

# PRIEST'S ORDINATION AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, 13/26 February 2021, during the All-night Vigil at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Hegoumen of the Shrine of Saint George in Lydda, Hierodeacon Marcellus was ordained a Priest. Father Marcellus came from the Monastery of Saint Anthony of Arizona, which was founded by the memorable Father Ephraim Philotheitis and joined the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood two years ago.

Hierodeacon Marcellus was ordained to Priest by His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, after the decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the appointment by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

His Eminence addressed Father Marcellus before the ordination as follows:

*“Reverend Hierodeacon Marcellus,*

*At this hour, as we stand before the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, which received the Creator as being asleep so that He would sanctify and recreate the original beauty of our defiled by sin nature with His resurrection, we are called, by the order, permission and encouragement of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, and by the approval of the Chaired by Him Holy and Sacred Synod, to entreat the All-Holy and Ceremonial Spirit, in order to ordain you, with the placing of our hands, to the second degree of Priesthood, that of the Priest, and make you a Minister of God's Sacraments.*

*A great honour for you; greater is the gift for you; and greatest is the responsibility for you! The Divine Providence of the All-holy Trinitarian God “who trieth the hearts and reins” (Psalm 7:9), has reserved many blessings and unexpected*

experiences for you. Having been nurtured and brought up spiritually to all matters concerning the angelic-like manner of living at the Holy Monastery of Saint Anthony in Arizona of the USA, under the lead of Geronda Ephraim, you came to the Holy Land and were appointed the duty to serve at the God-receiving Cave in Holy Bethlehem. Then, our most wise Father and Patriarch Theophilos III, along with the Holy and Sacred Synod, approved your application to join our venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, and having assessed your gifts, suggested that you should undertake the duty of the Hegoumen at the Holy Shrine of the Holy Great Martyr George in Lydda, as well as to receive the high ministry of the Priesthood.

And behold! Today "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" (Luke 1:35)! From today, you are lifted up in the air, from today you are reshaped, from today you are transformed! You receive the Priesthood and with it a new ministry and mission. Your new mission has three positions from which you can behold God.

First the Priesthood. Know that from henceforth you will be a Priest of the Highest! Your task is to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, during which "thousands of Archangels and myriads of Angels" (prayer of the D. Liturgy) will be standing by you. The Holy Altar will be in front of you, where, you will no longer be a servant, but a Minister, receiving and distributing the Divine Grace! From the Holy Altar, you will receive strength, and you will turn to it at your hardships. Watch out, because the cleaner the Priest's life, the more Grace he receives at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Keep in your mind the vision of Prophet Isaiah, when he saw "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his glory filled the temple" (Isaiah 6:1), and be sure that during the celebration of the Bloodless Sacrifice, this vision will be unfolded before you, even if you won't be able to view it with your human eyes.

The second is the Pastoral mission. From henceforth, you are

called "not to give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids" (Psalm 132:4). From today you become a vessel of the Divine Grace, in order to convey to every man coming to you the water of Eternal Life, that "shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). Your care for the flock of our Patriarchate in Lydda and for the pilgrims who come from all over the world makes it imperative for you to have unceasing continuous care so that they may be benefited spiritually and carry on to their path to salvation. Keep in your heart the words of Saint John of the Ladder; "the true shepherd is revealed by his love. For it was out of love that the Shepherd was crucified" (Ladder of the Divine Ascent, to the Shepherd, 24).

The third and last position of your mission is that of the Hagiotaphite. As a Hagiotaphite Hieromonk, continuator of the tradition of the Order of the Studious Ones, in addition to the aforementioned advice, you should have a tireless watch over the Holy Shrine which you are called to serve. Be a sleepless guardian, preserving and sustaining the spiritual and material property which has been handed over to us by the older Fathers, as well as all other precious items of our noble Faith. And be aware that our Fathers of old preserved these holy places with blood, tears and sweat. Rest sure, that the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer George, who "was a soldier of the King of the ages" (Vespers of St George), will be your guardian and companion in this struggle.

Having admonished you with these, as a brother and as a Father, obeying the order of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch Theophilos III, we invoke for you the Grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, of the God-receiving Cave, the intercessions of the Most Holy and Most-Pure Theotokos who received the Annunciation in Nazareth, and of the Holy Glorious Great Martyr and wonder worker George the Trophy-bearer, and call you, to "enter into His tabernacles...to the place of his footstool" (Psalm 132:7)."

With the invocation of the Divine Grace and the placing of the Metropolitan's hands, the members of the Lydda parish and the Hagiotaphite Fathers exclaimed the words "Axios, Axios!" for the ordained.

After the Divine Liturgy, the ordained Priest hosted a reception for the ordaining Metropolitan and all present at the Office of Geronda Sacristan, His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis.

The next morning, Hieromonk Marcellus came to the Office of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and received His blessing and instructions for the care of our Arab-speaking flock at the Shrine of Lydda.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **THE FEAST OF SAINTS JOHN AND GEORGE THE HOZEVITES**

On Thursday, 8/21 January 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of Saints John and George the Hozevites.

On this Feast, the Church, and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates Saint John. He abandoned the general pastoral care and retreated in the valley of Chorath, at the hermitages of the first ascetic fathers, Zenon, Elias, Eandas, Ganneos and Promos. Saint John made the former hermitage a Monastic centre and a famous Monastery due to his holiness and guided thousands of Monks in asceticism. Saint George came from Cyprus and reconstructed the Monastery after the 614 AD

Persian raid.

The two Saints are considered to be the founders of the Monastery due to their mission there.

Their commemoration was celebrated with an All-night Vigil, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

Welcoming His Beatitude, the Hegoumen and renovator of the Monastery, Archimandrite Constantine said the following:

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,  
with Your Reverend Entourage

The Holy Founders of this Holy Lavra, John and George the Hozevites, came in the desert of Judea, a desert, arid and harsh land, having first renounced the world. Through their asceticism and cleansing from the passions, they strove the devil very hard, right here, at the centre of his kingdom, the desert!

It is with great emotion that I always remember the inspired words of our father, Hieromonk Anthony, the memorable predecessor of my mediocrity, who told to a pilgrim in 1991 about the monastic, ascetic life and of the Hozevite Saints.

Among other things, Fr Anthony had said: “...we are never alone. You feel the presence of the Saints here. And you feel much security...There is a different kind of grace in the Desert, and we are very peaceful! And we are always optimistic!

God is with us, when, of course, we are on God's path, and when we strive...

We have to be ready at first, and then God comes. We invoke Him. And the Fathers here, of course, have much to tell us. The Saints set an example with their lives, they showed us ways and paths, so that we may easily gain the life ever

after, the eternal one, the life that “endures forever” and exchange the temporary things with the eternal ones...

Christ is the Truth, the Way, the Life, Everything!

Surely for many people the monastic life is strange, a challenge, how can one live by himself, without comforts, without a homeland, without relatives, without all these things that seem to be the meaning of life in our days...Nevertheless, where Christ is, there is no need whatsoever for anything...

We have the Mother of God here, the Protector. And the prayers of the Saints, of the Holy Fathers!

Because they showed us the way, they unmasked the devil with their lives, with their manner of living, they renounced the world completely, not out of hatred for the world, but out of love for the world...And out of love for God...Here the Fathers exist. The Fathers' books exist, we open, read them and choose...

It's either Christ or chaos!!”

Such words, Your Beatitude, came from our Father Anthony then, and bringing his words to the present day, amidst the horrible pandemic, which is a plague for the world, we draw hope, patience, serenity and optimism from our faith in Jesus Christ, His Most Holy Mother, the Holy Founders of this Monastery, John and George the Hozevites, and from all the Saints.

As Your Sons, we welcome Your Beatitude, wishing: Happy Feast!”

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences; Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, as the chanting was delivered by the Monastery Monks and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious”(Psalm 66:1-2), the psalmist proclaims.

Beloved Fathers and Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of our Holy Father George has gathered us all in this sacred place of the Jordan desert, of Hozeva, in order to rend glory to the Holy Trinitarian God, on the sacred commemoration of His Saint, the one that Lord sanctified; the Lord, who sanctifies those who love Him.

Today, Christ is born in Bethlehem of Judea and is baptized in the Jordan, the Church of the nations is mystically purified and puts on clothing of divine light. The truth has come, God hath appeared to those who sit in the shadow, He who was born from the Virgin has come to save our nation; Saint Andrew of Crete says.

Our Holy Father George longed to be dressed in this garment of the divine light, hearkening to Saint Paul's words: “For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked” (2 Cor. 5:2-3).

These clothes of the New Testament's grace, namely of Christ's light, did Saint George find in this deserted place of Hozeva, the Jordan district, where “our Lord God, having seen us naked, hath appeared to clothe us in the first robe again. Christ hath appeared, for He truly willeth to renew all creation” (Minaion January 2, apolytikion).

Saint John the Baptist's preaching for repentance turned the Jordan desert into the New Adam's Paradise, namely, a garden

of repentance and spiritual progress and development, where numerous ascetics retreated "Seeing [that they] have purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit" (1 Peter 1:22). The Lavra of Monks that was founded by our Holy Father George became a dwelling place, in which those who longed and still long for "the salvation of the Lord and the studying of his law" (Psalm 119:174), come to know the dynasty and the glory of the majesty of His Kingdom (Psalm 145:12). And this is because, according to the psalmist, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth" (Psalm 145:18). And according to our Lord Jesus Christ, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

Interpreting these words of the Lord, Zigavinos says: "the birth is not carnal, but spiritual...the carnal birth is felt by the senses; while the spiritual one is noetic, and there is no need to examine the noetic with the senses, nor in a human manner that which is divine". And Saint Theophylaktos says: "the baptized does not become a divine spirit, but he is deemed worthy to receive the adoption and the grace and the honour in Spirit".

This very adoption in the Spirit and the grace and the honour did Saint George and all those who followed him in his ascetic striving receive, such as Saint John, Bishop of Caesarea of Palestine, and our contemporary Saint John the New Hozevite from Romania, whose fragrant relics rest before our eyes. These Holy Hozevite Fathers, who illumined the whole world with their miracles, say along with Saint Paul: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:3-5).



The Holy Church of Jerusalem rejoices and is glad because God is miraculous in the protection of His Saints. "God is wondrous in his saints" (Ps. 67:36), King-Prophet David chants. Indeed, God makes his Saints victors over death and corruption, as the hymnographer of Saint George says: "Thou didst utterly despise every delight of this life, O marvellous Father, for the sake of heavenly delight and glory; for thou wast diligent to quench the furnace of the passions with a hard way of life and with thy many tears, O George, august adornment of monks" (Minaion January 8, Ode nine, Troparion 1).

Yes, my dear Brethren, Saint George scorned every delight, arrogance and luxury of this world for the heavenly glory. Therefore, along with Saint Paul and the other Holy Fathers, he says: "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:20-21). This great truth is being witnessed by the incorrupt relics of all the Saints, Fathers and Ascetics who illumined this Holy Lavra of Hozeva.

This redeeming message of Saint Paul, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21), is what our Holy Father George along with all his Hozevite co-ascetics saying to all of us. And with the hymnographer, let us say: "To the Lord God Who did descend to the Hebrew Children in the fiery furnace and did transform the flames and the burning heat into dew, chant praises and hymns, O all ye works of His, and exalt Him greatly to ages and all ages" (Minaion, January 8, Ode nine, Heirmos). Amen. Many happy returns!"

The Vigil was followed by a Monastic meal.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# TELECONFERENCE OF THE HEADS OF CHURCHES OF JERUSALEM

On Monday morning, 29 December 2020/ 11 January 2021, the annual meeting of the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem on the occasion of the New Year was held through Zoom, due to the covid-19 measures.

In it, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the participating Heads of the other Churches, the Custos of the Holy Land, the Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Jerusalem, the Archbishop of the Coptic Church in Jerusalem, of the Lutheran Church in Jerusalem and the others, as follows:

“Your Beatitudes,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

We greet you all with the joyful gladness of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Heaven and earth are united today, for Christ is born.*

*Today God has come upon the earth, and man gone up to heaven...*

*Therefore, let us also give glory and cry aloud to him:*

*Glory to God in the highest.*

(Entreaty, Tone One, for the Nativity)

The unity of heaven and earth, and of God and humankind, which we celebrate at this great feast, is of the utmost importance for us, for it is a reminder to us of the unity and togetherness to which we are called in our mission in the Holy Land. We who call the Holy Land our home, join our prayers from Bethlehem, as we have given witness to the mystery of the Incarnation of the Divine Logos.

The divine mystery of this season brings the Good News, and it is right, that this Good News is associated with the New Year when the hearts of everyone turn to the future in hope. If the world looks to the future in hope, so much more should we, who know the truth of our sacred history, be hopeful, for we know the culmination of our sacred history in the Incarnation.

As it is written in the Revelation of Saint John:

*"I am the Alpha and the Omega", says the Lord God,*

*Who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8).*

Humanity truly experiences trials, pain, suffering, and death. But unto this darkness, desperation, and hopelessness, the true Light has shone in our world and in our hearts; the Light that has come to enlighten everyone. As we read in the Gospel of Saint Luke:

*"By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness under the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78-79).*

This is the joy of Christmas. This is the true Light that the New Year brings to us all.

Our mission as Churches and Christian Communities is not for ourselves and our local communities only. It is for the whole world. At this season we are all the more aware of the supreme importance of guarding and serving Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and all the holy places as the witness of the Divine-human encounter, of the union of earth and the heaven in Jesus Christ. And ours is the duty, entrusted to us by Divine Providence, to maintain the Christian character and the sacredness of his land. For here, the sacred history of the Scriptures is written in the stones, which are the living martyria, and here the faithful are caught up in prayer and worship.

We are especially mindful in this holy season of the ongoing challenge posed to the stability and well-being of the Christian presence in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, as well as the integrity of the Status Quo, by radical elements in our society. The arson at the Church of the Agony in Gethsemane makes us all the more aware of the necessity of our mission, and we are resolved in our efforts to protect the Holy Places from such actions.

The ongoing COVID pandemic is an invitation to all of us for soul-searching and recollection. The pandemic has forced us to remember those things that are of ultimate importance, and it is a reminder to us, of how urgent our unity of resolve must be. We can never relax our vigilance or our recognition that we must remain united in mission and witness, as Saint Paul says: *"clothing ourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony"* (Col. 3:14).

We welcome the new vaccine, and we look forward in this New Year to the time when our local communities may have their regular life restored to them, and pilgrims may return to us. As we look to this renewed life in our region, we give thanks to Almighty God for the witness and mission that has been entrusted to us, and we pray for the blessing of the new-born Christ for all our peoples.

Thank you.”

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# **THE 15-YEAR ENTHRONEMENT ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS III**

On Sunday morning, 9/22 November 2020, a Doxology was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the fifteen-year election and Enthronement anniversary of the Holy Primate of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

The Doxology was led by His Beatitude, and along with Him, the Archbishops of the Patriarchate, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Patriarchal Representatives and Hegoumens of the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate and Managers of its parishes, that were able to attend due to covid-19 restrictive measures.

The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras with his wife and child and members of the community in Jerusalem.

After the Doxology the Patriarchal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters, where Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Consantina was the first to address His Beatitude with the following address:

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

The Church of Jerusalem and the inextricably linked to it Hagiotaphite Brotherhood celebrate today a quite important and remarkable event, a joyful and exuberant event. This is the anniversary of the unanimous voting of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the representatives of the flock, for the election of Your Beatitude as the Shepherd of the Church of the Holy Land and Hegoumen of the Order of the Studios, and the consequent ceremony of Your Enthronement and its recognition by all the Orthodox Churches and countries, where our Venerable Patriarchate holds its pastoral mission. This happened in A.D. 2005, after a painful ordeal that shook the foundations of the Church; it shook but did not destroy it, because the One Who founded it in the Holy Land led the Patriarchate back into refreshment.

This event secures the continuation of the unceasing Apostolic succession of the Church of Jerusalem, and the unity of its members for the smooth operation and fulfilment of its divine mission; for this reason, it was festively celebrated – in compromise of course with the covid-19 restrictive measures – at the most precious heirloom of our faith, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was celebrated with a Doxology to God, as a thanksgiving, because He led us back to refreshment and granted the Church Your Beatitude as its Patriarch and Shepherd. Having thanked God for this, and having prayed for Your health, stability and longevity, we returned to this historic hall of our holy “little house” as the memorable Patriarch Dositheos used to say, in order to wish and congratulate You up close, for all the good works You have accomplished through hardship and toil for our Patriarchate over these last fifteen years.

First of all, we recall that guided by the Ecclesiastical Tradition of the Fathers, You have guided the Hagiotaphite Fathers, Hegoumens of the Shrines and the Holy Monasteries, the clergy and the people to co-operate with the responsible

Health Authorities of the governing state for the effective dealing with the fatal epidemic of covid-19 since the beginning of the year. Under this spirit, with the keeping of our Status Quo rights, the Liturgical Services were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. From the Holy Week Services, the Epitaph Service and the All-night Vigil of the Resurrection were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The others, i.e. Palm Sunday, the Washing of the feet and the Service of Love were held at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, with the participation of the designated Priests and only a few faithful, but without any pilgrims, as no pilgrims have arrived in Israel since the beginning of the pandemic. The former full of pilgrims Holy City has been empty from pilgrims in its streets and pathways ever since. It is worth remembering that despite the pandemic, the Service of the Holy Light was held exactly according to the Status Quo. By special providence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Police Force of Israel, the Holy Light was transferred to Jaffa Gate by an Archbishop, from where it was received by the representatives of all Orthodox countries. The representatives of the Churches received the Holy Light at Ben Gurion airport, where they were secluded inside the landed planes of their countries. With the Patriarchate's actions, the Holy Light was transferred in the same day to its Communities in Jordan, the Palestinian areas and in Gaza.

For the relief of the financially weak people, due to the restrictive measures against the pandemic, Your Beatitude has ordered the distribution of packages of food by the Patriarchate to the neediest families in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem and in Ramallah and exempted from one year's rent the tenants of houses and shops that belong to the Patriarchate. The Fatherly and Pastoral support of Your Beatitude during the pandemic was shown to the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate with Your visits and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in them, along with Your

Sermons, which were broadcast through the internet in the Greek, Arabic, English, Russian and Romanian languages.

Your Beatitude's attitude was unwavering in the case of claiming and safeguarding the Pilgrimage rights of our Patriarchate. This was made manifest over last year's Epiphany Feast in Bethlehem, when the Armenian Priests, continuing their decades-long provocative behaviour, prevented us from the procedure of taking the Orthodox Icon of Epiphany down to the Holy Cave. Thanks to the persistence and guidance of Your Beatitude, the Hagiographite ministers of Bethlehem and those who came to their aid from Jerusalem, despite the physical violence they endured by the Armenians, managed to put the icon in the Cave, having first received the relevant order by President Abu Mazen. We still need to secure our right for this occasion with a special Presidential decree as well, so that it will not be disputed again in the future. A similar event happened over the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross on 14 September 2020, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Armenians tried to prevent us from our right to offer incense in the Altar of Saint Helen's chapel, as they have also done other times in the past. Finally, we performed our right, due to the persistence of Your Beatitude, who stood for more than one hour at the chapel with the Holy Cross placed on Your head, urging the Armenians to withdraw. This happened in the end, of fear of the Israeli Police force who was present video-filming the episode, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Vlioras. These rights of the Orthodox Patriarchate are supported by testimonies written in the pilgrimage codes that we keep, but also in the codes kept by the Custody of the Holy Land of the Franciscans, who supported us in this regard.

Along with the pilgrimage rights, Your Beatitude prioritized also the fortification of the land and building property rights of the Patriarchate, as many times they had been violated, either materially, or by court orders of greedy



opportunists. These rights are supported efficiently by the property titles, firmania, veratia, e.t.c., kept in the Patriarchate Archives, for whose better arrangement, Your Beatitude has provided for a new building which is still under construction. For the Archive titles, by Your order and guidance, the Financial Committee and the Legal Advisors of the Patriarchate tirelessly fought in the courtrooms and willingly paid the necessary amounts and the court fees. A recent example of this is the 2 million Shekels that were paid as a tax by the Patriarchate since the tenant of Petra Hotel by Jaffa Gate had not paid this amount. This was done to save the Patriarchate's property from its seizure by opaque and corrupt multi-year contracts, which were denounced by the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in the year 2005.

For the more effective operation of the pastoral mission of the Patriarchate, Your Beatitude has especially provided for the Theological or other studies of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, or young people of our flock, granting the relevant scholarships for them, especially in Greece and in Cyprus. By the appointing of new members of the Holy Synod, Your Beatitude has strengthened the Synodical ordinance of the Patriarchate. And by Your care, the renovation project of the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Sacristy is being promoted, with the funding of a reverend source.

All these encourage and strengthen us, Your Beatitude, both the old and the new Hagiotaphite Fathers, in order to stand by Your side and follow You, and also to fight in the good Hagiotaphite cause, for a dynamic Christian Rum-Orthodox testimony in the Holy Land, which will benefit many people.

Raising my glass to a toast, Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and of the whole Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, I wish You many happy returns, in health, stability, peace and joy, in governmental power and wisdom from on high, for the praise of our Venerable Patriarchate, of

our blessed nation and for the Glory of our Trinitarian God.”

This was followed by the addresses of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, His Excellency Mr Evangelos Vlioras, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, the Dean Priest of Saint James Cathedral Fr Charalambos Bandour and others.

His Beatitude thanked all with the following address:

“Your Excellency Consul General of Greece, Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Christians,

Noble pilgrims

“My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever” (Psalm 145:21).

The Holy Church of Christ in Jerusalem, which was sprouted from the rood of Jesse, and which was chosen by the Lord;“ He hath desired it for His habitation” (Psalm 132:13), celebrates today the completion of fifteen years of the governing ministry of Our mediocrity, since Our establishment on the God-founded throne of Hieromartyr James the Brother of God and first ordained Hierarch of Jerusalem.

This sacred event has a special significance for the testimony of Christ’s truth all over the world by the Church, and for the pastoral accountability of its spiritual shepherds, as Saint Paul notes: “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 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 20:27-28).

According to the Canon of our Hagiotaphite tradition, we went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, accompanied by the reverend members of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, where we rendered a thanksgiving Doxology to our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; “to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:6).

Our fifteen-year enthronement anniversary, celebrated amidst the covid-19 pandemic, should be considered an anniversary of renovation and guarantee of the apostolic succession throughout the centuries, which is followed by every Head of the Church of Jerusalem, having its beginning in the Only-Begotten Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, as Saint John, the Evangelist says: “In the beginning was the Word. The same was at the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

And according to the “Teachings of the Apostles”, “the bishop who is the Head, as honoured by God, leads the clergy and rules over all people” (Teachings of the Apostles, B XXVII).

Hearkening to Saint Paul saying: “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1) and following the footsteps of Our Predecessors, We make every effort to the best of Our abilities, to safeguard Our unadulterated Apostolic tradition and healthy faith, as well as to accommodate the spiritual and material needs of the Christian flock which has been entrusted to Us. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind” (1 Peter 5:2) Saint Peter orders. Moreover, we strive for the keeping of the biblical testimonies of our faith, namely the All-holy Shrines, which preach the incarnation of God the Word, His Passion on the Cross and His Resurrection.

Needless, again, to say, that the safeguarding of the

indelible privileges and sovereign rights of the noble and royal nation of the 'Rum Orthodox' on the All-holy Shrines is a sacred duty of Our ab antique mission in the Holy Land. Therefore, we never cease raising our voice towards every direction, political and diplomatic, local and international organizations and governments, in order to make the established by international treaties multi-cultural and multi-religious Status Quo respectable, for both the Biblical Shrines and for the Holy City of Jerusalem, which is an international Shrine in itself, as Prophet Isaiah says: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isaiah 62:1).

Being rooted and grounded in the love and faith of Christ, "my spirit is overwhelmed within me" (Psalm 143:4), working in clear consciousness (2 Tim. 1:3) for the prevention of the nesting schism in the bosom of Christ's body, which is the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. This, after all, was the mission of the Holy Apostles, who were established in the Church of Jerusalem, the preaching of reconciliation, as this is stated by Saint Paul: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

Through this enthronement celebration, We are called not to boast, but rather examine the work of our Patriarchal Office, according to Saint Paul's order: "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:4).

In this ministry, the mission of the martyr's throne of Saint James the Brother of God, we have as accomplices and companions the reverend and dearest Fathers and brothers Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Hieromonks, Priests, Hierodeacons and Monks, who are distinguished for their

fervent zeal and God-pleasing self-sacrifice.

Let us pray to God and Father of lights and truth along with the psalmist: "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psalm 17:5), by the intercessions of our Most-Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and by the prayers of our Father among the Saints Nectarios of Pentapolis. May the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen all of us who serve in the All-holy Shrines and shepherd our pious Christian flock.

For all these, we wish for all who prayed with Us and honoured Us with their presence in this Enthronement Anniversary, strength from on high, the grace of the Holy Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing from God, expressing also our gratitude for those who addressed Us; Geronda Secretary General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Russia, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Representative of the Holy Church of Romania, Reverend Archimandrite Ioannis, who conveyed the wishes of 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 Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Charalambos Bandour, who spoke on behalf of Saint James Cathedral, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the Russian-speaking Community of Ber Sheva, Father Romanos, who conveyed the wishes and love of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, Mr Athanasios Abu Aeta, Mr Ode Issa and Nibel Baramsi, and all who participated in this celebration of the Enthronement Anniversary."

At noon His Beatitude hosted a meal for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

**From Secretariat-General** On Sunday morning, 9/22 November 2020, a Doxology was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the fifteen-year election and Enthronement anniversary of the Holy Primate of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

The Doxology was led by His Beatitude, and along with Him, the Archbishops of the Patriarchate, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Patriarchal Representatives and Hegoumens of the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate and Managers of its parishes, that were able to attend due to covid-19 restrictive measures.

The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras with his wife and child and members of the community in Jerusalem.

After the Doxology the Patriarchal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters, where Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Consantina was the first to address His Beatitude with the following address:

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

The Church of Jerusalem and the inextricably linked to it Hagiotaphite Brotherhood celebrate today a quite important and remarkable event, a joyful and exuberant event. This is the anniversary of the unanimous voting of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the representatives of the flock, for the election of Your Beatitude as the Shepherd of the Church of the Holy Land and Hegoumen of the Order of the Studios, and the consequent ceremony of Your Enthronement and its recognition by all the Orthodox Churches and countries, where our Venerable Patriarchate holds its pastoral mission. This happened in A.D. 2005, after a painful ordeal that shook the foundations of the Church; it shook but did not destroy it, because the One Who founded it in the Holy Land led the

Patriarchate back into refreshment.

This event secures the continuation of the unceasing Apostolic succession of the Church of Jerusalem, and the unity of its members for the smooth operation and fulfilment of its divine mission; for this reason, it was festively celebrated – in compromise of course with the covid-19 restrictive measures – at the most precious heirloom of our faith, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was celebrated with a Doxology to God, as a thanksgiving, because He led us back to refreshment and granted the Church Your Beatitude as its Patriarch and Shepherd. Having thanked God for this, and having prayed for Your health, stability and longevity, we returned to this historic hall of our holy “little house” as the memorable Patriarch Dositheos used to say, in order to wish and congratulate You up close, for all the good works You have accomplished through hardship and toil for our Patriarchate over these last fifteen years.

First of all, we recall that guided by the Ecclesiastical Tradition of the Fathers, You have guided the Hagiotaphite Fathers, Hegoumens of the Shrines and the Holy Monasteries, the clergy and the people to co-operate with the responsible Health Authorities of the governing state for the effective dealing with the fatal epidemic of covid-19 since the beginning of the year. Under this spirit, with the keeping of our Status Quo rights, the Liturgical Services were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. From the Holy Week Services, the Epitaph Service and the All-night Vigil of the Resurrection were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The others, i.e. Palm Sunday, the Washing of the feet and the Service of Love were held at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, with the participation of the designated Priests and only a few faithful, but without any pilgrims, as no pilgrims have arrived in Israel since the beginning of the pandemic. The former full of pilgrims Holy City has been empty

from pilgrims in its streets and pathways ever since. It is worth remembering that despite the pandemic, the Service of the Holy Light was held exactly according to the Status Quo. By special providence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Police Force of Israel, the Holy Light was transferred to Jaffa Gate by an Archbishop, from where it was received by the representatives of all Orthodox countries. The representatives of the Churches received the Holy Light at Ben Gurion airport, where they were secluded inside the landed planes of their countries. With the Patriarchate's actions, the Holy Light was transferred in the same day to its Communities in Jordan, the Palestinian areas and in Gaza.

For the relief of the financially weak people, due to the restrictive measures against the pandemic, Your Beatitude has ordered the distribution of packages of food by the Patriarchate to the neediest families in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem and in Ramallah and exempted from one year's rent the tenants of houses and shops that belong to the Patriarchate. The Fatherly and Pastoral support of Your Beatitude during the pandemic was shown to the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate with Your visits and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in them, along with Your Sermons, which were broadcast through the internet in the Greek, Arabic, English, Russian and Romanian languages.

Your Beatitude's attitude was unwavering in the case of claiming and safeguarding the Pilgrimage rights of our Patriarchate. This was made manifest over last year's Epiphany Feast in Bethlehem, when the Armenian Priests, continuing their decades-long provocative behaviour, prevented us from the procedure of taking the Orthodox Icon of Epiphany down to the Holy Cave. Thanks to the persistence and guidance of Your Beatitude, the Hagiotaphite ministers of Bethlehem and those who came to their aid from Jerusalem, despite the physical violence they endured by the Armenians, managed to put the icon in the Cave, having first received the relevant order by



President Abu Mazen. We still need to secure our right for this occasion with a special Presidential decree as well, so that it will not be disputed again in the future. A similar event happened over the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross on 14 September 2020, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Armenians tried to prevent us from our right to offer incense in the Altar of Saint Helen's chapel, as they have also done other times in the past. Finally, we performed our right, due to the persistence of Your Beatitude, who stood for more than one hour at the chapel with the Holy Cross placed on Your head, urging the Armenians to withdraw. This happened in the end, of fear of the Israeli Police force who was present video-filming the episode, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Vlioras. These rights of the Orthodox Patriarchate are supported by testimonies written in the pilgrimage codes that we keep, but also in the codes kept by the Custody of the Holy Land of the Franciscans, who supported us in this regard.

Along with the pilgrimage rights, Your Beatitude prioritized also the fortification of the land and building property rights of the Patriarchate, as many times they had been violated, either materially, or by court orders of greedy opportunists. These rights are supported efficiently by the property titles, firmania, veratia, e.t.c., kept in the Patriarchate Archives, for whose better arrangement, Your Beatitude has provided for a new building which is still under construction. For the Archive titles, by Your order and guidance, the Financial Committee and the Legal Advisors of the Patriarchate tirelessly fought in the courtrooms and willingly paid the necessary amounts and the court fees. A recent example of this is the 2 million Shekels that were paid as a tax by the Patriarchate since the tenant of Petra Hotel by Jaffa Gate had not paid this amount. This was done to save the Patriarchate's property from its seizure by opaque and corrupt multi-year contracts, which were denounced by the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in the year 2005.

For the more effective operation of the pastoral mission of the Patriarchate, Your Beatitude has especially provided for the Theological or other studies of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, or young people of our flock, granting the relevant scholarships for them, especially in Greece and in Cyprus. By the appointing of new members of the Holy Synod, Your Beatitude has strengthened the Synodical ordinance of the Patriarchate. And by Your care, the renovation project of the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Sacristy is being promoted, with the funding of a reverend source.

All these encourage and strengthen us, Your Beatitude, both the old and the new Hagiotaphite Fathers, in order to stand by Your side and follow You, and also to fight in the good Hagiotaphite cause, for a dynamic Christian Rum-Orthodox testimony in the Holy Land, which will benefit many people.

Raising my glass to a toast, Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and of the whole Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, I wish You many happy returns, in health, stability, peace and joy, in governmental power and wisdom from on high, for the praise of our Venerable Patriarchate, of our blessed nation and for the Glory of our Trinitarian God.”

This was followed by the addresses of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, His Excellency Mr Evangelos Vlioras, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, the Dean Priest of Saint James Cathedral Fr Charalambos Bandour and others.

His Beatitude thanked all with the following address:

“Your Excellency Consul General of Greece, Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Christians,

Noble pilgrims

“My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever” (Psalm 145:21).

The Holy Church of Christ in Jerusalem, which was sprouted from the rood of Jesse, and which was chosen by the Lord; “He hath desired it for His habitation” (Psalm 132:13), celebrates today the completion of fifteen years of the governing ministry of Our mediocrity, since Our establishment on the God-founded throne of Hieromartyr James the Brother of God and first ordained Hierarch of Jerusalem.

This sacred event has a special significance for the testimony of Christ’s truth all over the world by the Church, and for the pastoral accountability of its spiritual shepherds, as Saint Paul notes: “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 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 20:27-28).

According to the Canon of our Hagiotaphite tradition, we went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, accompanied by the reverend members of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, where we rendered a thanksgiving Doxology to our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; “to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:6).

Our fifteen-year enthronement anniversary, celebrated amidst the covid-19 pandemic, should be considered an anniversary of renovation and guarantee of the apostolic succession throughout the centuries, which is followed by every Head of the Church of Jerusalem, having its beginning in the Only-Begotten Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, as Saint John, the Evangelist says: “In the beginning was the Word. The same was at the beginning with God. All things were made by

him, and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

And according to the “Teachings of the Apostles”, “the bishop who is the Head, as honoured by God, leads the clergy and rules over all people” (Teachings of the Apostles, B XXVII).

Hearkening to Saint Paul saying: “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1) and following the footsteps of Our Predecessors, We make every effort to the best of Our abilities, to safeguard Our unadulterated Apostolic tradition and healthy faith, as well as to accommodate the spiritual and material needs of the Christian flock which has been entrusted to Us. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind” (1 Peter 5:2) Saint Peter orders. Moreover, we strive for the keeping of the biblical testimonies of our faith, namely the All-holy Shrines, which preach the incarnation of God the Word, His Passion on the Cross and His Resurrection.

Needless, again, to say, that the safeguarding of the indelible privileges and sovereign rights of the noble and royal nation of the ‘Rum Orthodox’ on the All-holy Shrines is a sacred duty of Our ab antique mission in the Holy Land. Therefore, we never cease raising our voice towards every direction, political and diplomatic, local and international organizations and governments, in order to make the established by international treaties multi-cultural and multi-religious Status Quo respectable, for both the Biblical Shrines and for the Holy City of Jerusalem, which is an international Shrine in itself, as Prophet Isaiah says: “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth” (Isaiah 62:1).

Being rooted and grounded in the love and faith of Christ, "my spirit is overwhelmed within me" (Psalm 143:4), working in clear consciousness (2 Tim. 1:3) for the prevention of the nesting schism in the bosom of Christ's body, which is the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. This, after all, was the mission of the Holy Apostles, who were established in the Church of Jerusalem, the preaching of reconciliation, as this is stated by Saint Paul: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

Through this enthronement celebration, We are called not to boast, but rather examine the work of our Patriarchal Office, according to Saint Paul's order: "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:4).

In this ministry, the mission of the martyr's throne of Saint James the Brother of God, we have as accomplices and companions the reverend and dearest Fathers and brothers Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Hieromonks, Priests, Hierodeacons and Monks, who are distinguished for their fervent zeal and God-pleasing self-sacrifice.

Let us pray to God and Father of lights and truth along with the psalmist: "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psalm 17:5), by the intercessions of our Most-Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and by the prayers of our Father among the Saints Nectarios of Pentapolis. May the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen all of us who serve in the All-holy Shrines and shepherd our pious Christian flock.

For all these, we wish for all who prayed with Us and honoured Us with their presence in this Enthronement Anniversary, strength from on high, the grace of the Holy

Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing from God, expressing also our gratitude for those who addressed Us; Geronda Secretary General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Russia, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Representative of the Holy Church of Romania, Reverend Archimandrite Ioannis, who conveyed the wishes of 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 Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Charalambos Bandour, who spoke on behalf of Saint James Cathedral, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the Russian-speaking Community of Ber Sheva, Father Romanos, who conveyed the wishes and love of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, Mr Athanasios Abu Aeta, Mr Ode Issa and Nibel Baramsi, and all who participated in this celebration of the Enthronement Anniversary.”

At noon His Beatitude hosted a meal for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

**From Secretariat-General** On Sunday morning, 9/22 November 2020, a Doxology was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the fifteen-year election and Enthronement anniversary of the Holy Primate of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

The Doxology was led by His Beatitude, and along with Him, the Archbishops of the Patriarchate, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Patriarchal Representatives and Hegoumens of the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate and Managers of its parishes, that were able to attend due to covid-19 restrictive measures.

The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras with his wife and child and members of the community in Jerusalem.

After the Doxology the Patriarchal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters, where Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Consantina was the first to address His Beatitude with the following address:

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

The Church of Jerusalem and the inextricably linked to it Hagiotaphite Brotherhood celebrate today a quite important and remarkable event, a joyful and exuberant event. This is the anniversary of the unanimous voting of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the representatives of the flock, for the election of Your Beatitude as the Shepherd of the Church of the Holy Land and Hegoumen of the Order of the Studious, and the consequent ceremony of Your Enthronement and its recognition by all the Orthodox Churches and countries, where our Venerable Patriarchate holds its pastoral mission. This happened in A.D. 2005, after a painful ordeal that shook the foundations of the Church; it shook but did not destroy it, because the One Who founded it in the Holy Land led the Patriarchate back into refreshment.

This event secures the continuation of the unceasing Apostolic succession of the Church of Jerusalem, and the unity of its members for the smooth operation and fulfilment of its divine mission; for this reason, it was festively celebrated – in compromise of course with the covid-19 restrictive measures – at the most precious heirloom of our faith, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was celebrated with a Doxology to God, as a thanksgiving, because He led us back to refreshment and granted the Church Your Beatitude as its Patriarch and Shepherd. Having thanked God for this, and having prayed for Your health, stability and longevity, we returned to this historic hall of our holy “little house” as the memorable

Patriarch Dositheos used to say, in order to wish and congratulate You up close, for all the good works You have accomplished through hardship and toil for our Patriarchate over these last fifteen years.

First of all, we recall that guided by the Ecclesiastical Tradition of the Fathers, You have guided the Hagiotaphite Fathers, Hegoumens of the Shrines and the Holy Monasteries, the clergy and the people to co-operate with the responsible Health Authorities of the governing state for the effective dealing with the fatal epidemic of covid-19 since the beginning of the year. Under this spirit, with the keeping of our Status Quo rights, the Liturgical Services were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. From the Holy Week Services, the Epitaph Service and the All-night Vigil of the Resurrection were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The others, i.e. Palm Sunday, the Washing of the feet and the Service of Love were held at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, with the participation of the designated Priests and only a few faithful, but without any pilgrims, as no pilgrims have arrived in Israel since the beginning of the pandemic. The former full of pilgrims Holy City has been empty from pilgrims in its streets and pathways ever since. It is worth remembering that despite the pandemic, the Service of the Holy Light was held exactly according to the Status Quo. By special providence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Police Force of Israel, the Holy Light was transferred to Jaffa Gate by an Archbishop, from where it was received by the representatives of all Orthodox countries. The representatives of the Churches received the Holy Light at Ben Gurion airport, where they were secluded inside the landed planes of their countries. With the Patriarchate's actions, the Holy Light was transferred in the same day to its Communities in Jordan, the Palestinian areas and in Gaza.

For the relief of the financially weak people, due to the



restrictive measures against the pandemic, Your Beatitude has ordered the distribution of packages of food by the Patriarchate to the neediest families in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem and in Ramallah and exempted from one year's rent the tenants of houses and shops that belong to the Patriarchate. The Fatherly and Pastoral support of Your Beatitude during the pandemic was shown to the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate with Your visits and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in them, along with Your Sermons, which were broadcast through the internet in the Greek, Arabic, English, Russian and Romanian languages.

Your Beatitude's attitude was unwavering in the case of claiming and safeguarding the Pilgrimage rights of our Patriarchate. This was made manifest over last year's Epiphany Feast in Bethlehem, when the Armenian Priests, continuing their decades-long provocative behaviour, prevented us from the procedure of taking the Orthodox Icon of Epiphany down to the Holy Cave. Thanks to the persistence and guidance of Your Beatitude, the Hagiographite ministers of Bethlehem and those who came to their aid from Jerusalem, despite the physical violence they endured by the Armenians, managed to put the icon in the Cave, having first received the relevant order by President Abu Mazen. We still need to secure our right for this occasion with a special Presidential decree as well, so that it will not be disputed again in the future. A similar event happened over the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross on 14 September 2020, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Armenians tried to prevent us from our right to offer incense in the Altar of Saint Helen's chapel, as they have also done other times in the past. Finally, we performed our right, due to the persistence of Your Beatitude, who stood for more than one hour at the chapel with the Holy Cross placed on Your head, urging the Armenians to withdraw. This happened in the end, of fear of the Israeli Police force who was present video-filming the episode, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Vlioras. These rights of the

Orthodox Patriarchate are supported by testimonies written in the pilgrimage codes that we keep, but also in the codes kept by the Custody of the Holy Land of the Franciscans, who supported us in this regard.

Along with the pilgrimage rights, Your Beatitude prioritized also the fortification of the land and building property rights of the Patriarchate, as many times they had been violated, either materially, or by court orders of greedy opportunists. These rights are supported efficiently by the property titles, firmania, veratia, e.t.c., kept in the Patriarchate Archives, for whose better arrangement, Your Beatitude has provided for a new building which is still under construction. For the Archive titles, by Your order and guidance, the Financial Committee and the Legal Advisors of the Patriarchate tirelessly fought in the courtrooms and willingly paid the necessary amounts and the court fees. A recent example of this is the 2 million Shekels that were paid as a tax by the Patriarchate since the tenant of Petra Hotel by Jaffa Gate had not paid this amount. This was done to save the Patriarchate's property from its seizure by opaque and corrupt multi-year contracts, which were denounced by the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in the year 2005.

For the more effective operation of the pastoral mission of the Patriarchate, Your Beatitude has especially provided for the Theological or other studies of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, or young people of our flock, granting the relevant scholarships for them, especially in Greece and in Cyprus. By the appointing of new members of the Holy Synod, Your Beatitude has strengthened the Synodical ordinance of the Patriarchate. And by Your care, the renovation project of the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Sacristy is being promoted, with the funding of a reverend source.

All these encourage and strengthen us, Your Beatitude, both the old and the new Hagiotaphite Fathers, in order to stand by

Your side and follow You, and also to fight in the good Hagiotaphite cause, for a dynamic Christian Rum-Orthodox testimony in the Holy Land, which will benefit many people.

Raising my glass to a toast, Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and of the whole Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, I wish You many happy returns, in health, stability, peace and joy, in governmental power and wisdom from on high, for the praise of our Venerable Patriarchate, of our blessed nation and for the Glory of our Trinitarian God.”

This was followed by the addresses of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, His Excellency Mr Evangelos Vlioras, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, the Dean Priest of Saint James Cathedral Fr Charalambos Bandour and others.

His Beatitude thanked all with the following address:

“Your Excellency Consul General of Greece, Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Christians,

Noble pilgrims

“My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever” (Psalm 145:21).

The Holy Church of Christ in Jerusalem, which was sprouted from the rood of Jesse, and which was chosen by the Lord;“ He hath desired it for His habitation” (Psalm 132:13), celebrates today the completion of fifteen years of the governing ministry of Our mediocrity, since Our establishment on the God-founded throne of Hieromartyr James the Brother of God and first ordained Hierarch of Jerusalem.

This sacred event has a special significance for the testimony of Christ's truth all over the world by the Church, and for the pastoral accountability of its spiritual shepherds, as Saint Paul notes: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 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 20:27-28).

According to the Canon of our Hagiotaphite tradition, we went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, accompanied by the reverend members of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, where we rendered a thanksgiving Doxology to our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; "to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 1:6).

Our fifteen-year enthronement anniversary, celebrated amidst the covid-19 pandemic, should be considered an anniversary of renovation and guarantee of the apostolic succession throughout the centuries, which is followed by every Head of the Church of Jerusalem, having its beginning in the Only-Begotten Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, as Saint John, the Evangelist says: "In the beginning was the Word. The same was at the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

And according to the "Teachings of the Apostles", "the bishop who is the Head, as honoured by God, leads the clergy and rules over all people" (Teachings of the Apostles, B XXVII).

Harkening to Saint Paul saying: "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1) and following the footsteps of Our Predecessors, We make every effort to the best of Our abilities, to safeguard Our unadulterated Apostolic tradition and healthy faith, as well as to accommodate the spiritual and material needs of the Christian flock which has been entrusted to Us. "Feed the

flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1 Peter 5:2) Saint Peter orders. Moreover, we strive for the keeping of the biblical testimonies of our faith, namely the All-holy Shrines, which preach the incarnation of God the Word, His Passion on the Cross and His Resurrection.

Needless, again, to say, that the safeguarding of the indelible privileges and sovereign rights of the noble and royal nation of the 'Rum Orthodox' on the All-holy Shrines is a sacred duty of Our ab antique mission in the Holy Land. Therefore, we never cease raising our voice towards every direction, political and diplomatic, local and international organizations and governments, in order to make the established by international treaties multi-cultural and multi-religious Status Quo respectable, for both the Biblical Shrines and for the Holy City of Jerusalem, which is an international Shrine in itself, as Prophet Isaiah says: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isaiah 62:1).

Being rooted and grounded in the love and faith of Christ, "my spirit is overwhelmed within me" (Psalm 143:4), working in clear consciousness (2 Tim. 1:3) for the prevention of the nesting schism in the bosom of Christ's body, which is the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. This, after all, was the mission of the Holy Apostles, who were established in the Church of Jerusalem, the preaching of reconciliation, as this is stated by Saint Paul: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

Through this enthronement celebration, We are called not to boast, but rather examine the work of our

Patriarchal Office, according to Saint Paul's order: "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:4).

In this ministry, the mission of the martyr's throne of Saint James the Brother of God, we have as accomplices and companions the reverend and dearest Fathers and brothers Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Hieromonks, Priests, Hierodeacons and Monks, who are distinguished for their fervent zeal and God-pleasing self-sacrifice.

Let us pray to God and Father of lights and truth along with the psalmist: "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psalm 17:5), by the intercessions of our Most-Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and by the prayers of our Father among the Saints Nectarios of Pentapolis. May the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen all of us who serve in the All-holy Shrines and shepherd our pious Christian flock.

For all these, we wish for all who prayed with Us and honoured Us with their presence in this Enthronement Anniversary, strength from on high, the grace of the Holy Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing from God, expressing also our gratitude for those who addressed Us; Geronda Secretary General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Russia, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Representative of the Holy Church of Romania, Reverend Archimandrite Ioannis, who conveyed the wishes of 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 Joppa, who

spoke on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Charalambos Bandour, who spoke on behalf of Saint James Cathedral, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the Russian-speaking Community of Ber Sheva, Father Romanos, who conveyed the wishes and love of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, Mr Athanasios Abu Aeta, Mr Ode Issa and Nibel Baramsi, and all who participated in this celebration of the Enthronement Anniversary.”

At noon His Beatitude hosted a meal for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

**From Secretariat-General** On Sunday morning, 9/22 November 2020, a Doxology was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the fifteen-year election and Enthronement anniversary of the Holy Primate of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

The Doxology was led by His Beatitude, and along with Him, the Archbishops of the Patriarchate, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Patriarchal Representatives and Hegoumens of the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate and Managers of its parishes, that were able to attend due to covid-19 restrictive measures.

The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras with his wife and child and members of the community in Jerusalem.

After the Doxology the Patriarchal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters, where Geronda Secretary-General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Consantina was the first to address His Beatitude with the following address:

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

The Church of Jerusalem and the inextricably linked to it Hagiotaphite Brotherhood celebrate today a quite important and remarkable event, a joyful and exuberant event. This is the anniversary of the unanimous voting of the members of the Holy

and Sacred Synod and the representatives of the flock, for the election of Your Beatitude as the Shepherd of the Church of the Holy Land and Hegoumen of the Order of the Studios, and the consequent ceremony of Your Enthronement and its recognition by all the Orthodox Churches and countries, where our Venerable Patriarchate holds its pastoral mission. This happened in A.D. 2005, after a painful ordeal that shook the foundations of the Church; it shook but did not destroy it, because the One Who founded it in the Holy Land led the Patriarchate back into refreshment.

This event secures the continuation of the unceasing Apostolic succession of the Church of Jerusalem, and the unity of its members for the smooth operation and fulfilment of its divine mission; for this reason, it was festively celebrated – in compromise of course with the covid-19 restrictive measures – at the most precious heirloom of our faith, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was celebrated with a Doxology to God, as a thanksgiving, because He led us back to refreshment and granted the Church Your Beatitude as its Patriarch and Shepherd. Having thanked God for this, and having prayed for Your health, stability and longevity, we returned to this historic hall of our holy “little house” as the memorable Patriarch Dositheos used to say, in order to wish and congratulate You up close, for all the good works You have accomplished through hardship and toil for our Patriarchate over these last fifteen years.

First of all, we recall that guided by the Ecclesiastical Tradition of the Fathers, You have guided the Hagiotaphite Fathers, Hegoumens of the Shrines and the Holy Monasteries, the clergy and the people to co-operate with the responsible Health Authorities of the governing state for the effective dealing with the fatal epidemic of covid-19 since the beginning of the year. Under this spirit, with the keeping of our Status Quo rights, the Liturgical Services were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and at the Basilica of the



Nativity in Bethlehem. From the Holy Week Services, the Epitaph Service and the All-night Vigil of the Resurrection were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The others, i.e. Palm Sunday, the Washing of the feet and the Service of Love were held at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, with the participation of the designated Priests and only a few faithful, but without any pilgrims, as no pilgrims have arrived in Israel since the beginning of the pandemic. The former full of pilgrims Holy City has been empty from pilgrims in its streets and pathways ever since. It is worth remembering that despite the pandemic, the Service of the Holy Light was held exactly according to the Status Quo. By special providence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Police Force of Israel, the Holy Light was transferred to Jaffa Gate by an Archbishop, from where it was received by the representatives of all Orthodox countries. The representatives of the Churches received the Holy Light at Ben Gurion airport, where they were secluded inside the landed planes of their countries. With the Patriarchate's actions, the Holy Light was transferred in the same day to its Communities in Jordan, the Palestinian areas and in Gaza.

For the relief of the financially weak people, due to the restrictive measures against the pandemic, Your Beatitude has ordered the distribution of packages of food by the Patriarchate to the neediest families in Jerusalem, in Bethlehem and in Ramallah and exempted from one year's rent the tenants of houses and shops that belong to the Patriarchate. The Fatherly and Pastoral support of Your Beatitude during the pandemic was shown to the Holy Monasteries of the Patriarchate with Your visits and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in them, along with Your Sermons, which were broadcast through the internet in the Greek, Arabic, English, Russian and Romanian languages.

Your Beatitude's attitude was unwavering in the case of claiming and safeguarding the Pilgrimage rights of our

Patriarchate. This was made manifest over last year's Epiphany Feast in Bethlehem, when the Armenian Priests, continuing their decades-long provocative behaviour, prevented us from the procedure of taking the Orthodox Icon of Epiphany down to the Holy Cave. Thanks to the persistence and guidance of Your Beatitude, the Hagiotope ministers of Bethlehem and those who came to their aid from Jerusalem, despite the physical violence they endured by the Armenians, managed to put the icon in the Cave, having first received the relevant order by President Abu Mazen. We still need to secure our right for this occasion with a special Presidential decree as well, so that it will not be disputed again in the future. A similar event happened over the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross on 14 September 2020, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Armenians tried to prevent us from our right to offer incense in the Altar of Saint Helen's chapel, as they have also done other times in the past. Finally, we performed our right, due to the persistence of Your Beatitude, who stood for more than one hour at the chapel with the Holy Cross placed on Your head, urging the Armenians to withdraw. This happened in the end, of fear of the Israeli Police force who was present video-filming the episode, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Vlioras. These rights of the Orthodox Patriarchate are supported by testimonies written in the pilgrimage codes that we keep, but also in the codes kept by the Custody of the Holy Land of the Franciscans, who supported us in this regard.

Along with the pilgrimage rights, Your Beatitude prioritized also the fortification of the land and building property rights of the Patriarchate, as many times they had been violated, either materially, or by court orders of greedy opportunists. These rights are supported efficiently by the property titles, firmania, veratia, e.t.c., kept in the Patriarchate Archives, for whose better arrangement, Your Beatitude has provided for a new building which is still under construction. For the Archive titles, by Your order and

guidance, the Financial Committee and the Legal Advisors of the Patriarchate tirelessly fought in the courtrooms and willingly paid the necessary amounts and the court fees. A recent example of this is the 2 million Shekels that were paid as a tax by the Patriarchate since the tenant of Petra Hotel by Jaffa Gate had not paid this amount. This was done to save the Patriarchate's property from its seizure by opaque and corrupt multi-year contracts, which were denounced by the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood in the year 2005.

For the more effective operation of the pastoral mission of the Patriarchate, Your Beatitude has especially provided for the Theological or other studies of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, or young people of our flock, granting the relevant scholarships for them, especially in Greece and in Cyprus. By the appointing of new members of the Holy Synod, Your Beatitude has strengthened the Synodical ordinance of the Patriarchate. And by Your care, the renovation project of the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Sacristy is being promoted, with the funding of a reverend source.

All these encourage and strengthen us, Your Beatitude, both the old and the new Hagiotaphite Fathers, in order to stand by Your side and follow You, and also to fight in the good Hagiotaphite cause, for a dynamic Christian Rum-Orthodox testimony in the Holy Land, which will benefit many people.

Raising my glass to a toast, Your Beatitude, on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and of the whole Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, I wish You many happy returns, in health, stability, peace and joy, in governmental power and wisdom from on high, for the praise of our Venerable Patriarchate, of our blessed nation and for the Glory of our Trinitarian God."

This was followed by the addresses of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, His Excellency Mr Evangelos Vlioras, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, His Eminence

Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, the Dean Priest of Saint James Cathedral Fr Charalambos Bandour and others.

His Beatitude thanked all with the following address:

“Your Excellency Consul General of Greece, Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Christians,

Noble pilgrims

“My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever” (Psalm 145:21).

The Holy Church of Christ in Jerusalem, which was sprouted from the rood of Jesse, and which was chosen by the Lord;“ He hath desired it for His habitation” (Psalm 132:13), celebrates today the completion of fifteen years of the governing ministry of Our mediocrity, since Our establishment on the God-founded throne of Hieromartyr James the Brother of God and first ordained Hierarch of Jerusalem.

This sacred event has a special significance for the testimony of Christ’s truth all over the world by the Church, and for the pastoral accountability of its spiritual shepherds, as Saint Paul notes: “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 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 20:27-28).

According to the Canon of our Hagiotaphite tradition, we went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, accompanied by the reverend members of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, where we rendered a thanksgiving Doxology to our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; “to him be glory and dominion

forever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 1:6).

Our fifteen-year enthronement anniversary, celebrated amidst the covid-19 pandemic, should be considered an anniversary of renovation and guarantee of the apostolic succession throughout the centuries, which is followed by every Head of the Church of Jerusalem, having its beginning in the Only-Begotten Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, as Saint John, the Evangelist says: “In the beginning was the Word. The same was at the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

And according to the “Teachings of the Apostles”, “the bishop who is the Head, as honoured by God, leads the clergy and rules over all people” (Teachings of the Apostles, B XXVII).

Harkening to Saint Paul saying: “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1) and following the footsteps of Our Predecessors, We make every effort to the best of Our abilities, to safeguard Our unadulterated Apostolic tradition and healthy faith, as well as to accommodate the spiritual and material needs of the Christian flock which has been entrusted to Us. “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind” (1 Peter 5:2) Saint Peter orders. Moreover, we strive for the keeping of the biblical testimonies of our faith, namely the All-holy Shrines, which preach the incarnation of God the Word, His Passion on the Cross and His Resurrection.

Needless, again, to say, that the safeguarding of the indelible privileges and sovereign rights of the noble and royal nation of the ‘Rum Orthodox’ on the All-holy Shrines is a sacred duty of Our ab antique mission in the Holy Land. Therefore, we never cease raising our voice towards every direction, political and diplomatic, local and international

organizations and governments, in order to make the established by international treaties multi-cultural and multi-religious Status Quo respectable, for both the Biblical Shrines and for the Holy City of Jerusalem, which is an international Shrine in itself, as Prophet Isaiah says: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isaiah 62:1).

Being rooted and grounded in the love and faith of Christ, "my spirit is overwhelmed within me" (Psalm 143:4), working in clear consciousness (2 Tim. 1:3) for the prevention of the nesting schism in the bosom of Christ's body, which is the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. This, after all, was the mission of the Holy Apostles, who were established in the Church of Jerusalem, the preaching of reconciliation, as this is stated by Saint Paul: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).

Through this enthronement celebration, We are called not to boast, but rather examine the work of our Patriarchal Office, according to Saint Paul's order: "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:4).

In this ministry, the mission of the martyr's throne of Saint James the Brother of God, we have as accomplices and companions the reverend and dearest Fathers and brothers Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Hieromonks, Priests, Hierodeacons and Monks, who are distinguished for their fervent zeal and God-pleasing self-sacrifice.

Let us pray to God and Father of lights and truth along with the psalmist: "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psalm 17:5), by the intercessions of our

Most-Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and by the prayers of our Father among the Saints Nectarios of Pentapolis. May the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen all of us who serve in the All-holy Shrines and shepherd our pious Christian flock.

For all these, we wish for all who prayed with Us and honoured Us with their presence in this Enthronement Anniversary, strength from on high, the grace of the Holy Sepulchre, patience, and every blessing from God, expressing also our gratitude for those who addressed Us; Geronda Secretary General, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Representative of the Brotherly Holy Church of Russia, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the Representative of the Holy Church of Romania, Reverend Archimandrite Ioannis, who conveyed the wishes of 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 Joppa, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Joppa, Reverend Charalambos Bandour, who spoke on behalf of Saint James Cathedral, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the Russian-speaking Community of Ber Sheva, Father Romanos, who conveyed the wishes and love of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, Mr Athanasios Abu Aeta, Mr Ode Issa and Nibel Baramsi, and all who participated in this celebration of the Enthronement Anniversary.”

At noon His Beatitude hosted a meal for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# THE FEAST OF THE NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY OF OCTOBER 28, 1940 AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, October 15 / 28, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the National Anniversary of October 28, 1940.

On this Feast the whole Church and that of Jerusalem commemorate our nation's sufferings; persecutions, exile, group executions and starvation, caused by the German and Italian atrocities, during their occupation in our country, in World War II (1940-1944). The Church prays for the repose of the souls of the fighters who devoted their lives in the defence of their country, and thanks God and the Most Holy Theotokos for their help in our regaining the precious gift of freedom.

This event was celebrated at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with a Doxology led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants their Eminences the Archbishops of the Throne and Hagiotaphite Hieromonks. The chanting was delivered by the Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos, as the Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evaggelos Vlioras and members of the Greek Community.

The Service of Doxology was followed by the return at the Patriarchate Headquarters where His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evaggelos Vlioras,



Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Brethren in Christ

The great epic of 1940 is portrayed on today's anniversary of the "No" of 28<sup>th</sup> October, which was the answer to the provoking arrogance of the Fascist and Nazi forces of the German-Italian axis.

The 1940 "No" of Greece is a landmark of self-sacrifice for the defence of moral values, and love for the country, to safeguard the national independence and our territorial integrity. And this is so, because, undeniably, the heroic resistance against Hitler's armed forces was the victory of the spirit over material things, of freedom over slavery, of right against the unrighteousness of the modern civilization, of the barbarity, and finally, of Christ's light over the darkness of the devil, as Saint Paul wisely phrases: "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" (Ephesians 6:12).

World War II and its consequences showed that the contemporary technologically advanced man "did not want to come to reason", meaning that he did not try to set himself free from his primitive beastly behaviour. "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Romans 1:25).

And we say this because the super-human fighting spirit of the Greeks against the axis was inspired by the faith in the Crucified and Resurrected Christ. Rightly it was then said that the 28<sup>th</sup> October epic was the miracle of the faith in God.

Our venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, honouring, as it should, this historic event of "1940 No" and wholeheartedly participating in this victorious commemoration of freedom and

of the steadfast resistance against the obnoxious occupational forces of Nazism, went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and rendered a thanksgiving Doxology to the Trinitarian God, despite the restrictive measures of the Corona Virus plague.

Moreover, we prayed for the eternal repose of the souls of all our fathers and brothers who fought gloriously and suffered a martyr's death for their faith and country and for freedom.

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem, replying to the various challenges of the world and of our tested region of the Middle East, projects October 28 as an example of inspiration and hope, as Saint Paul's advice says: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"(Galatians 5:1).

For all these, let us raise our glasses to a toast and exclaim:

Long live the 28<sup>th</sup> October 1940!

Long live the "NO"!

Long live Greece!

Long live the noble nation of the Rum Orthodox!

Long live our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood!"

His Beatitude's address was followed by that of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evaggelos Vlioras, as per below:

"Your Beatitude,

Most Reverend Archbishops,

Reverend Fathers,

Dear Children,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

National anniversaries are milestones, occasions for reflection, which in the course of time bring back to our minds the events that have forged the collective historical memory of Greeks everywhere.

In every historical period, there is a pole, a historical event that marks it, and it becomes a point of reference for all of us later. The struggle of 1940 is this landmark for the modern history of Hellenism, a central point of reference and a symbol for the whole Nation.

Therefore, at that time, as in any difficult time, there were many who surpassed themselves, "Or who came out of their skin", to use the phrase of Iakovos Kampanellis, and showed heroism, beyond what we call "duty". Ordinary, everyday people, who suddenly found themselves in the forefront of history, without asking to become heroes and yet received a "glorifying myrtle" responding, every single one of them, to the call, without fear, without hesitation, marking history and life in Greece and in Hellenism in general.

If life is measured more by the burning heart than by the duration, if the candle that shines brighter lasts the least, then we can all be proud of the mature life of those who sacrificed themselves in the icy mountains of Epirus, in the Fortresses of Macedonia, in the waters of the Aegean, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, in the Middle East and throughout the resistance to the triple occupation of our country by the forces of darkness.

The Battle of Greece, which lasted a total of 216 days from the NO on October 28 until the fall of Crete on June 1, 1941, caused worldwide sensation and admiration, spreading hope and making the hearts of the peoples of occupied Europe, who lived the night of the occupation, to take courage. The magnitude of

the sacrifice of the Greeks during World War II is easily understood if we consider that Greece lost almost 10% of its population of 7.5 million.

It is, therefore, a special honour for the Consul General of Greece to address the Hellenism of the Holy Land and especially the young people on this special day of remembrance and pride.

Eighty years after this historic day we remember and pay tribute to the heroic heirs of the Homeland, to all those who fought the relentless beast of fascism and Nazism, to all those who made the supreme sacrifice, on the battlefields or in front of the firing squad, so that we can live free today.

To all those who with feelings of patriotism and self-denial, according to the play writer, "pushed the time for good towards peace and freedom. A freedom that seemed so wide to them".

We pay tribute to both the mothers and wives who endured while waiting, to the children who were orphaned or lost due to hunger and misery.

The Greek NO clearly and unequivocally demonstrated the deep historical conscience of the Greeks that dictated their refusal to forget their history and to live in compromise and submission.

In this national ordeal, the Sun of Righteousness did not forget Greece.

In this historical moment, as in any other nationally difficult circumstance, the dynamic participation of Hellenism anywhere in the world was valuable, for which Greece is proud and grateful.

The impact of the 1940 Struggle was shocking on Holy Land as well. More than 40 Greeks from Jerusalem voluntarily joined

the Greek Armed Forces while two of them gave their lives for Greece.

The Sailor Electrician Anestis Zografos was lost in the sinking of the Katsoni Submarine in Skiathos on September 14, 1943, while the Sailor Engineer Emmanuel Mykonos was killed during the impact of a missile of the Adria Destroyer in Kalymnos on October 22, 1943. The bones of the latter as well as 20 of his other comrades-in-arms, which were buried in a makeshift grave in Turkey, were transported to Greece in 1947 and deposited in the ossuary of the Monument to the Fallen of our Navy.

Today, as then, the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, with their long and multifaceted contribution to the Holy Land and the highest pastoral work, remain, as a key point of reference, guardian of the moral and spiritual values of our Orthodox faith.

Our Patriarchate of Jerusalem testifies to the timelessness of the dynamic presence of the Greek and Orthodox tradition in the Middle East. Its high mind and struggles, under adverse conditions, until today, are for all of us an invaluable national capital but also a source of inspiration and encouragement.

For all of us, the national anniversary messages are only useful if they guide our steps today.

Especially nowadays, Greece is called upon to face a series of challenges to our national integrity, sovereignty and sovereign rights from Evros to the ends of the Aegean, to our land and sea borders and to our sea zones. The Armed Forces give every day the answer that befits modern arrogance, on land, sea and air.

Let me assure you that the common meaning we all derive from the NO of October 28, 1940, strengthens the strong will of the Greeks to maintain the freedom, independence and integrity of

the homeland, knowing full well that the price of freedom is always high, and that our country is blessed because there are always those who will willingly pay this price.

With these thoughts I call on all of us to exclaim:

Long live the 28th of October 1940!

Long live the Nation of the Greeks!"

This was followed by the Arabic translation of His Beatitude's address, by the Patriarchate's Representative in the Arabic M.M. Father Issa Mousleh, and finally, of the address of the Managing Director of the Patriarchal School of Zion, Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, as per below:

"Today we celebrate and recall in our memory one of the most beautiful, most brilliant, and most glorious moments of the Greek Nation. The thought of all of us today turns with sacred emotion, justified pride and infinite admiration to the great day of October 28, 1940. On that day, 80 years ago, the cannon sounded in the mountains of Northern Epirus and the whole of Greece paid its duty to the Homeland, a debt that is not transferable and everyone repays it by himself alone.

The Greek nation did not kneel in fear at that time. But like every time in history, it stood upright on its saddle and proved in the best way its love for the Homeland, a love without limits, since it puts the universality of its existence in the service of the Homeland. A love that reaches the contempt of death and the emergence of heroism that the modern world had not seen until then. And for this reason, the world looked closely and expressed its admiration in amazement, watching the triumphs of a small nation against a great power. And this is because everyone knew and knows that war, wants courage, it wants chests and arms, hearts that can bear the pain and endure the calamity. War wants strong people, who can rebuild from the beginning, everything that it [war] tore down and ruined in front of them. War wants

determination, on the part of the fighters, in order to turn it into a holocaust, so that they can sustain the liberty of all things they consider sacred and holy.

For as the poet says:

*Here no one fears death but everyone longs to hear his name, riding on a horse, leaving on foot, here there is no place, neither for death nor for the fear of entering the tomb (Free translation, Poem by C. Palamas: The country that does not die).*

October 28, 1940, is a new milestone in the history of our long-suffering Homeland, our thrice-glorious Greece. On that day, a new period of heroism and sacrifice of the Greek race began, for the preservation of its freedom and independence. With the protection of our Most Gracious Theotokos, the Greeks climbed like the eagles on the snow-covered, steep and inaccessible mountain peaks of northern Epirus, leaving friends and enemies open-mouthed.

Brilliant glory then crowned our Homeland, which despite the difficulties, continues to cover Greece with laurels.

Today, "the times are not waiting; we must take action". Clouds are gathering over our Homeland and some, just like the beasts of the Book of Revelation, have opened their mouths and gnash their teeth, wanting to frighten this small country by showing their great power; but they forgot or did not understand, that the Greeks, with their wonderful achievements, proved that in the fight for freedom, for the defence of altars and hearths, it is not the irons and the numbers that win, but the heart and the courage.

And as the poet says about the indestructible sprout of the Greeks:

*I shall not be lost in the depths of the earth, I only stop for a while, I come back to life and make the nations rise!*

(Free translation, Poem by C. Palamas, Digenis and Charon).

Let us turn our thoughts at this time to all those who fought then, and sacrificed their lives for the freedom and the benefit of the Homeland, and offer them, as a minimum tribute, our admiration and gratitude, and assure them, that in the difficult times of our Homeland, their example will guide us and strengthen our will, so that we may become worthy successors of the bright and glorious struggles of the children of 1940 “.

The celebration was sealed with patriotic songs and our National Anthem by the Patriarchal School of Zion Students.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **HIS HOLINESS THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW VISITS THE METOCHION OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN NEOCHORION**

On Friday, October 10/23, 2020, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated for the Feast of the Holy Apostle James the Brother of God and first Hierarch of Jerusalem, according to the custom of the Church of Jerusalem, at the Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre in Neochorion of Bosphorus. The Liturgy was attended by His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Who addressed our Representative in Constantinople Most Reverend Archbishop Nectarios of Anthedona and the congregation as follows:



Your Eminence, Archbishop Nectarios of Anthedona,  
Representative of the Holy Sepulchre in the City of  
Constantine,

Most Reverend Brethren,

Your Excellencies Archons,

Beloved Children in Christ,

We are gathered in this historic Metochion of the Holy Sepulchre in joy and contrition, in order to celebrate with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs the commemoration of Apostle James the Brother of God, one of the primary persons of the ancient Church, the genuine bearer and exponent of the sacred consignment of the Lord, the First Hierarch of the Church of Jerusalem and its patron Saint. Along with our reverent entourage, We came to the Church of the Metochion of Jerusalem in Neochorio, which is dedicated to the Holy Great Martyr George the Trophy Bearer, just like two other Churches-Metochia of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Halki and in Phanar, so that we may proclaim "the bond of love" between the Holy Great Church of Christ and the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which holds this celebration of the Throne today, and to express our feelings of love and honour to its Holy Primate, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The Patriarchates of Constantinople and Jerusalem have a long-term tradition of coexistence, cooperation and solidarity, which have produced good fruit for the whole of Orthodoxy and for the protection of the Status Quo in the Holy Land. The All-holy shrines and the holy places where the redeeming news of salvation was heard, and God the Word was made incarnate, the places where the immaculate feet of our Lord Jesus Christ walked, and His words were heard, where He worked the miracles of faith, where the glory of the Lord was revealed in Transfiguration, the Passion and the Resurrection were witnessed, along with the miraculous appearances, the

Ascension of the Saviour and the crown of festivities, Pentecost, happened, all these, and “many other things Jesus did” which, as Saint John the Evangelist writes “if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (John 21:25), are always in our mind and heart.

We ceaselessly pray to the Founder of the Church, to strengthen His Beatitude our Brother Theophilus and the blessed Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, in the struggle for the protection of the All-holy monuments and shrines. We were expecting the visit of His Beatitude at the centre of Orthodoxy which was scheduled for the beginning of the Church Year, on September 1, 2020, and was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We wait for the visit of the Holy Brother, in a face-to-face meeting, to co-celebrate the Divine Liturgy and discuss the matters of Orthodoxy related to its unity and witness in the contemporary world.

The Church is “God’s answer to the expectation of the world”. It is “the new world and the new paradise”. Being alive “in the world” it bears witness for the truth “that is not of this world”, carrying the Cross of Christ, experiencing and preaching His Resurrection which is the joy of the world. It also foretells and depicts “the common resurrection”, “the unwaning, heirless and eternal day”, in the course toward the eternal Kingdom of God, “the new world” (2 Cor. 5:17), where “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away”(Revelation 21:4), but there will be a joy that is complete, unspeakable and glorified. To this Church, the place and the way of the salvation of man and of the world, we owe everything, in it we minister its Founder and Head, the Giver of every good thing, being ministered in all things by the unspeakable Divine Philanthropy.

Most Reverend brother, Archbishop of Anthedona,

We praise the good-fruit-bearing ministry for the full duration of your ecclesiastical ministry here, the many toils, your tireless and productive work for the preservation of your Metochia, your sacrificial witness and wise care for the ecclesiastical matters at all times. Thanking you for the kind invitation of Our Mediocrity to participate in the Service in this Metochion of Bosphorus, We wish you health and strength to continue your good works. We also congratulate all those who support this holy foundation, with their leader, the Cross-bearer of the Holy Sepulchre and Our dearest Officion-bearer, Mr Panteleimon Vigan.

With these thoughts, and in a festive frame of mind, we express the wishes of Our Mediocrity to His Beatitude, the Head of the Church of Jerusalem, and to all the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood for this Feast of the Throne, praying to the Almighty, Omniscient and Most Generous God, that by the intercessions of the Holy Apostle James the Brother of God and of the Holy Glorious Great Martyr George the Trophy Bearer, He may protect and strengthen the brotherly Church of Jerusalem and grant to its pious clergy and people every kind of heavenly blessing.

Many happy returns to all of you!"

**From Secretariat-General**

---

**THE LAMENTATIONS OF THE MOST  
HOLY THEOTOKOS AT THE**

# PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM

On Thursday morning, August 14/27, 2020, Fore-feast of the Dormition, the Service of the Lamentations was held at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

This ceremony in honour of Theotokos is a part of the Status Quo of the Church of Jerusalem.

For this ceremony, the Hagiotaphite entourage, led by its Hegoumen His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, marched from the Patriarchate Headquarters down Via Dolorosa with short stops at the Holy Monasteries of St. Charalambos, Panagia Sayda Naya, Praetorion, The Ancestors of God Joachim and Anna and St. Stephen and arrived at the Hegoumeneion of Gethsemane.

Going down the stairs to the courtyard of the Church of the Dormition of Theotokos Mary, His Beatitude was received by the Hegoumen His Eminence Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela and the Priests in their liturgical vestments with the co-celebrants their Eminences the Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Isidoros of Hierapolis and Philoumenos of Pella, at the chanting of Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos, He entered the Church and having given the blessing, He venerated the Tomb of Theotokos and put on His Patriarchal liturgical vestments. The Archbishops put on omoforion and epitrahilion and the Priests felonion.

Once everybody was ready the Priests took the Icon of the Body of the Dormition of Theotokos on the Epitaph and placed it in the centre of the Church.

The three stasis of the Lamentations were chanted. After the Lamentations the Sermon by His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina followed as per below;

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece,

Most Reverend Chorea of Hierarchs,

Reverend Fathers and noble pilgrims,

During the Fifteen days of the Dormition fast the attention of the memory, the life and all activity of the Church are centred primarily and especially to the Most Holy Theotokos, the Mother of our God.

From the first day of August, there is a gradual increase of the supplications and all kinds of prayers dedicated to Her, who was chosen by God and became the vessel that held the Creator, contained the uncontainable, conceived by the Holy Spirit and bore as man our Lord Jesus Christ.

All events of honour, respect and reverence for the Most Holy Theotokos reach their climax on 15th of August, which has been set by the Church as the day of the commemoration of Her Dormition.

Celebrating the Fore-feast of the Dormition today, and the main feast tomorrow, we commemorate and recall the whole mission of the Most Holy Theotokos to us men. We commemorate that She accepted to lend flesh from Her flesh to the Word of God Who is without flesh. She conceived the Son of God through the Holy Spirit, became pregnant, went through labour and bore Him in the flesh, swaddled Him, breastfed Him, saw the Wise Men and the Shepherds offering gifts and worshipping Him at the humble Cave in Bethlehem, heard the hymns of the Angels in the heavens chanting "Glory to God in the Highest", "kept all these words in her heart"(Luke 2:19) and handed all these over to the Evangelists and Apostles and they to the Church in turn. Theotokos led our Lord to circumcision and His naming on the eight-day since His Nativity in the flesh, and to His Entrance and the fortieth-day prayers at the Temple of Solomon, where Simeon the God-receiver held Him in his arms, and she heard in surprise the words " Lord, now lettest thou

thy servant depart in peace”(Luke 2:29) and “a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also”(Luke 2:35). Moreover, She held Him in her arms fleeing from Herod’s fury to Egypt and brought Him back to Nazareth again, where they dwelled and from which He was called Nazarene. She followed and watched Him and as a Mother gave Him all He needed in His childhood and youth, when “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man”(Luke 2:52).

Having witnessed all these, and the thing that was beyond any human logic, His conception and bearing without the consummation of conception with a man’s participation, it was natural to say to the servants of the wedding in Cana “Do whatever He tells you to do”(John 2:5). She followed and served Him along with the women who were following Him from Galilee, and “ministered unto him of their substance” (Luke 8:3). She was a witness of the signs and miracles of comfort and healing of the sick, felt the joy for these and the sorrow of the ungrateful condemnation and of the vision of Her beloved Son pierced with the nails of the Cross. She was the first among the Myrrh-bearing Women at the Deposition and the burial, but also at the joy of the Resurrection and at His other appearances after the Resurrection. She experienced the sorrowful-joy of the Ascension and the joy of the sending down of the Holy Spirit the Comforter to Her and to the Apostles by Her Son.

For this mission of Hers, which is beyond any human logic and marvellous, for the unique event which happened once and for all, the faith, the devotion, the love, the complete consistency to Her promise to the Angel at the Annunciation “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word”(Luke 1:38), the Church throughout the centuries, honours and magnifies Her, as She foretold at her meeting with her relative Elizabeth “behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed”(Luke 1:48), accepts Her natural death, and burial in this village of Gethsemane, but

also Her translation (metastasis) by Her Son in both soul and body into heaven before the common Resurrection, and Her presence as a Queen at His Right Hand, "arrayed in a vesture of inwoven gold, adorned in varied colours"(Psalm 44: 8), being the first among the members of the triumphant Church, ready to hear the supplications of those who revered Her, to help, support, heal the illnesses, overcome difficulties and temptations, and most of all to set an example with Her Most Holy life for us.

For Her excessive goodness and love, the Church of Jerusalem, the land where She lived and which She sanctified, honours Her, as it should today, with this Service of the Lamentations around Her Tomb, under the lead of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, and prays to Her to intercede for the unity in Christ of the Orthodox Churches, for the peace and good state of the whole world and of the Middle East, for the cessation of the brutal crimes of violence against innocent people and of the existing wars around the globe, for the rescue and treatment of shipwrecked refugees, for the help of the addicted to drugs youth, for the unity of the divided families and for the help of all of us who honour Her today at Her Most Sacred and Life-giving Tomb, so that by Her help we may continually convey a message of reconciliation and love to the world, and a witness of the Christian Orthodox life, to strengthen, comfort, sustain and guide to salvation the fulness of the Church and give Glory to our Trinitarian God. So be it."

This was followed by Eulogitaria, Praises, Doxology, the procession of the Epitaph to the top of the staircase of the Church and the prayer.

Finally, the icon was placed behind the Tomb of Theotokos under the chanting of the Dormition hymns and a large crowd of faithful approached to venerate it, despite the COVID-19.

After the Service, the Hegoumen His Eminence Archbishop

Dorotheos of Avela offered a reception at the Hegoumeneion.

**From Secretariat-General**

---

## **ORDINATION OF A PRIEST FOR THE RUSSIAN FLOCK**

After the decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod, Chaired by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, on Saturday morning, May 31/June 13, 2020, during the Divine Liturgy at the Horrendous Golgotha, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba ordained to Priest the Deacon Alexander Yasevich, who has been serving at the Russian-speaking Community in Be'er Sheba, and will continue his ministry there as a Priest from now on.

His Eminence the Archbishop of Madaba addressed the ordained with the following fatherly words;

“Reverend Deacon Alexander,

Two years ago, we gathered in this Holy Place, the horrendous Rock of Golgotha, to participate in your ordination to the first degree of Priesthood and to witness the alteration of the “Right hand of the Most High”. At the same Holy Place we gathered again today to rejoice together, to celebrate the coming of the Comforter, the feast of the Holy Pentecost and at the same time to witness your promotion to the second degree of Priesthood.

Two years ago, you entered the All-holy Church of the Resurrection as a simple pilgrim and after the completion of the ordination you departed as an angel, a minister of the



Holy Mysteries. Today, you arrived at the Horrendous Golgotha as an Angel and in a little while, the divine grace of the All-holy and Ceremonial Spirit will make you partake of "the holy and ultimate degree of the Priesthood, of the interior of the veil dividing the sanctuary from the nave, in the Holy of Holies, where the Holy Angels desire to look down upon and behold with their own eyes the person of the Holy Anafora, and enjoy the Divine and Holy Liturgy". And again we will witness this unique mystery and exclaim: "this change hath been wrought by the right hand of the Most High"(Psalm 76:10).

Your ordination is not just your personal matter. It is a matter for the whole parish, the members of which have come from southern Israel to support you and rejoice with you, because they are finally getting their own Priest, born and raised in a certain area, in which until recently they used to grow up without being able to be baptized, to celebrate the Feasts of the Church, without the joy of the Church, and in the end to die alone and bury their dead without any ceremony.

By the grace of God we are living in historic moments for the Church of Jerusalem. After 70 years of absolute silence, the holy city of Patriarch Abraham, with the famous well of his treaty with Abimelech, regains its Liturgic life. Since 1948, with the evacuation of the area due to the Arab-Israeli war, the Divine Liturgy in Be'er Sheba ceased to take place. The only sign that indicated the existence of an old Christian community in the city was the abandoned cemetery in the centre of the Old City.

The dead waited for decades to hear the sound of an incense burner and see a Priest to hold even a simple memorial service. The old tombs looked like seeds, which were planted in the ground and waited for the right time to take root again and bear fruit. This era came with the fall of Communism and the opening of the borders of the former Soviet Union. Israel was filled with the old Israelites, who spread throughout the land.

However, a portion of these Israelites had one characteristic feature. In addition to the Israelite identity, they brought with them the Christian faith, the Orthodox tradition, the icons, the incense, the fast, the prayer. The Christians became the salt of the local community. They kept their obligations to the state to the fullest. They “ Rendered to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”, and now what they should also do was to render “to God the things that are God’s”.

Their desire was to have a Priest enter their house, to sanctify them, to enlighten them and to help them keep the flame of the Faith burning. This wish was fulfilled in 2008, on the feast day of St. Spyridon, when God miraculously led my steps to the Negev Desert to perform the first memorial service and I met the first Christians with the help of the venerable Pilgrim Nina, the name of who reminded me of the sister of St. George the Great Martyr, Saint Apostle Nina, who spread the teaching of the Holy Gospel at the inhospitable territories of Georgia as it was then, in the 4th century AD.

Many visits followed, during which I found for myself the magnitude of the faith, the simplicity and the love of the orphaned Christians of the South. I was happy every time the road brought me close to them. With the passage of time, however, I realized that the harvest is too much for the few workers. I was starting to feel tired because of the long distance from Jerusalem, and I was saddened by my inability to be among the Christians of Be’er Sheba all the time.

Then a new desire was created for me. To find the right Priest, who will come from and live in Be’er Sheba, so that he can immediately meet the Liturgical needs of Christians and be always present, whenever the parish demands it.

When we refer to the parish of Be’er Sheba, we do not simply

mean the parish of a district. The area in which we are supposed to serve begins east of Aynn Ghent's springs on the shores of the Dead Sea to reach west to the coastal Ashkalon and end up as far south as the centre of the city of Eilat having as its centre the capital of the desert, Beer Sheba, , and thus covering an area of more than 12,000 square kilometres. Consequently, the presence of the local Priest was absolutely necessary for the correct execution of the pastoral work in such a large and sensitive area.

The choice on you was not accidental. You appeared at the first Divine Liturgy in Be'er Sheba and have been present on a daily basis ever since. Your ordination as a deacon coincided with my temporary removal, fortunately not for long. With your help, we have managed to find a new place to house the temporary House of prayer until God deems us worthy to build our own Holy Church, dedicated to Patriarch Abraham, the Holy Patriarch St. Sophronios and the Holy Maccabees.

From now on, your responsibilities will increase. The effort will be great. You must cultivate, above all, patience in temptations. His Beatitude our Patriarch, the Holy and Sacred Synod and all the Fathers of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood have accepted you into the bosom of the Church of Jerusalem and will support you in your mission. Your wife, who has supported you with her love, will stand by you again. Your beloved daughter Maria, who has devoted herself in the treatment of the sick with medicine, is happy and proud of her father. Your little son Paul stands in your shadow and waits for you to teach him from your experience in the Church. We will all stand by you and strengthen you in your new ministry.

We entreat the Holy Spirit to enlighten you, strengthen you and cover you from temptations. And now leave yourself to the will of God and accept the divine gift of Priesthood, in order to sanctify others and to sanctify yourself personally “.

Fr. Alexander returned the address as follows:

“Your Eminence, Dear Fathers, brothers and sisters in Christ!

In this joyful and important day for me, being in the holy place of the Golgotha □□Rock, where the Cross of the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ was erected, I would like to thank His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch Theophilos III, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Church of Jerusalem and especially Your Eminence Aristovoulos, for the trust you have shown in me.

The Lord brought me to the city of Be'er Sheva, when you, Your Eminence, began to regularly celebrate the Divine Liturgy there in a small Russian-speaking community, which was located in the Special Homeland of the Patriarch Abraham. After many years, the holy chanting was heard again and the Divine Liturgy began to be celebrated. At that moment, I immediately felt a strong desire to work hard for the Church. I still feel that. In front of me is a large field for action, because the community is developing, and many Russian Christians live in Be'er Sheva and other cities in the south.

I also want to thank our Priest, Father Igor, with whom I had the opportunity to serve as a deacon for almost two years. I want to thank my wife, Xenia, who helps and supports me. I also want to thank our entire community and especially those who have come to my ordination today. I thank God and ask for your prayers! ”

After these words, His Eminence placed his hands on the head of the ordained and invoked the Divine Grace which heals all infirmities and completes all things lacking.

The ordained received the acclaiming “axios” by the co-praying Hagiotaphite Fathers, his wife, relatives and community members who came to honour him.

After the ordination, the Episcopal entourage and the ordained paid their respects to His Beatitude and thanked Him.

# THE EPITAPH SERVICE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Good Friday evening, April 4/17, 2020, around 9.00 p.m., the modest, contrite but nevertheless magnificent Epitaph Service was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by the Patriarchate. On this Service the Church commemorates the burial and descent in Hades of our Lord Jesus Christ after His crucifixion. There, the Lord preached the message of salvation and release from the darkness and the torments of hell to the departed ones by saying; “come back again into Paradise”. This Service, which is actually the Matins of Holy Saturday, included the Six Psalms, the Canon of Holy Saturday, the procession around the shrines in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, concluding in Horrendous Golgotha.

There, after the reading of the Gospel narrative and the veneration, the Archbishops took the silk corporal of the Epitaph from the Holy Altar of Golgotha and placed it on the Deposition slate, where the Gospel of the deposition was read.

A procession three times around the Sacred Edicule followed and then the silk corporal was placed on the Holy Tomb. The Lamentations were chanted afterward, and the rest of the Service continued with the blessings, praises, Doxology and the Sermon of His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of

Constantina as follows;

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Your Excellency Mr. Consul General of Greece,

Reverend chorea of High Priests,

Reverend Fathers,

Noble pilgrims,

This evening of Holy Friday, the Church experiences the crucifixion of the Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth. – “Today hangs upon the wood the One who has hung the earth upon the waters – the bridegroom of the Church has been pierced with nails” -, and with the dawn of Holy Saturday the Church experiences His burial in the flesh – “Thou who art the life hast gone down into the grave O Christ, and the orders of angels marveled – removing Thee from the wood, Joseph of Arimathea buries Thee in a grave”.

The Church lives these two events today, drawing the details from the eye-witnesses of the Holy Scriptures, co-crucified with the One who was crucified for her, and being buried along with Him, who was buried as a mortal man, and went down in Hades.

Commemorating these, the Church believes that Christ’s crucifixion was done by the free will and decision of His crucifiers, foreknown, but not predestined by God. The crucifiers were unable to tolerate that He was the Incarnate Son and Word of God who came on earth, and therefore condemned Him to death. The Church prays for the remission of their sin, just like He asked from the Cross “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). Jesus had the power to avoid this death, either as man or by His divine power, however He came into it willingly. Having been betrayed, arrested, mocked, “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and

like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth" (Acts 8:32). As the Apostle of the nations says: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). By the humility and the kenosis on the Cross, Christ conquered the opposing power and even death. For the Church, Christ's Cross is the beginning of existence, of life and its resurrection. For this reason, it sings: "we venerate Thy Cross, O Christ and Thy resurrection we worship and glorify". Therefore St. John Damascene says "His precious Cross is above all the wondrous things Christ worked... and truly the precious and sacred wood, on which Christ placed Himself as a sacrifice for us, is sanctified by the touch of His Holy Body and Blood, it is venerated, [along with] the nails, the lance, the garments, the holy places which are the manger, the cave, Golgotha, the redeeming, life-giving Tomb, Sion, the Acropolis of the Churches, and the like, as Prophet David says, We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool (Psalm 132:7)." (St. John Damascene Edition of the Orthodox Faith).

His feet stood at the place of Horrendous Golgotha. There, during the reign of Pontius Pilate, God "worked salvation in the middle of the earth". By the Cross of His Son, He united Jews and Greeks in one body, one nation, one Church. He called us, the nations which did not know God, which were far away from Him, to the message of His reconciliation, and we, the gentiles, having accepted this, became friends of God, "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Ephesians 3:6). God grafted us into the body of the Church. Joining the body of the Church we were taught to live with our fellowmen on earth in reconciliation, righteousness, peace and love,

even love towards our enemies, remembering that "our conversation is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).

However, God's love for man, Who "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32), according to St. Paul, has included in the providence of salvation through the cross not only us, the living on earth, introducing us to the path of salvation, but also the dead, those who were captives of Hades, dwelling in the darkness and the shadow of death, awaiting redemption. Through the Cross, the Son of God went down into Hades, as the One Who has power over both the living and the dead and sought the lost sheep in its darkness, as He did on earth; He sought the fallen man, Adam and his descendants, and in the lightning of His Divinity drew them up saying; "come back again into paradise". The first to enter paradise was the thief on the cross, who used repentance as the key to it; "Remember me O Lord, in Thy Kingdom". As St. John Damascene says; "just as the sun of righteousness rose on earth, the deified soul of Christ went down into Hades so that the light might shine upon those who were in the darkness and the shadow of death under the earth...and having released those bound there of old, immediately He departed from the dead, opening the way of resurrection for us" (Publ. of the Orthodox Faith).

The Church of Jerusalem, "which was the first to receive the remission of sins through the resurrection", boasts for Christ crucified, and praises Him as the one who has fallen asleep in the flesh, today with the epitaph hymns, in this contrite modest Service, officiated by its Primate, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, and prays along with Him, from the empty blessed tomb, that the Lord may look down upon the vineyard of His flock all over the world and guide it and lead it to the glory of the resurrection, and that He may not forsake those who are tested by the deadly virus of the



plague, locally and universally, but by His healing power and mercy, He may lead them to refreshment, health, good life and prosperity, and may favorably look down upon the Christians of the Middle East and all who dwell in the Holy Land, wishing to all a joyful, gleeful and blessed Resurrection.”

**From Secretariat-General**

---

# **THE NAME DAY OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS**

On Saturday, March 15/28, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated in transference the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the Feast of the Holy Forty Martyrs who martyred at the lake of Sebastia of Pontus during the reign of Licinius in 320 A.D., as the Holy Martyr Theophilos was one of them.

1. In the afternoon.

On the eve of the Feast, after the reading of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hour at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, the Patriarchal entourage went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre through the staircase of St. James Cathedral, and held the Service of Great Vespers as “Parresia”. The Service with the Great Entrance and the Blessing of Bread was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and only a few clergy, Geronda Sacristan Most Reverend Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos and Deacons. Their entrance was allowed by the Israeli Police in

cooperation with the Patriarchate, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from whose consequences may the Lord our God protect us.

After the Service of Vespers the Canon of the Akathist followed, with the 4<sup>th</sup> Stasis of the Salutations to the Most Holy Theotokos, led by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of Lydda.

## 2. On the Feast Day

An All-night Vigil was celebrated at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the entrance was through St. James Cathedral and the Monastery of Abraham. The Service was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants their Eminences; Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Archbishops Isidoros of Hierapolis and Aristovoulos of Madaba, Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Patrikios, and the participation of the Temple Fathers.

At 11.00 am the following morning, the Doxology was chanted at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen with the participation of the Fathers of the Central Monastery.

Afterward, at the Reception Hall of the Patriarchate, Geronda Secretary-General Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina addressed His Beatitude as follows;

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

The commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs, who fought the good fight and were crowned at the lake of Sebastia of Pontus during the reign of Licinius in 320, is a feast we celebrate at the beginning of March and a stronghold of power and hope for the continuation of the spiritual fight of fasting, which concludes at the fair harbour of the bright day of the Resurrection.

If this feast is celebrated thus by the Church as a whole, it is especially celebrated by the Mother of Churches as it is also related to the fact that Your Beatitude bears the name of one of these martyrs.

Therefore, especially honouring the holy martyr Theophilos and Your Beatitude, this feast was celebrated as Parresia at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with an All-night Vigil and the Doxology in the morning at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, with the participation of Hagiotaphite Fathers, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the Representative of the Moscow Patriarchate in MISSIA, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, withing the limits of our ability to gather due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Having thanked the Lord in the Church and prayed for the health and stability of Your Beatitude, and now at the Reception Hall of the Patriarchate, we congratulate You for Your Name day, and offer You the righteous praise for all the good works You have accomplished for the benefit of the unity of Church of Christ in the bond of peace, of the Pilgrimage and territorial rights of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and of the instruction of our reverend flock.

First of all, regarding the unity of the Church, Your Beatitude has made many efforts and actions, continuously underlining the need of the beginning of cultivating a dialogue, in order to achieve reconciliation and peace. Recognizing this contribution for the year 2018, the Moscow Patriarchate and His Holiness Patriarch Alexei II, has awarded You with the price for "outstanding activities in strengthening the unity of the Orthodox Christian nations" and "for upholding and promoting Christian values in the life of society", at Your visit to Moscow last November after the personal invitation from the President of Russia Mr. Vladimir Putin.

As far as the works of spiritual enhancement and benefit of our flock are concerned, worth mentioning is the cooperation with the Palestinian Authorities for the renovation of the historic Church of St. Moses the Ethiopian in the Rafidia Community near Jacob's well, the construction of the ikonostasion with the icons of the Sahnin Community in Ptolemaida-Acre district, and the activities of Your Beatitude, the founding of an Athletic Academy in Karak of Jordan and Your Beatitude's local and international activities for the protection of the property of the Patriarchate in Jaffa Gate and the preservation of the long-term Biblical and internationally established Status Quo of the Old City of Jerusalem, for the benefit of our Brotherhood, of the flock and all the Christians and pilgrims of the Holy Land.

In order to succeed in these goals, You Beatitude has cultivated good co-operation relations with the Political Authorities. Regarding the relationship with Greece, this was made obvious with the recent President of the Greek Republic Mr. Prokopis Pavlopoulos at the Patriarchate and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, as well as that of the Minister of Tourism of Greece Mr. Haris Theoharous of the Secretary-General of the Public Diplomacy of Consulate and Religious Matters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alexandris.

As far as the Patriarchate's relations with the State of Israel are concerned, according to the Gospel's words "give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God", Your Beatitude received at the Patriarchate the New Mayor of Jerusalem, and before the Heads of the local Christian Churches, mentioned the issue of the prominent unjust taxes on the Church properties, and at the ceremony of the Ministry of Tourism of Israel, You stressed the problem of the lack of water in the Christian Monasteries in Mount Tabor. Moreover, at the annual New Year meeting at the Presidential Residence, You asked the President Mr. Rouven Rivlin for the righteous solution of the unsolved issued of the properties of

the Patriarchate at Jaffa Gate, with the cancellation of the illegal agreements signed a few years ago.

Regarding the relations of the Patriarchate with Jordan, they were good, taking into consideration the bonds of the Royal family with the Patriarchate, the Jordanian law of the Patriarchate in 1957 and the custody Jordan exercises over the Christian and Muslim shrines in Jerusalem.

Within these relations, Your Beatitude was warmly welcomed in New Year's by the whole Mayoralty of Fhes town and His Royal Highness the King of Jordan Abdullah Ibn-Housein Althani hosted a special ceremony for our Christmas Feast, at the Baptism Site of the river Jordan, and received the Heads of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, who were guests of our Patriarchate in the brotherly meeting in Amman, for the beginning of the dialogue for the unity in the Orthodox Church, in respect of the "Primate's honour" of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and all its privileges under our Orthodox tradition.

Your Beatitude has also protected and safeguarded like "the pupil of the eye" the rights of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and our nation, every time they were questioned, as was the case at the recent event at the Feast of Epiphany, when the Armenians unsuccessfully tried to prevent the placement of the Orthodox icon at the God-receiving Cave in Bethlehem, a right that has been established with the Status Quo for many years.

Encouraged by these, the Hagiotaphite Fathers stand by Your Beatitude's side in a common honest fight for the continuing protection of the heritage of our venerable Patriarchate and of our nation in the Holy Land, and the support of our Rum-Orthodox Arab-speaking flock, for the preservation of its identity and its development and increase towards works of common good.

Raising my glass in a toast, Your Beatitude, on behalf of the

members of our Holy and Sacred Synod, and all the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, I wish You health and unshakable stability for many more years, in fruition and abundance of good works, for the praise of our blessed nation and the glory of our Trinitarian God.”

The Archbishop’s address was followed by addresses from the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, and the Representative of the Moscow Patriarchate, Head of the Russian MISSIA, Archimandrite Alexander.

His Beatitude thanked those present with the following address:

“Nobly enduring things present, and rejoicing in things hoped for, the holy Martyrs said one to another: Shall we not indeed strip off this garment? Yea rather, let us cast off the old man. Bitter is winter, but sweet is Paradise; painful is this freezing, but pleasant shall be that enjoyment. Let us not waver, O fellow soldiers. Let us endure for a little while, that we may put on the crowns of victory given by Christ God, the Saviour of our souls”, Basil the Great says on his sermon on the Forty Martyrs through the mouth of the hymn writer of the Church. (Minaion March 9, Vespers, first idiomelon).

Your Excellency, Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“God is life, and light and those in the hands of God exist is life and light” St. John Damascene says about the souls of the saints, of the righteous ones, according to the Biblical words: “But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them” (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1) and “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His

people" (Psalm 115:5).

Indeed, precious in the sight of the Lord was the death of today's honoured Holy Forty Martyrs and their co-martyr Theophilos, who martyred at the lake of Sebastia. These saints were not afraid of the threats of the tyrants, nor did they flinch by the insults of the torments, as they had the Cross of Christ their divine weapon, as the hymn writer of the Church says; we stand in awe before the struggles of the Holy Martyrs, as being in a mortal body they defeated the bodiless enemies; they were not afraid of the threats of the tyrants, nor were they intimidated by the insults of the torments; they were indeed worthy to be glorified by Christ, and that our souls may receive the great mercy.

The holy forty Martyrs were righteously glorified by Christ, because they sought the glory of God the Father rather than that of the people, as St. John the Evangelist says: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). For His sake, the Forty soldiers left every army of the world and entered the martyrdom of their blood, preaching not themselves, but the redeeming truth of Christ, Who shone into their hearts the light of knowledge of the glory of God the Father in Him (Christ), (2 Cor. 4:6).

The martyrdom of the glory of God the Father in His Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Whom all martyrs along with those honoured today imitated, is witnessed and proclaimed continuously at the place of His Passion on the Cross and the three-day burial of our Lord, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where we celebrated the sacrament of the Eucharist, of the bloodless sacrifice and praised in Doxology our All-merciful God.

The God-bearing Father of the Church Basil, praising the undefeated mind of the forty martyrs, who gladly rejected

their last garments, urges us to hear their unity of faith: "We are not being undressed from our clothes, they said, but we denounce the old man in us, the corrupt by the desires of treachery. We thank Thee Lord, that we expel sin along with this garment. Because of the snake we got dressed, but for Christ's sake we get undressed".

The sacred commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs is calling us, my dear Brothers and Sisters, in the middle of the Great Lent, in order to become imitators of their Christ-like mind, as St. Basil the Great says: "For God is their common Father and everybody is their brother, as they were not born by a man and a woman, but by the adoption of the Spirit, adjusting in the unity through love with each other".

Our Mediocrity, bearing the name of Theophilus, the co-martyr of the Holy Forth Martyrs, rend glory and thanksgiving to the Holy Trinitarian God on this Holy Feast, in which "we celebrate our salvation" but also our calling in this institutional mission, namely of the Shepherd of the Most Holy Church of Jerusalem, and of the Hegoumen of the Monastic Order of our Venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

Every virtue and praise is owed to the Saints! They shed their blood, for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Who emptied Himself, taking upon Himself the form of a servant; these holy Martyrs of Christ, fighting on earth stepped upon the enemy and banished the falsehood of the idols, therefore they received the grace to heal the illnesses of the sick and while still in life and after death they work miracles, according to the hymn writer of the Church who speaks about the Lord's words: "And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matt. 10:1).

Let us therefore pray to the Holy Forty Martyrs and their co-martyr Theophilus, who have boldness in heaven, so that by



their intercessions and those of the Ever-Virgin Mary we may preach Christ Crucified, healer of our souls and bodies, and being free from the the Coronavirus epidemic, we may celebrate the bright Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For all these, we wish to all who prayed with us, those present and the absent ones (due to the COVID-19 lockdown), strength from on high, the grace of the All-Holy and Life-giving Tomb, patience, and every blessing from God, expressing warm thanks to those who addressed US, Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of our Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, Head of the Russian MISSIA and representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Russia, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril and all others who joined Us in this celebration.

To the health of all of you!"

**From Secretariat-General**