica, Mr Papadimitriou Nikolaos, choir leader of the Holy Church of Saint Kyriaki in Pyrgos Elia, Mr Stavros Ioannou choir leader in the Holy Church of Saint Dimitrios of Tripoli, Mr Theotokatos Nikolaos left choir singer in the H. Church of Prophet Elias of the Municipality of Saint Paraskevi Attica, Mr Kamtsios Elias and Panagiotis, right and left choir singers respectively of the chapel of the Holy Apostles of the Municipality of Saint Paraskevi Attica, after the monks of the Monastery, with the participation of many people for the first time after the last covid-19 pandemic.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude delivered the solemn sermon as follows:

“And I said: this change hath been wrought by the right hand of the Most High”, (Ps. 76,11) exclaims the psalmist,

Beloved Holy Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

The redeeming Grace of God and our Saviour Christ, who appeared in the Jordan, brought us all together in this Holy place of Hozeva, so that we may solemnly honour the sacred memory of our Holy Father George the Hozevite.

Burning from childhood with the desire for a solitary and ascetic life, to which he was drawn, and after remaining in the service of his elderly parents until their death, he left his native island of Cyprus for the Holy Land. Then his brother the monk Heraklides receives him and leads him to the famous for its austerity and its holy monks, the coenobitic monastery of Hozeva.

Let's listen to his hymnographer saying: “Neither lengthiness of the road nor severity of the place could avail to weaken thy strong and fiery zeal to make thy journey to God; and when thou joyously hadst arrive da the places that were trod by the feet of our Lord and God, thou, O righteous George, leftest nothing undone till through thy labours and ascetic deeds thou camest unto the Sion in Heaven's heights” (Vespers, sticheron 2).

Indeed, “the fire of our Saint George's education to God” is strengthened by the Davidic words “I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord, and Thy law is my meditation” (Psalms 118, 174) from one; and the strict (hard) his practice on the other hand, in Lavra. “The insults of the warrior devil did not settle the citadel of his soul,” says the hymn. And this, because the blessed George had as a model of imitation our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the commandment of Saint Paul: “ Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a

sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5, 1-2).

Interpreting these words of Paul, Saint Chrysostom says: "See that the suffering because of the enemy, is a smell of fragrance and also a welcome sacrifice; if you die, then it a sacrifice; this is to imitate God."

The imitation of God, that is, of our Saviour Christ, is nothing other than the alteration of the right hand of the Most High, Who "became like us and was greatly altered himself", as Saint Cyril of Alexandria says, adding: "and everyone, out of malice returning, or remaining in virtue and prosper, let him say: -Now I start; this change, which the right hand of the Most High has bestowed, may it be the greatest advance through the striving of reverence. The precept of virtue does not exist when he does not change. It is also said that the Only Begotten (Son and Word of God) is changed, as the descent of the divine nature to the human form and a kind of change, not by expulsion (=rejection) but by adoption.

Our holy Father George also achieved this exact change according to Christ, "having been trained in virtue through the gymnasiums (=practice) of piety, of the right professed faith. Also worth noting is the fact that the Holy George, like another Paul, dwelt on earth as a disembodied angel, unceasingly glorifying the Holy Triune God and receiving his divine radiance.

Saint George, born as a vessel of the enlightening Grace of the Holy Spirit and following in the footsteps of Saint John the Forerunner and Baptist preaching repentance in the desert of Jordan, echoed and evangelized through the mouth of the psalmist, the greatness and saving truth of Christ, saying: "I have proclaimed the good tidings of Thy righteousness in the great congregation; lo, my lips I shall not restrain; Lord, Thou knowest it. Thy righteousness have I not hid in my heart; Thy truth and Thy salvation have I declared (Ps. 39, 11-12).

True witnesses of this event have been the multitude of monks, the ascetics in this holy Monastery of Hozeva, in which John the bishop-to-be of Caesarea of Palestine and John our New Father from Romania, who is before our eyes and his incorruptible and fragrant relic proclaims the Resurrection of God and our Saviour, but also our resurrection in Christ. " For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5), preaches the wise Paul.

We, my beloved brothers and venerable monks, who are practising in this sanctified Lavra, beseech the all-wise George standing before God, to grant to those who honour him the illumination of the Holy Spirit who appeared in the form of a dove in the Jordan and the divine communion.

And after the hymnographer let us say: "with one accord, let us faithful laud with hymns God the Word, Who came forth from God, and Who ineffably took on flesh from a pure Virgin for us and in wisdom past telling descended to make Adam new again, who by eating fell grievously down into corruption's pits" (Ode 9, Heirmos).

Amen. Many, peaceful and blessed years".

After the Dismissal of the vigil, the renovator of the Monastery and its reorganizer, Hegoumen Archimandrite Constantine, offered a solemn feast.

Blessing everyone, His Beatitude ascended the uphill road with the help of the monastery vehicle and boarded the Patriarchate's car to return to Jerusalem.

From Secretariat-General