

THE FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD INTO THE TEMPLE

On Sunday, the 21st / 8th of December 2022, the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple was celebrated by the Patriarchate.

During this feast, the Church remembers that the Theotokos, as a gift to her former barren parents Joachim and Anna, was presented/offered by them, in accordance with their promise to the priests of Solomon's Temple and was kept by them in the Holy of Holies, when alone the High Priest entered once a year. There, she was nourished by the angels and prepared for the great mystery of the incarnation of God the Word, until she was handed over for safekeeping to Joseph her minister.

This feast was celebrated

1. At the Patriarchal and Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen with Vespers on Saturday afternoon and with the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning, which was presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the participation in prayer of the Hagiotaphite High Priests, Hieromonks and monks.

After the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude visited the Holy Monastery of Megali Panagia, where he was received by the Abbess Nun Melani, who renovated the Church and preserved its ancient icons.

2. At the Holy Monastery of Megali Panagia, adjacent to the Central Monastery of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood with Vespers on Saturday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning. The services were presided over by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, with the co-celebration of the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the ministering Priest of the Monastery

Archimandrite Makarios, Archimandrite Leontios from the Russian MISSIA, Archimandrite Dionysios and Hierodeacon Dositheos.

The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon with the help of the Patriarchal School of Zion students and the services were attended by the Nuns of the Holy Monastery, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and many faithful Christians from Jerusalem and pilgrims.

Before the Holy Communion His Eminence delivered the following Sermon:

“Today is the prelude of God’s goodwill and the heralding of the salvation of mankind. In the temple of God, the Virgin is presented openly, and she proclaimeth Christ unto all. To her, then, with a great voice let us cry aloud: Rejoice, O thou fulfilment of the Creator’s dispensation.”

Reverend Christians, dear children of the Lord,

The pious Anna, Joachim’s wife, spent her life without being able to bear children, as she was barren. Together with Joachim, she fervently prayed to God to enable her to give birth to a child, with the promise that she would dedicate her child to Him. Indeed, the All-Good God not only blessed her with a child but also qualified her to give birth to the woman who would give birth to the Messiah, our Saviour Jesus Christ. The fact of the entry of the Daughter of Nazareth into the Temple is not mentioned in the New Testament. Of course, it is not the only case, because neither the Nativity of the Theotokos Mary is mentioned, nor is her Dormition. The fact that the entry of the Theotokos into the Temple was preserved in one of the apocryphal texts, which is called the “First Gospel of James”, and which of course has nothing to do with James the Brother of God, does not mean that the Church embraced the ideas of a cryptic text. Simply, this apocryphal text saved the information about the entry of the Virgin into

the Temple, but this does not mean that the aforementioned text also suggests her feast day.

What is important, however, is that the Feast of the Theotokos' Entry into the Temple is based on a real event, and this feast begins to be established in the life of our Church in the 6th century AD. References are found in St. Sophronius of Jerusalem, St. Andrew of Crete and Fathers of the Church deliver solemn speeches in the 8th century during the Feast of the Theotokos' Entry into the Temple.

Therefore, the feast of the Entry of the Theotokos is an act of the Church, which not only does not contradict the work of the New Providence but on the contrary is consistent and synergistic with it.

Thus, the deeper meaning of the entry of the three-year-old child of Joachim and Anna into the Temple was not the fulfilment of a promise of the solution to the shame of childlessness. Still, it inaugurated the great chapter of the salvation of people. The childlessness of the parents of the Theotokos was part of God's plan so that Mary would be the fruit of her parents' gift to God.

Moreover, her entrance into the temple, due to the dubious calculations that it may cause many people, who think earthly and "foreign things", is the "prelude of the future divine grace that would overshadow her ", as the Patriarch of Constantinople Germanos declares. And he adds: "Who has ever heard of such a thing? " Who has seen or heard of this, now or in the past? A woman being brought inside the Holy Altar?"

Certainly, according to the Fathers of the Church, the three-year-old Daughter comes to be dedicated to the Temple, to become "the new immaculate and undefiled volume, "not written by hand, but gilded by the spirit". And this had to precede, according to the divine order, because one thing is possible to stand as an impossible event in the almighty God, "to be in

union with anyone unclean”, says Saint Gregory Palamas.

Therefore, if God, not from weakness, but because of His nature is unable to communicate with the impure, how much more must the Virgin Mary be immaculate and undefiled, in order for the Son and Word of God to borrow her pure blood and regenerate “by the Holy Spirit he for Himself” His human nature?

So, the Virgin stayed there for twelve years nourished by the Archangel Gabriel with heavenly food, until the time of the divine Annunciation approached. Then the Theotokos, emerging from the Holy of Holies, was given to Joseph the betrothed, that he might be the guardian and witness of her virginity and that he might serve as much in her seedless pregnancy as in her flight to Egypt and her return to the land of Israel.

May the intercessions of the Theotokos give you health, mental and physical strength. Many Happy returns”.

From Secretariat-General

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENTHRONEMENT OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS

On the 9th / 22nd of November 2022, the seventeenth anniversary of the Enthronement of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos in 2005 was celebrated by the Patriarchate.

Due to this fact, a Doxology took place at 10.30 am at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Doxology was presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of the High Priests, Hieromonks and Deacons of the Patriarchate and the participation of members of the congregation of the Church of Jerusalem and pilgrims, along with the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and one hundred and fifty members of the Frigate Salamis of the Hellenic Navy who came from Haifa with the Honorary Consul of Greece in Haifa Mr Constantinos Zenovios and the member of the Greek Embassy – Naval Department in Tel Aviv Mr Tsiros.

After the Doxology, everybody went to the Patriarchate Reception Hall.

Then the Geronda Chief Secretary His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina addressed His Beatitude with the following address:

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

In full joy today, the Church of Zion and the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood celebrate in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in a solemn gathering of clergy and people, a historic, very important, joyful and hopeful event, which took place seventeen years ago, in the year of our salvation 2005, of the election of Your Beatitude to the martyred and glorious Patriarchal Throne of Saint James the Brother of God in Jerusalem.

This event, in addition to its importance primarily for the formation, coherence, stability and peace of the institution of the Church, acquires particular importance also because it came to put an end to a – thankfully – short, gloomy and extremely painful-sadly- period of the life of the Church of

Jerusalem. The Church and the Brotherhood were then suddenly speechless at the prospect of the conclusion of dishonourable agreements made without their knowledge. These agreements mortgaged, if not sold, the property of the Patriarchate in the Old City of Jerusalem, namely in the area opposite the Church of the Resurrection, of priceless material, much more of cultural value, and disrupted the centuries-old power and Biblical and internationally recognized Status Quo of the Old City. The Brotherhood then protested ecclesiastically, denounced the primacy of these agreements, considering itself as an active communion member of the body of the Church and respecting the institution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, opposed it, and called a Pan-Orthodox Synod – an event that takes place in critical circumstances of the church of life – and opened the way by electing a worthy Pastor, able to lead the Jerusalem Church and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood out of their impasse.

In regular elections held on the basis of the Ecclesiastical Canons and the Jordanian Law of the Patriarchate of 1957, Your Beatitude was elected by unanimous vote of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod as the Primate of the flock of the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Hegoumen of the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

Ever since, the first and main concern of this Patriarchal Office was the annulment of these agreements by the weapons of justice of the right and the left, through the judicial process, which is not specific and through legal political means, through mobilizing the protests of Churches and States, able to protect the Christian Community in the Holy Land from the challenges and pressures of extreme fanatical elements, who covet this property, so that it does not have a dwelling place but hast to remain homeless in its cradle. This burning issue of the protection of the Christians of the Holy Land was brought to the attention of the President of the USA, Mr Joe Beiden, through a special letter by Your Beatitude, when You

received and guided him to the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, in July of this year.

Nevertheless, Your Beatitude was not exhausted from these efforts, but at the same time contributed to other works worthy of memory, such as, after the restoration of the Holy Tomb of the Holy Sepulchre in 2017, the active participation of the present Patriarchate in the basis of a scientific study by the Sapiientia University of Rome, starting and continuing through the cooperation of the Three Major Communities, also a historical project of the maintenance of the floor of the Church of the Resurrection in the Seventh Arches and in the northern wing of the rotunda and of the consolidation of the subsoil of these spaces through scientific archaeological excavations. The decoration of the dedicated main space of the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection was and is a priority of Your Beatitude, for which You took advantage of the interest of the well-known pious businessman and Governor of Mount Athos Mr Athanasios Martinos, who visited our Patriarchate twice within a year, and was informed of the offer of sponsorship and of the other ongoing project of operating a scientific Centre for Theological Research in the Holy Monastery of the Holy Cross. In this case, the Patriarchate has already generously spent not inconsiderable sums for materials and conservation work under the expert conservator from Cyprus, Mr Stavros Andreou, for a multitude of antiquities of the Library of the famous historical Theological School of the Cross and the treasures of the Archive of the Brotherhood.

The ever-known interest of Your Beatitude for our Orthodox Arab-speaking flock was also manifested in practice recently, through the selection, ordination and appointment of educated clergy to fill parish positions of the Patriarchate in Jordan and Israel, by sending young people for theological studies in Greece, through the financial contribution of our Patriarchate to the completion and the consecration of the Holy full-sized

Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos of the Sakhin Community of the Acre region and of the Kufr Smea Community of the same region, through the Inauguration of a housing settlement in the town of Beit Jala on concessional terms of payment to four hundred and fifty families, through the external grouting of the Cathedral of St. James the Brother of God, thus securing our right of pilgrimage to the Courtyard of the Church of the Resurrection, through the offer of Mr Martinos of a modern X-ray machine for the Polyclinic of Saint Benedict, through the ongoing radical external and internal renovation of the Holy Monastery of the Prophet Elias and for the emergence of the nearby ancient Monastery of the "Seat", delayed, due to non-grant in the case of the Municipality of Jerusalem regular license. Simultaneously Your Beatitude has taken care of the Russian-speaking flock, appointing the Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth and the Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba for its immediate pastoral care, and by officiating the Divine Liturgy at the prayer house of Patriarch Abraham and the Patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronios in Beer Sheva, waiting for the construction of a decent holy temple by obtaining the required permission from the Municipality there.

The attention of Your Beatitude did not escape the lack of Fathers that has always afflicted the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, which You tried to cover by sequestering some of the clergy from Mount Athos or from the Church of Greece and the appointing Elder Dragoman and Managing Director of the School of Zion with the difficult task of selecting young students for the Zion School, as hope for the future.

These well-deserved memorials, Your Beatitudes, Father and Master, are only a few selected from the rich Patriarchal activity of Your Beatitude, giving us the Hagiotaphite Fathers the occasion for the celebration of this blessed anniversary day and the boast we have in Christ. This activity is the basis for our inspiration from Your example, the encouragement

and strengthening of us, the clergy and the members of the flock, in the cultivation of an optimistic attitude of stewardship and enrichment of works of good in the field of personal virtues and the field of the rights of the Brotherhood and our Roman Orthodox nation at the Holy Shrines of the Holy Land.

In such an optimistic disposition of soul, I raise my glass, Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and of the entire Brotherhood and I wish You as many happy returns as possible, healthy, happy, stable, and fruitful, in the governmental power coming from above, for the glory of God and the praise of our blessed nation. So be it.”

This was followed by the Consul General of Greece, Mr Evangelos Vlioras, through his address below:

“Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Dear Fathers,

Ladies and gentlemen.

It is a special honour for the speaker to represent our Motherland again this year in the solemn celebration of the anniversary of your enthronement, a day of celebration for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem which takes place in the historical seat of the Mother of the Churches, with its 2,000-year history.

In the difficult and sometimes conflicting conditions that the long-suffering Holy Land and our wider region are going through, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, under your leadership, is a factor of stability, calmness, moderation and a beacon of

hope for a future for this region free from intolerance and fanaticism.

Today is an opportunity, Your Beatitude, recalling your journey and your presence, on the Throne of the Zionist Church, to express our respect and appreciation for your great pastoral work and for the important and national work of the preservation and promotion of the Holy Places in the Holy Land and the safeguarding of the rights of the Patriarchate, unflinchingly and with the Hagiotaphite vigour and determination, in spite of the times, according to the best traditions of the Order of the Studious (Spoudaioi) and the Holy Common of the Holy Sepulchre.

Your Beatitude,

The Greek State surrounds you with appreciation and deep respect, recognizing the important work you are doing, as the Head of the Members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and is always a sincere and constant helper and supporter in your struggle, expressing, moreover, its unanimous, universal and all-round support of Greeks everywhere, as it is proven, and from the influx of devout pilgrims from Hellenism to the Holy Land, after the test of the recent pandemic.

For Greece, the defence of the rights and privileges of the ancient Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, as well as of the Customary Status Quo, constitute a moral and historical debt and mission, to which we have undertaken, with a sense of responsibility, and bearing in mind that the Holy Institution it is a leading point of reference for the moral and spiritual values of our Faith, a symbol, inextricably intertwined with the Holy Land as a source of life, hope and love.

In this spirit, our Motherland, as evident from the recent visits here of our political and official leadership and donors, honestly and tirelessly takes care of strengthening and consolidating our Patriarchate and the Holy Community of

the Holy Sepulchre in its high pastoral and national mission to be the guardian of the timelessness of the Greek and Greek-Orthodox presence in the Holy Land, as evidenced by the inscription on the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre, after the reconstruction of 1810 'Property and dedication to Christ of the Orthodox Romans'.

On behalf of the Greek State and the colleagues who serve at the Consulate General of Greece in Jerusalem, we wish, from the bottom of our hearts, for health, longevity and the Lord's support for your high spiritual and consoling work for the good of our respective Patriarchate, Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, ministers and guardians of the Holy Shrines of the Holy Land and of your Rum Orthodox Flock."

His Beatitude was also addressed by representatives of the Orthodox Churches of Moscow and Romania and of our flock, and representatives of the Schools of the Patriarchate and the representative of the World Council of Churches Deputy Secretary Fr Ioannis Sauka and the representative of Scouts and others.

His Beatitude thanked them through the following address:

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation (Psalm 68:19) says the psalmist.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Dear Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

The divine-human city of the living God, that is, the holy Church of Jerusalem, is celebrating today the Seventeenth Anniversary of the Enthronement of Our Mediocrity on the Apostolic Shroud of the Holy and righteous James the Brother of God and its First Hierarch.

This enthronement anniversary does not refer to Our unworthiness, but to the "God-made scene", according to Gregory of Nyssa, the holy delirium that is the institution of the Church at war in the world, which constitutes the body of the incarnate Son and Word of God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory...gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:17, 23), according to Saint Paul.

Being grateful, we went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with the honourable members of the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood accompanying Us, where we offered a thanksgiving doxology to the Holy Triune God "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4).

Hearers of the evangelical voice of Luke: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28), we did not cease our concern for our tested flock, who were under our direct ecclesiastical jurisdiction and spiritual responsibility. "Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah" (John 1:23).

We have not lessened the observance, both of our paternal and apostolic traditions, as well as of the unceasing devotional ministry of the Holy Places, of the true testimony of our faith, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion? he hath desired it for his habitation" (Psalm 132:13), but neither of the indescribable privileges and sovereign rights of the pious and

royal race and nation of the Roman Orthodox Christians.

By obeying the order of Saint Paul "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58) we follow the path of justice, the good cooperation with other Christian Communities, in every direction locally and internationally, demanding respect for the existing multi-religious and multinational Status Quo, both on the Holy Places and on the diplomatic "corpus separatum" of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

We confess after Saint Paul, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). We say this because the land of Jerusalem, watered by the redemptive blood of the Righteous One, that of our Crucified and Resurrected Saviour Jesus Christ, is a refuge of comfort and the hope of all people, as the wise Paul preaches saying: "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:18), namely Christ.

Our Mediocrity after the Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2) and remaining unchanged under the mission assigned to us by the divine Providence, do none other than the redeeming evangelism of love, of peace, righteousness, and the infinite philanthropy of the One who emptied himself and became a subject unto death, death on the cross (cf. Philippians 2:6-8).

The enthronement of this seventeen-year anniversary of Our Mediocrity calls us not to "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10:5), but "to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all

the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:2-3) according to the wise Paul. We say this because the throne of Christ's grace is in the Church of "the general assembly and church of the firstborn" (Hebrews 12:23). "As God, Christ has the eternal throne, as man, and high priest, and apostle of our confession, He hears, sit at my right hand", says Theodoritos Kyrou. According to Clement of Alexandria, "he who knows himself is the throne of the Lord" a throne of grace and mercy, according to Paul's words, "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). Saint Hippolytus commenting on the verse of Isaiah: "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud and shall come" (Isaiah 19:1) says: "Lord and the Word, cloud and hollow the cleanest tent, [said] where the enthroned Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the life [of man] to destroy the fallacy". In other words, today's enthronement anniversary refers to the inauguration of the throne of Christ in our hearts, and indeed in our contemporary time, of the "new order of things", about which Saint Paul said, "perilous times are coming" (1 Tim. 3,1). "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine? but after their own lusts they shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Tim. 4:3). "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thess. 2:7).

We who are aware of our infirmity, that "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27), do not stop the work on our Patriarchal, ecclesiastical and pastoral ministry of the apostolic and martyr's throne of the holy and righteous James the Brother of God. But we do not even hesitate, because we have co-ministers, the respected and beloved in Christ, our Hagiotaphite brothers, Arch Priests, Priests, Hieromonks, Deacons and Monks, distinguished by the Hagiotaphitic sacrificial self-denial and their ecclesiastical mindset, the unity and love, according to the exhortation of the Holy martyr Ignatius of Antioch: "Let us all love one another in

unity, and none of us see our neighbour according to the flesh but in Christ Jesus. Let not what is possible divide you among you, but be united to the bishop, submitting to God through him in Christ".

We truly say that we do not hide our dismay at the prevailing disorder and dissension in the body of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church. For even the Episcopal and Patriarchal throne of the city, sanctified by the redemptive blood of Christ the King, is not silent prayerfully working for the observance of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (cf. Eph. 4,3).

Let us beseech the God of patience and supplication and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that H

is holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, "guide us into all truth" (cf. Jn. 16,13), through the of the intercessions of our most blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and of the prayers of our holy Father Nektarios of Pentapolis.

May the grace of the Holy and Life-giving Tomb of our Saviour Christ strengthen us all in our mission of witnessing love, peace and justice in the world and in our region.

Therefore, we call on all those praying with Us and those who, through their presence, are honouring Us on this Enthronement feast, power from on high, the illuminating energy of the Holy Sepulchre, patience and all God's blessing. We express our heartfelt thanks to the Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Cosntantina, who spoke on behalf of the reverend members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, and to all who addressed Us, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, His Eminence Archimandrite Alexander, representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Russia, conveying to us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow, Cyril, the Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the

brotherly Holy Church of Romania, conveying to us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania, Daniel, His Eminence the Metropolitan of Nazareth, Kyriakos, speaking on behalf of our flock in Nazareth, His Eminence the Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, speaking on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Fr Charalambos Bandour, speaking on behalf of Saint James Cathedral, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, speaking on behalf of the Russian-speaking Community of Beer Sheva, Archimandrite Philotheos, speaking on behalf of the communities in Acre region, Reverend Treasurer Fr Savva, speaking on behalf of the Community of the Shepherds Village, Deputy Secretary Fr Ioannis Soukas, speaking on behalf of the World Council of Churches, Mr Ode Kavas, speaking on behalf of the Arabic-speaking Schools of the Patriarchate and Mrs Panagiota Kafetzi speaking on behalf of the School of Saint Demetrius and all who participated in the celebration of this Enthronement anniversary.

Cheers to all of you!"

At noon, a meal was offered at the refectory of the Patriarchate.

From Secretariat-General

THE HARVEST OF OLIVES AT THE HOLY MONASTERY OF MARTHA AND MARY IN BETHANY

The website of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem conveys the thanks of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood to the Greek Consulate

General of Greece in Jerusalem for its assistance in the arduous task of harvesting the olives in the Holy Monastery of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, in Bethany and presents the following statement by the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras:

“The Consulate General of Greece voluntarily participated again this year in the centuries-old tradition of collecting olives at the Holy Monastery of Martha and Mary of our Patriarchate in Bethany, where the first tomb of Lazarus is located.

We thank H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos for His blessing, the Reverend Archimandrite Epiphanius, the Abbess Gerontissa Eupraxia and the Nuns who minister this Pilgrimage, for their incomparable hospitality and the opportunity they gave us to support their work.

Thanks are also addressed to the Head of the Representation Office of Argentina in Ramallah and his family, to the staff of our Government and the members of their families and to the Greeks who live here or serve in International Organizations, who voluntarily participated in the event.

From Secretariat-General

**STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF HM
KING ABDULLAH II FOLLOWING**

HIS SPEECH AT THE UN ASSEMBLY IN NYC

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, express our utmost gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan, the Hashemite Custodian of Christian and Muslim Holy sites in the Holy Land, for his true and honest description of the Christian reality in the Holy land, especially in Jerusalem, during his highly respected speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 20th of September, 2022.

We also applaud His Majesty's public commitment to protect our communities' historical and legal status quo, thus preserving our safety and future. His Majesty's spearheading efforts to ring the bells of warning over the deteriorating situation of Christian basic human rights sends a strong message to the world regarding the clear and present dangers surrounding the Christian heritage and presence in Jerusalem and the rest of the Holy Land.

We call on the International Community as a whole, and all peace-loving people around the world, to act upon His Majesty's warning addressed in his United Nations speech.



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

**A Statement in Support of HM King Abdullah II
Following his Speech at the UN Assembly in NY
27 September, 2022**

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan, the Hashemite Custodian of Christian and Muslim Holy Sites in the Holy Land, for his true and honest depiction of the Christian reality in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem, during his highly respected speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations on the 27th of September, 2022.

We also applaud His Majesty's public commitment to protect our communities' historical and legal status quo, thus preserving our unity and future. His Majesty's unequivocal efforts to bring the halls of warning over the deteriorating situation of Christian holy sites and rights sends a strong message to the world regarding the clear and present dangers concerning the Christian heritage and presence in Jerusalem and the rest of the Holy Land.

We call on the International Community as whole, and all peace-loving people around the world, to act upon His Majesty's warning addressed in his United Nations speech.

—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem

THE SERVICE OF THE LAMENTATIONS OF THE THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday 14/27 August 2022, on the Forefeast of the Dormition, the service of the Lamentations of the Theotokos – a unique service of the Church of Jerusalem – was held at the Church of the Dormition in Gethsemane, where the Tomb of the Theotokos lies, after an all-night vigil which was officiated by the Master of Ceremonies of the Patriarchate, Archimandrite Bartholomew.

For this service, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood marched down Via Dolorosa from the Patriarchate Headquarters, and after a short rest at the Hegoumeneion of Gethsemane, the welcoming reception began at the courtyard of the shrine with lit candles and incense offering under the chanting of the Apolytikion of the Dormition. The service was held at the centre of the Church, before the Epitaph of the Mother of God, presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with Hagiotaphite Hierarchs and Hieromonks, following the Typikon order with the three stasis of the Lamentations, with the incense offering inside the Tomb and around the Church and the chapels in it.

After the completion of the third stasis, the Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina delivered the following Sermon:

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

Reverend Chorea of Hierarchs,

Your Excellency, Consul General of Greece,

Reverend Fathers

Christian congregation of the Lord

Gathered today, on the eve of the Dormition of the Theotokos around her sacred monument, we remember not only what is connected with her Dormition, but also what from the beginning is connected with her immaculate face. We remember all that the Church received from her and from the Apostles and teaches them to us through its Holy God-bearing Fathers. We engrave anew in our memory that the Theotokos was a gift of God to her childless and godly parents, Joachim and Anna, and to all humanity. That she was the fruit of their natural conjugal relationship and that her conception was not immaculate, that is, she was not free from the original sin and its consequences, which is death. The Mother of God inherited from the Forefather only the original sin and she had no personal sin nor disposition or inclination for it. For the exceeding and surpassing purity and cleanness of her life, God chose her, destined her, to become a vessel of His grace. With the goodwill and providence of God, when she was three years old, she was kept in the Holy of Holies of the Temple of Solomon and then she was given by the Priests to the sober and righteous Joseph to protect her virginity.

“When the fullness of time came”, God called her to become His accomplice in the work of regeneration, rebirth, renovation and salvation of man. Through the mouth of the Archangel Gabriel, he addressed her with the address that no mortal has ever heard, “Rejoice, thou who art full of grace” and asked her to become the mother of His only-begotten Son and Word, Who alone with Him is without beginning. To her question, “how will this be done, since I do not know a man”, she received the answer, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most-High will overshadow you”. When with trust and free and indiscriminate obedience she answered, “Behold the

handmaid of the Lord, let it be unto me according to Thy word," then she lent her flesh to God, then, "along with the bodiless voice," the bodiless took flesh, the bodiless became flesh, the second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ our God, became man, God and became man, God-man, "in one hypostasis and with two natures, wills and actions".

How does this happen? "There is no investigation of the mystery". However, it was done with Divine power and energy. "As He knew, as He willed, and as He pleased". As the Archangel said to the Virgin, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you...and the holy child born will be called the son of God". As the Evangelist of love affirms, "the Word became flesh". As the Apostle of the Gentiles tells us by revelation, that "God sent His Son, born of a woman, from whom Christ took flesh". As the Church sings in all the masterpiece hymns of the divine poets of its Holy Fathers and above all in the praise hymn for the Virgin in the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, "in thee, O Full of Grace, all creation – both the company of Angels and the race of men – doth rejoice...for He made thy womb a throne, and He made thee more spacious than the heavens, from thee God was incarnate, and became a child, He, our God, Who existed before the ages".

In her who held and gave birth to this supernatural mystery, virginity and motherhood do not oppose each other but meet and unite. As Saint Kosmas, the melodist sings, in the face of the Immortal Virgin, "the bounds of nature are overcome in her, for her childbirth is virginal", the birth is held by a Virgin. Similarly, the bounds of nature are overcome during her exodus from this world, because "her death is the spousal of life", death is betrothed to life. She who is "a virgin after childbirth", is also "living after death" (Katavasia ode 9). After her burial at "the village of Gethsemane" by the Holy Apostles who were gathered in a heavenly command through the air", her Son, as Saint John Damascene sings, "bestowing on her the supernatural, as he protected her in the labour and

kept her a Virgin, even in the tomb her body was preserved incorrupt and was co-glorified by her divine metastasis”.

This truth is also expressed by the Kontakion of the Feast of the Dormition, “the grave and death could not hold the Theotokos, who is unsleeping in her intercessions and unfailing hope in her mediations. For as the Mother of Life she was translated to life by Him Who dwelt in her ever-virgin womb”. The tomb housed but did not preserve, the God-receiving relic of the Theotokos. However, it was sanctified by this and is sanctified by the daily Divine Liturgy, which is offered on it. To this tomb, which, as a precious pilgrimage relic, has been preserved throughout the centuries by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, we are exhorted to hasten by the pre-eminent praiser of the Most Holy Theotokos, Father John of Damascus, “Come ye faithful, let us draw nigh unto the tomb of the Mother of God, let us embrace it, touching it sincerely with the lips and eyes and forehead of the heart, and let us draw up bounteous gifts of healing that stream from the ever-flowing fountain” (Matins, Ode 9, 2nd canon, Troparion 2).

In the same way, on tomorrow’s “important day of the metastasis”, as Saint John of Damascus calls it, and on today’s overwhelming exodus ceremony, which is presided over by the Primate of the Church of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, let us kneel in reverend before the empty Tomb of the Mother of God and pray to the one who experienced her metastasis in the heavens before the common Resurrection and sits on the right hand of the Saviour and has boldness before Him, to intercede for the forgiveness of our sins, for the cleansing of our souls from our personal passions, for the healing of our infirmities, for the healing of the wounds of the body of the Church and the wounds of the Orthodox states, for goodness of the state of the universe, for the pacification of the Middle East, for the cessation of the horrible wars waged unjustly throughout the world, for the repose of their deceased victims, for the

protection and relief of their living victims, wounded, homeless, displaced and refugees, and for the transformation of earth again into a paradise, in which the fruits of the prayer, “Your kingdom come, let Your will be done” will be visible.”

The service continued with the praises, Doxology and the litany of the Epitaph up to the entrance of the Church, the supplication and its placement before the Theotokos Tomb until the Apodosis of the Dormition.

After the service, the Hegoumen, His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis hosted a fasting reception with grapes and seasonal fruit at the hegoumeneion.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINT JOHN THE NEW HOZEVITE

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Noble pilgrims

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

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

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

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

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

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

Therefore, we who honour the commemoration of His Saint, cry

aloud with Saint Paul: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The aforementioned facts are clearly displayed in the Saint's

letter of some Monk of Mount Athos in 1957, and reveal his character. He wrote among other things:

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

Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

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

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

interested to read it:

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

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

“Biography of Saint John the New Hozevite

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

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

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

(1947-1952) in the Romanian Hermitage of the Holy Forerunner in Jordan, under particularly adverse living conditions.

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

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

On August 5, 1960, he slept in the Lord at the age of only 47 years, due to his failing health. His departure, which he had

foreseen, was one befitting the righteous; Just a few minutes after the Holy Communion, as described by an eyewitness, the already blessed Father Basilios Vakras.

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

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

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

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a monastic meal.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

Sunday 6/19 June 2022, the last Sunday of the Pentecostarion period was celebrated by the Patriarchate as the Sunday of All

Saints, namely of all the Holy Patriarchs of the Old Testament, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Preachers, Evangelists, Ascetics of the fruit of the Grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, which was sent down on the day of the Holy Pentecost.

This feast was celebrated at the chapel dedicated to All Saints in the Holy Monastery of Sayda Naya.

Great Vespers on Saturday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning were officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, with the co-celebration of the Archimandrites Klaudios and Ieronymos, Priest Nectarios and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Typikon keeper of the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen Archimandrite Alexios, and Hierodeacon Dositheos in Greek and by Mr Rimon Kamar in Arabic. The services were attended by a noble congregation of nuns and laity from Greece, Russia and Romania, and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

During the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and His entourage visited the Monastery for veneration.

His Eminence delivered a sermon to the congregation which follows below:

“All Saints’ Day closes the mobile cycle of festivities that began on the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. In the contrite Triodion and in the joyful Pentecostarion, the Church presented to us all the work of the divine Providence, centred on the great feast of Easter. We saw the fall of the firstborn and the resurrection of our generation through the resurrection of Christ. We greeted the coming of the Comforter to the world and we celebrated the birth of the new people of God, the inauguration and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit “on all flesh”. Today’s feast is in close connection with the

feast of Pentecost, the seal and the end of the great festive period. It comes as proof of the work of the church of the energy of the Holy Spirit in the world. Because it shows us the fruits and the sowing of that harvest of the white countries that the Apostles were sent to reap. And as Nikiforos Xanthopoulos observes very nicely in the synaxarion of the day, the fathers instituted this feast after the descent of the Holy Spirit, to show that the presence of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles succeeded in sanctifying and rendering wise the people who formed the first Church and restoring people to the place of the angels through Jesus Christ either by offering their martyrdom or by their virtuous state and conduct. And a supernatural work is done. God descends, the Spirit and the made of earth man raises. The Word of God raises the deified flesh and attracts with it those who want to do works of conciliation with God. Those who were alienated from God before, are united with God and become His friends. The nations offer their beginning, the All Saints.

But also, a second reason caused the establishment of this collective feast. Many Saints are known and honoured with the feasts celebrated by the Church. The Holy Spirit also dwelled and sanctified many others. However, they remained unknown and invisible. Therefore, the Church honours its unknown saints today, those "who lived according to the teachings of Christ in India and Egypt and Arabia and Mesopotamia and Phrygia and over the Black Sea; moreover, those in Western Europe, up to the British Isles or to put it more simply in the east and in the west".

However, initially, this feast did not have such a wide content. It was only a feast for all the martyrs. Already in the 4th century, we have a sermon of St. Chrysostom for this feast and the Typicon of Saint Sophia in Constantinople during the 10th century provides for a Gathering and a feast in the great Church and in the Church of the Holy Martyrs which was

located near the Church of the Holy Apostles. The feast is entitled "All Saints" but the synaxarion of the day determines that we commemorate the Saints and the victorious Martyrs throughout the universe who martyred at various times for the name of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. If the information of Xanthopoulos is precise, the feast of All Saints was established during the reign of Leo the Wise when he built a Church and wanted it to be honoured by the name of his wife Theophanous, who "pleased God greatly". He was advised, nevertheless, that it would not be wise to dedicate a Church to a woman, however holy, that died a while ago and the time has not yet given her the "honest and venerable". The King was convinced and assigned the Church to the honour of "the Saints all over the earth saying... if Theophano is a Saint she will be counted with all of them".

Regardless of the origin of the new feast with the general content, not only of the martyrs but also of all the Saints its expansion was very successful. Martyrs of Christ are not only those who shed their blood for the faith of Christ and thus gave the seal of faith and their testimony. Martyrs are all those who fought in the struggle of the Christian life and patiently bore the cross of Christ in this world. Those who martyred for Christ the daily martyrdom of conscience; the confessors who confessed the good confession before "nations and Kings"; Hierarchs who were God-pleasing shepherds of the flock of Christ and supported the right faith. The righteous and the ascetics who crucified the flesh along with the passions and desires; the people of the world who lived in the land of temptations and trials, but lived in a state as if they were already in heaven. And with them, the righteous prophets, the righteous and the forefathers of the Old Testament who lived by law and "became martyrs by faith", waiting for the Promise; especially the Holiest of the Holy, the Blessed Virgin and mother of Christ the Theotokos Mary.

Through the present feast, we honour and highlight the Saints'

virtuous manner of living as an example, entreating them to intercede for us to God, Whose grace and infinite mercy may be with all of us. Amen”.

The Episcopal Entourage and the congregation were offered a generous reception by the renovator of the Church of the Monastery, reverend Abbess Seraphima.

From Secretariat-General

THE STUDENTS OF THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL OF ZION VISIT HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS

On Saturday, June 11, 2022, the graduates of the Patriarchal School of Zion visited the His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem at His office, on the occasion of the end of the School year.

On this visit the graduate novice Simeon Lianoudakis addressed His Beatitude on behalf of the students as follows:

Τό Σάββατο, 11 Ἰουνίου 2022, οἱ ἀπόφοιτοι καί τελειόφοιτοι τῆς Πατριαρχικῆς Σχολῆς Σιών ἐπισκέφθηκαν τό Γραφεῖο τοῦ Μακαριωτάτου Πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων ἐπί τῆ λήξει τῶν μαθημάτων τῆς Σχολῆς.

Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Reverend Managing Director of the School,

At the end of the school year and our student cycle, in deep emotion, we would like to express from the bottom of our hearts our thanks for what you have offered us.

Since our arrival in the Holy Land, the Patriarchate and the Brotherhood welcomed us with paternal affection and love. They shaped our character and enriched us with spiritual goods and many unforgettable experiences that will accompany us for the rest of our lives.

First of all, we would like to thank You, Your Beatitude, for the interest You have shown as well as for the love You have expressed towards us in many ways. In addition, we would like to thank the Most Reverend Archbishop of Hierapolis, Isidoros, Chairman of the school board, who made sure that we never miss anything. Next, we want to thank the Managing Director, Father Mattheos, for the time he devoted, the effort and the sacrifices he made to always be by our side and to support us. Together with him, the people in charge who contributed to the work of the boarding school and the school for our education. Of course, we would like to thank the teachers, who also in their part, helped us to expand our knowledge and horizons.

Finally, we would like to thank You once again for the opportunity you have given us to live in the Holy Land, where our Lord Jesus Christ taught and lived. Also, for us, the visits to the Holy Pilgrimages of the Holy Land and to Constantinople were very important.

We venerate Your holy right hand”.

His Beatitude blessed them, wished them success in their exam results and safe return to Jerusalem after their summer vacations, by the blessing of the Resurrected Christ and the Holy Sepulchre, and success in any activity they chose to pursue in the future.

THE FEAST OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN THE HEAVENS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, May 7/20, 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the appearance of the sign of the Precious Cross in the heavens.

On this feast, the Church, and especially the Church of Jerusalem celebrates the event that took place in AD 351, at the third hour, which is at nine o'clock in the morning, a brighter than the sunrays Cross appeared and was visible from Golgotha to the Mount of Olives. The Cross was seen by many inhabitants of Jerusalem who in awe glorified God, according to the description written by Cyril the Archbishop of Jerusalem to Emperor Constantius, son of Saint Constantine the Great.

For this event, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Horrendous Golgotha, by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitoliias, with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Priests and Priests from other Orthodox Churches and Deacons, under the chanting of Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Gotsopoulos. The service was attended by Nuns and pious faithful Christians.

After the Divine Liturgy, there was a procession with the

Hagiotaphite High Priests and Hieromonks from the Deposition Slate to the Holy Sepulchre, marching three times around the Sacred Edicule.

After the Procession, the officiating Metropolitan stood in front of the Sacred Edicule and read the Gospel narrative of Easter Sunday and Saint Cyril's letter, with the description of the celebrating event in Greek, and His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia read the translation of this letter in Arabic. There was a supplication at the end of the readings.

Finally, bells tolling, the Episcopal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters and paid its respect to His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios addressed His Beatitude as follows:

"Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

Twenty centuries ago, the cross was an instrument of shameful punishment and horrible death. The Romans sentenced the greatest criminals to death by crucifixion.

Today the cross dominates the whole life of the faithful Christians, the whole life of our Church, as an instrument of sacrifice, salvation, joy, sanctification and grace. As Saint Chrysostom writes, "this accursed and abominable symbol of the worst punishment has now become coveted and lovable." You see it everywhere: "In the Holy Table, in the ordinations of the priests, in the divine liturgy, in the houses. So much needed has this wonderful gift become to all, this inexpressible grace. "

The Lord Himself, with supernatural facts and wonderful revelations, revealed on various occasions, in a glaring way, how the sign of the Cross is His symbol and the invincible trophy of the faithful.

1. The well-known ecclesiastical historian Eusebius of

Caesarea (+340), a contemporary of Saint Constantine the Great, describes vividly and unequivocally the well-known incident of the appearance of the light Cross on Constantine the Great with the inscription "be victorious with This", and in fact at broad daylight, with witnesses all the men of his army.

2. In addition to the above supernatural revelation of the sign of the Cross, there was another, again in front of innumerable eyewitnesses, when the king was Constantius, son of St. Constantine, and Saint Cyril was the Archbishop of Jerusalem. The miracle is narrated by Saint Cyril himself to the king in a letter, in which he states that on that day (May 7, 346 AD, the period of Pentecost), around the third hour (9 a.m.), the sign of the Holy Cross appeared in the sky, huge, bright, extending from Saint Golgotha to the Mount of Olives. Not one or two saw it, but all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And it did not appear for a moment only, but for many hours it hung on the firmament. And it was so bright that it surpassed the rays of the sun in the Flash, so they could see it clearly at daylight, at noon. Seeing this miracle, the people of the city ran to the Church of the Resurrection.

If September 14 is the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy and Life-giving Cross, a feast on which human hands, Patriarchal and Royal, raised the Holy Cross, projecting Him as the symbol of the Christian faith and the "lock of Paradise" because it is the point of our reference to the One who shed His holy blood on It, May 7th is another celebration of His Exaltation, not by human hands this time, but by the "hands" of God Himself. Because He wanted, when the Christian faith had already been accepted and expanded, to reveal the Cross in Heaven, as an extension, we would say, of His revelation on Constantine the Great, with the well-known "In this be victorious". The hymnology of our Church highlights the event and pervades it in all its parameters: "Today the divine

multitude of the faithful rejoices. Because the Cross appeared in Heaven to a great extent. The air shines from uncreated light. The air is illuminated and the face of the earth becomes beautiful. The Church of Christ sings divine songs. The Church shows its respect, honouring the divine and miraculous Cross that protects it from Heaven " (free translation of a sticheron from Vespers).

The Venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem, following the order and practice of the Orthodox Church, honours and celebrates the feasts, among which is the present feast, "of the appearance of the sign of the Precious Cross in the heavens", which, although being a local feast, has an effect on Orthodoxy around the world.

Pray Your Beatitude, that Our Venerable Brotherhood continues this tradition for centuries to come".

From Secretariat-General

THE EPITAPH SERVICE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

At 9.00 p.m. (summertime) on Good Friday evening, 9/22 April 2022, the Epitaph Service was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

On this feast, the chanting began with the Canon and Matins of Holy Saturday, at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection.

During the chanting of the Canon His Beatitude, the Archbishops and the Priests were dressed in their mourning

liturgical vestments.

Then the litany began from the Catholicon, marching on the right from the "touch me not" chapel, towards all the shrines outside the Catholicon, offering an entreaty at each of them.

At the Horrendous Golgotha, the Gospel narrative of the Crucifixion was read and the Archbishops received the silk corporal of the Epitaph from the Altar, which they placed on the Deposition Slate, below Golgotha, and the Gospel narrative was read.

Then there was a litany three times around the Sacred Edicule with the silk corporal being held by the Archbishops, which they placed on the Tomb and the 3 stasis of the Lamentations began.

The officiator of the Service, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos recited the 1st stasis, and the rest were read by the High Priests.

Then Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina delivered the following Sermon:

"Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

Respected chorea of Hierarchs,

Your Excellency, Consul General of Greece,

Reverend Fathers,

Noble pilgrims,

Great and sacred is this day of Holy Friday and Holy Saturday. It is the day of commemoration of the Cross and burial of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Church chants in joyful mourning; "Today, He who suspended the earth in the waters is suspended on a cross. The Bridegroom of the Church is fixed with nails to the cross. The Son of the Virgin is

pierced with a spear” and “You, O Life, were buried in a tomb, O my Christ, and angelic hosts were struck with astonishment, glorifying Your ineffable descent” and “The almighty Master is observed to be dead. He is laid within a new, unused sepulchre, He who emptied many graves of those who died”.

About this event of Divine love, compassion and conciliation, Saint Chrysostom wonders in awe: “how, having risen from the royal thrones, God entered the earth and even Hades, and how the devil became an opponent not to a naked God but to a God hidden within the human nature and how death is released by death and the curse annuls curse, and through these, the tyranny of the devil in all things he prevailed is now abolished” (Homily 2 ch.1 on the Gospel according to Matthew).

This happened indeed, Christ our God went down to Hades, conquered its powers and released from it the centuries-long bound ones in fetters and slavery therein because He willingly accepted the Cross. We went down to Hades by the power of the humility of His Cross. Until the incarnate presence of His Son, God the Father granted righteousness and the salvation of people through His Law, which He wrote by His own hands, on mount Sinai and gave it to His servant Moses (Exodus 31,18). This Law was not abolished, because the Lord said “I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil the law” (Matthew 5,17), and because Saint Paul says that “the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ” (Gal. 3,17); however, it becomes insufficient since the “the fulness of the time was come” (Gal. 4,4), ever since “Christ our God is the fulfilment of the law and the prophets”, as Saint John the Baptist revealed in the River Jordan, He became “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1,29), and “by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9,12). He sacrificed Himself (Hebrews 7,27) and with the red colour of His own blood, He signed the New Testament of Grace. Since then, as the Apostle of the nations says, “man is not justified by the

works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2,16). "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5,6), "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3,11).

This word of the Cross, the par excellence word of the Holy and Great Friday, became "foolishness" for the ancient Greek philosophy, it is a "scandal" for the rabbinic theology, however, for Saint Paul, the twelve Apostles and the Church, it is the "power of God leading to salvation". Just as Christ entered Hades through the sign of His Cross, likewise, the Church, embracing the Cross, entered the world and enchanted it through the teaching of the Crucified Christ. Through the power of the sign of the Cross, the Church opposed the invisible evil forces and conquered them. It raised millions of martyrs, who considered death as nothing, thousands of ascetics and righteous, confessors Fathers, who lived like angels on earth and like heavenly people and illumined the minds of the people in the Holy Spirit through the decisions of Councils, to comprehend the Revelation in Christ and decorated their morals and created the Christian civilization. The Church honours and venerates the Holy Cross and projects it as a weapon against the devil in all the manifestations of its life. Through the Cross, it sanctifies the sacraments, such as the Baptism, the Holy Eucharists, the Unction, the Sanctification of the water, it sanctifies the whole creation and exorcises every evil action from it.

Non the less, even pious emperors vanquished great armies of their enemies by the Cross of Christ. First among them with the sign "conquer in this" of the Cross was the pious emperor Constantine the Great, who conquered the opposing armies of the irreverent Maxentius. Following this, he believed in Christ and was baptised, offered freedom in the Christian faith through the decree of Mediolams in AD 312 and became

equal to the Apostles, inaugurating the reigning city as the capital of the Rum Orthodox tradition. He also projected this place of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord through the construction of this magnificent Church of the Resurrection, the beauty of which the hymnographer compares to that of the heavenly firmament. Until the end of times, this Church remains the most sacred, pan-orthodox and pan-Christian Shrine, shelter, shield and protection of the inhabitants but also of the pilgrims of the Holy Land in their religious life and its difficulties, and above all the boast of the Church of the Holy Zion. By the power of the Cross also, the pious emperor Herakleios conquered the Persians in their homeland and returned the captive Patriarch of Jerusalem Zacharias and exalted the Sacred Cross in its initial position in the Horrendous Golgotha. The Church of Jerusalem has kept like the pupil of the eye this place, which was sanctified once and for all with the divine blood of Christ, and is everyday sanctified through Christ's blood in the Holy Eucharist. This is proven by the Sacred Edicule, the work of Kalfa Komninos from Mytilini, which was constructed over difficult times of bitter bondage by our noble nation, as written herein is "a possession and offering to Christ of the Rum Orthodox in 1810". It was renovated and beautified in the year of our salvation 2017 by the initiative and care of the Primate of the Church of Jerusalem and officiator of this Epitaph Service, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

In the group of the peaceful tribes and peoples who accepted the crucified Christ as their leader, He included our Greek nation. When the Apostle of nations according to the vivid narrative of Saint Luke the Evangelist was called to speak at the Areopagus in Athens, the Athenians listened to him until the point of the resurrection of the dead. In a polite manner, they then said "we shall listen to you again". However, there were those who believed and were baptised, such as "Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with

them" (Acts 17,34). Along with Lydia the Philippian, they are the beginning of the dough of Christian Hellenism. They are its originator ancestors. Later on, Hellenism as a manner of thinking and life accepted the Revelation. It was named after the name of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. It lived up to its calling, which was petitioned when "the Greeks asked to see Jesus" (John 12,20-21). Then Jesus said, "the hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12,23). This phrase is an honour and blessing along with the calling of our nation. Its mission continues to be the glory of the Son of man through its manner of living, through the course of history. Our nation has carried out this mission throughout the centuries, not hiding the lamp below the stand, but placing the lamp and transmitting the light of Christ to the Slavonic people through Saints Cyril and Methodios and Photios, and to the ends of the world through the Orthodox mission.

Gratefully attributing its rebirth to God, our nation is the Lord's "people, and inheritance and regime", and it is again called by both the auspicious and ominous current circumstances "to keep the good things which it has been taught" the consignment of Christ, of faith, hope, freedom, equality, equity, righteousness, conciliation and peace-making, the care of the sick, refugees, and the needy, chanting in its Churches "Lord, Thou hast given us Thy Cross a weapon against the devil", "Thy Cross we venerate, O Master and Thy Holy Resurrection we glorify". Deem us worthy, O Lord, to venerate Your Holy Resurrection in peace."

During praises, the High Priests venerated the silk corporal with the immaculate Body of the Lord and received the blessed rose petals.

The service concluded with the procession of the Epitaph around the Altar of the Catholicon and its placement on the Altar.

From Secretariat-General