

# THE FEAST OF ST. IOANNIS THE NEW HOZEVITE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday July 28/August 10, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of Saint Ioannis the New Hozevite at the Holy Monastery of his repentance and asceticism, ever since his arrival from his country Romania.

Having been distinguished in ascetic striving, writings of spiritual strengthening and having been glorified by God through many signs, and healing of illnesses, Saint Ioannis was canonized a Saint by the Church of Jerusalem in 2015.

On Thursday night there was an all-night vigil in his honour, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenopolis. The choir was formed by Mr. Leonidas Doukas, choir leader of the Holy Metropolis Iliou, Mr. Gregorios Zarkos, choir leader of the Holy Metropolis of Pireaus, Mr. Christos Stavrou, choir leader of the H. Church of St. Paraskevi in Attiki, and Mr. Dionysios Thanasoulis, left choir singer of the H. Church of Faneromeni in Holargos, Attiki, while the service was attended by many faithful who prayed in contrition.

The Hegoumen of the Coenobitic Brotherhood and renovator of the Holy Monastery Archimandrite Constantinos addressed His Beatitude upon His arrival as follows;

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

With Your Reverend Entourage,

Today, for one more time we celebrate the commemoration of St.

Ioannis the New Hozevite, one of the myriads of the Holy Ascetics who turned the desert of Judea into a marvelous spiritual paradise.

Today's honoured Saint of the Lavra of Hozeva, despite having completed his earthly life in solitude, had had full cognition of the problems of his time, and could also foresee things in the future.

He writes in his epistle "The contemporary Babel Tower"; "Today's Babel Tower is neither a stone-building nor a building made of bricks, but the impetuous pursuit of new inventions. People say that the invention of new devices and weapons make man's life easier, and provide him with security, in other words, they protect him. How deceitful this opinion is! We see all this time, that since our world became 'modern' and the inventions multiplied, wickedness also multiplied. ...Nowadays, despite the progress of the civilization, the world has become more turbulent and desperate than ever before. As we see, this progress and fashion have taught people to walk naked, in other words it has driven away their sense of shame. It has taught people not to seek God any more. ... Science has become rich, while faith has become poor. The contemporary civilization has shortened men's clothes, and made people cut short their beards and hair. After that, it has made them abolish their Holy Tradition! In short, with this villainous progress in which the world boasts, the tears have multiplied more than ever, the cemeteries have become bigger due to the wars, the horizon has darkened by the smog of the engines, the sky has been filled with huge "fowls" with the iron beak which are ready to kill people".

The aforementioned description records the tenebrous condition of the time we live in with an amazing trueness.

Nevertheless, filled with optimism by the Divine Grace, the Saint writes in November 1952 the bright hope he foresaw in the future of the Jerusalem Church. And foreseeing the future,

he wrote in his metaphorical poem "The granite castle of Hozeva";

"Today, however, in the Holy Land, a new tender plant blossoms, stemming from an ancient root, which springs up through the thorns"!

Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Welcome!

Let us begin the Feast!"

His Beatitude addressed the Congregation as follows;

*"But the righteous live forever and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them. Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the Hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will shield them"(Wisdom of Solomon 5:15-16). [The righteous live forever and their reward is at the Lord's hands; The Most High takes care of them. For this reason, from His hand will they receive the glorious Kingdom of Heaven and the Royal crown on their heads, because the Lord will overshadow them with His right hand and He will protect them from their enemies] according to wise Solomon.*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Noble pilgrims,*

*The sacred commemoration of God's luminary, our Father among the Saints Ioannis the New Hozevite, has gathered all of us in this sacred Church, where he had ministered the Lord for several years, so that we glorify the Name of the One Who glorified him, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

*Since the prime of his youth, our Father among the Saints Ioannis loved Christ with all his soul and mind, hearkening to the Lord's Gospel words; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*

*with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37).*

*In order to reach this goal, he followed the ascetic path of monasticism, the path of righteousness that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven. And he chose the desert of the river Jordan to be the place of his striving, as well as the unwelcoming caves of Brook Chorath, the Monastery of Saints George and Ioannis the Hozevites, where a multitude of Saints and righteous men received the divine light, according to the psalmist; "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart" (Psalm 97:11). Commenting on these words, St. Cyril of Alexandria says: "He has dawned [sown] instead of dawns [change of tense]. The divine light dawns on the mind and heart of every single pious and righteous man".*

*This very divine and noetic light dawned in the mind and heart of our Father among the Saints Ioannis. "Therefore he will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the Hand of the Lord" (Wisdom of Solomon 5:15). And this divine and noetic light dawned in the mind and heart of St. Ioannis, not only during his earthly life, but also during his heavenly life, as his incorrupt relics witness before our eyes, giving out the fragrant scent of the grace of the Holy Spirit.*

*Behold therefore, why the wise Solomon says; "the righteous live forever and their reward is with the Lord" (Wisdom of Solomon 5: 15), while Prophet David urges us saying; "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Ps. 55:22). Likewise St. Peter says; "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7).*

*In other words, my dear Brothers and Sisters, the righteous in Christ is the one who by his "perfect manner of living" reaches the "likeness of God" according to St. Basil the Great, or "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephes. 4:13) according to St. Paul. Righteous is the*

one who reaches deification, in other words, his perfection in Christ, not only by his own power, namely his own free will, but also with the cooperation of the Divine Grace.

Referring to the new life in Christ, St. Paul says; "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephes. 4:24). This "new man" did our Father Ioannis put on, "who has been created after God".

Today's commemoration of our Father among the Saints Ioannis calls us to consider our Christian name. To consider the fact that our faith has been built on righteousness and holiness of truth: "I am the way the truth and the life" (John 14:6) the Lord says.

In other words, putting away the old man of sin is not enough; we should put on the new man of the grace of the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul orders by saying; "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:12-14).

Having applied these God-inspired orders of St. Paul, St. Ioannis became indeed "a light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79), to the people of our contemporary era of confusion, where – according to the foreseeing words of our Holy Father "man himself is preparing again to build the Tower of Babel on earth, seeking to destroy the foundations of the "Divine Law". Almost all of the tongues [languages] have been established and the hour of conflict will not delay much longer".

Therefore let us entreat our Holy Father Ioannis the New Hozevite who dances with the Angels on high, and has become a

*luminary and friend of Christ, so that he may intercede for us along with our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, for the salvation of our souls and the prevailing of peace in our tested region. Amen."*

After the spiritual and sanctifying feast of the Divine Liturgy there was a hospitable monastic meal.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **THE UNDERTAKING OF DUTY OF THE PATRIARCHAL REPRESENTATIVE IN NORTH JORDAN**

On Saturday July 15/28, 2018, according to the Synodical Decision, the appointed Archimandrite Raphael undertook his official duty as the Patriarchal Representative of North Jordan, in the town of Irbet.

This was serviced during the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of St. George in Irbet. The Service was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia, and the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina and Secretary-General, Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis, Aristovoulos of Madaba, Philoumenos of Pella, and the established Archimandrite Raphael as the Patriarchal Representative in North Jordan, the Ministering Priests of Irbet, Priest Abdullah and Priest Jordan, Deacon Eulogios, and the Deacon of Madaba Shrine Fr. George. The parish choir

delivered the hymns in Arabic and Greek and many faithful attended the service, participating in the prayer for their new Pastor.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation;

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 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; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:1-3), St. Paul commands the Priests.

Reverend Archimandrite Raphael,

By Our Patriarchal proposal Our Holy and Sacred Synod has appointed you Patriarchal Representative, at the North Hashemite Kindgom of Jordan at the town of Irbet, having considering your long-term fruitful ministry at the holy shrine of the God-receiving Cage in Bethllehem, along with your zealous pastoral activity,

You are called to undertake this new pastoral ministry at the vineyard of our Holy Church of Jerusalem the Mother of all Churches, hearkening to the words of the chief of the Apostles Peter who says: “And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?” (1 Peter 3:13).

And we say this because “the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few” (Matt. 9:37), and “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word [of the Lord’s Gospel]; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful” (Matt. 13:22), as it is being revealed by the signs of the time.

Our Holy Church of Jerusalem, having as its first Hierarch the Holy Apostle James the Brother of God, who was ordained by our Lord Jesus Christ, and received the lot of this spiritual jurisdiction at the Promised Land on either side of the River Jordan, has never ceased to evangelize the kenotic love of Christ on the cross, hearkening again to St. Peter words who says: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:21-24).

Irrefutable witnesses of the Evangelism of Christ's love are the Greek-Orthodox monuments which have been preserved throughout the ages in the inward parts of the blessed land of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the living Christian Greek-Orthodox Communities which enjoy the respect of their religious identity and the total freedom of exercising their church services. This truth is witnessed in this town (Irbet) and its outskirts by its inhabitants, the Christians who live in harmony with their fellow citizens who follow other religions.

The venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood which has been established by God's providence as the guardian and minister of the Holy Shrines and our Christian Congregation, continues its mission following St. Paul's commandment to his disciple Timothy: "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5).

Therefore, you, Father Raphael, genuine child of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, bring to a good end the ministry



that has been given to you in the Church. Multiply the gift you have received by the Holy Spirit to be a steward at the house of God, continuing the God-pleasing work of your predecessor Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella "being an example to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3).

And honour your elders "as the congress of God and league of the Apostles" (St. Ignatios). "For Priesthood is ranked at the top of every good thing among men; and the one that is enraged towards it does not dishonor any man, but God and Jesus Christ, the first-born and the only High Priest by nature. Do therefore every single thing in good order in Christ. Let the laity be subject to the deacons; the deacons to the priests; the priests to the Bishop; the Bishop to Christ, as He was subject to the Father" St. Ignatios orders (BEP, vol. 2, p. 315).

It is precisely this good order in Christ what is being suggested by the care of the Spiritual Shepherd and especially of the leading Priests, to whom St. Paul says; "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:9-10).

Indeed, in this did all the saints and the martyrs of Christ's love bear witness, just like today's commemorated Saint Ioulita with her son Kyrikos, who became "bright stars at the fixation of the sky, brightening the whole world by their wonders" according to the hymn writer.

Let us entreat them, so that along with the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary they may intercede to our Lord and God to grant us, Father Raphael, a leading and pastoral Spirit, mercy and peace to our souls, and to our Reverend King Abdullah II and His family and the Hashemite Kingdom of our beloved Jordan, strength, health, and longevity. We also pray for every good thing for the people of this country and for

the preservation of the holy places and the Holy City of Jerusalem which are under the custody of His Majesty.

And now, reverend Archimandrite Father Raphael, receive the Precious Cross of the Lord, the weapon against the devil, so that by It, you may guide the footsteps of your flock to the working of the Lord's commandments. Amen."

The Patriarchal Representative replied to His Beatitude's words as follows;

Your Beatitude Father and Master,

On behalf of the holy clergy and the people, we welcome You today in Irbet, the seat of the Patriarchal Region of North Jordan, with feelings of deep honour, due respect and spiritual joy, and we say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord", along with the words of Prophet Isaiah: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (in Romans 10:15).

Your presence is a great blessing to us, because You come from the Holy City of Jerusalem bringing us the grace and the blessing of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb and of all the Holy Shrines of the Holy Land. Your blessed presence strengthens and supports us and also denotes the unity of our local Church.

Your Beatitude, in confession may I say, that obeying Your command and the decision of the Holy Synod, I came to this blessed place, repeating Christ's words, "I have come to minister". I have come to minister the mystery of the salvation of the flock and offer God's blessing freely. I came to share with these people their joys and sorrows. Since my first day in this blessed place I felt at home. I found open doors and hearts. I found blessed Priests who work for the good of the Church and the congregation silently, and who welcomed me with much love. I found noble people who respect

and honour the clergy. But especially I found children, young men and women who love Christ and His Church. Your Beatitude, I came to minister this holy clergy and people of God, and I will stand by their side praying that God may grant them health and every good thing.

This sacred hour, before You, I call all of them to cooperate with me for the glory of God and His holy Church. I call upon the Priests the members of the Ecclesiastical councils, our choir singers, the laity who work for the Church, men and women, those in charge of the Young and the Church Schools, the Scouts and all who work for the Church and I ask them to continue their work with the same zeal as before.

All together in the body of the Church should participate actively and use the gifts they have received from God. Today there is a new beginning at the ministry of our Region and they are a part of that. I will not be able to do a single thing by myself. We should do the best we can together. That is why I want them to be with me, the Clergy and the laity who work for the Church, I ask for their prayers, help and cooperation.

I strongly feel the need to thank from the depths of my heart all here present at the Church of St. George. I thank all the holy Bishops who came to participate at the beginning of my new ministry and ask for their prayers for me the unworthy. I also thank all the Priests, the choirs, the young people, the scouts and all of you, and I ask you to pray for my unworthiness.

I also would like to thank all the security forces, who have joined us since early in the morning. And we glorify God for the blessing of this security in our blessed country, which is owed to the wise Hashemite leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah bin Al-Hussein II.

Your Beatitude,

Especially I thank You from the depths of my heart, for Your trust in me, Your Fatherly advice and love, and I would like to ask You to pray that I may perform my duties in fear of God.

I ask Your Patriarchal blessing and as Your son, I pray that the Trinitarian God may grant You many years to come, steadfast health, strong faith and a mind set in both the Cross and the Resurrection, so that guided by the Holy Spirit You may lead the Christian Congregation of the venerable Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem in continuous spiritual fruition and radiate the Light of the Cross and the Resurrection in our time.”

Consequently there was a reception at the reception hall.

This was followed by a meal at a town restaurant offered by the Patriarchate. During the meal, His Beatitude addressed the guests as follows;

“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another” (Romans 12:9-10) “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:17-18), St. Paul orders.

Dear and Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We thank the Holy and Most Merciful God, Who has deigned us worthy to celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Church of St. George on this blessed occasion of the undertaking of duty of Reverend Archimandrite Raphael, our Patriarchal Representative at the town of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Irbet and its outskirts.

We are especially glad because the pastoral care of the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem in its spiritual jurisdiction on either side of the River Jordan is being continued without any hurdle. This is owed to the free exercising of the religious and worshiping events that all the religious and thus the Christian Communities in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan enjoy.

The mission of the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate, namely the Jerusalem Church, is based on the Lord's commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:37-39).

The one who loves God "with all his heart" cannot help but love his neighbour also, as St. Paul preaches: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18).

The All-holy Shrines which have been ministered throughout the centuries in self-denial and self-sacrifice by the monastic order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, evangelize and preach peace among men.

The contribution of the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate and its Hagiotaphite Brotherhood to both the preservation of the Holy Land as a place of worship and prayer, and the peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims, and of the Abrahamic religions in general, is recognized by all and especially by our reverend King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Abdullah bin All-Hussein II, since the Christian and Islamic shrines in Jerusalem are under His custody.

We, hearkening to the words of wise Paul: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19) have come to the appointment by our Holy Synod of the Patriarchal

Representatives in Amman, Madaba, Irbet and elsewhere, in order to provide for the spiritual and social needs of our Christian congregation and to also reinforce the difficult but God-pleasing pastoring work of our beloved reverend Priests.

For all these, we think we should express our heartfelt thanks to all of you, who have honoured with your presence our reception, and especially the local civil authorities, the military and police forces and much more the reverend and most dear to Us King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Abdullah bin Al-Hussein II, whose leadership is a guarantee of stability and peaceful co-existence of the different cultural and religious communities living in this country and in the Middle East. Long live the King!

Finally, We should not fail to praise the pastoral and social work of the Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella during his ministry as our Patriarchal Representative in Irbet. To both Archimandrite Raphael and the Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, we wish success in their new ministry and mission. Amen”.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE ORDINATION TO ARCHBISHOP OF ARCHBISHOP-ELECT ARISTOVOULOS OF MADABA**

On Sunday May 7/20, 2018, Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ecumenical Synod and of the commemoration of the appearance in the sky of the sign of the Cross, the Episcopal ordination of Archbishop-Elect Aristovoulos of Madaba took place at the

Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection.

The Ordination was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with concelebrant Archbishops of the Throne, the Most Reverend Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth, Isychios of Kapitolias, Timotheos of Bostra, and the Most Reverend Archbishops Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theophylactos of Jordan, Demetrios of Lydda, Makarios of Qatar, Isidoros of Hierapolis, Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis. There were also Hagiotaphite Priests and visiting Priests from other Churches, Archdeacon Mark and Deacons Anastasios and Sophronios. The Choir was that of Byzantine Music Professor Mr. Demetrios Balagiorgos. The Service was attended by the Abbess and Nuns of the Holy Monastery of St. Anthanasios Kolindros in Olympos, the mother, sister and relatives and friends of the new Archbishop from Greece, as well as members of the Arab-speaking and Russian-speaking Congregations of the Patriarchate, Hagiotaphite Fathers, monks and nuns.

The main parts of the ordination were: During Matins the reciting of the Confessions of Faith and the Libels against the heresies by the Elect. These were followed by the Divine Liturgy and before the reading of the Apostolic reading and the Gospel His Beatitude addressed the Archbishop-Elect Aristovoulos of Madaba as follows;

*Your Grace Archbishop-Elect Aristovoulos of Madaba,*

*On this day and hour we are blessed by our God to celebrate the Sacrament of the Eucharist at the place where God worked the salvation of the human race in the centre of the earth.*

*This place is the Horrendous Golgotha and the empty Tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ Who was risen from the dead, the heart of all Holy Shrines, which God has appointed the Jerusalem*

*Patriarchate with the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood to safeguard and minister.*

*Along with the Sacrament of the bloodless sacrifice at this hour, there is another Sacrament, that of your Episcopal Office, after your election to Archbishop of the Holy Archdiocese of Madaba, by the unanimous voting of the members of our Holy and Sacred Synod.*

*The Church calls you to this ministry, considering your arrival to the Holy Land since your early youth from your hometown, your studies at the Patriarchal Seminary School, your joining the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood after your graduation, and your zealous ministry in various tasks. First of them comes your strong twenty-eight-year Management of the Choir of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, following with outmost precision the Typikon and the Byzantine Music, according to the council of the Apostle of Nations Paul; "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19) and also being distinguished in it, by receiving the Diploma of the School of Music of Athens. Simultaneously you undertook your post-graduate studies at the Institut d'etudes superieures en Theologie Orthodoxe de Chambesy in Geneva, Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, where your Thesis was on our memorable Predecessor, St. Sophronios Patriarch of Jerusalem.*

*Despite your Higher Education studies, you never ceased to serve our Greek Orthodox Arab-speaking Congregation, either ministering as the Hegoumen of the Greek Orthodox Community of Beit Jalla, or as a Byzantine Music Teacher in special and intensive courses. You also took care of our Russian-speaking Congregation, visiting prisoners and moving from North to South in Israel to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, having also founded, by Our guidance and support the House of Prayer named after Patriarch Abraham, the Macaws and St. Sophronios the Patriarch of Jerusalem in the town of Ber-Sheba of Negev,*



following the commandment of the Apostle of Nations Paul to his disciple Timothy saying: "that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience;" (1 Tim. 1:18-19).

From today onward, the Church calls you to work on this pastoral work in "meekness, humility and indulgence of Christ" at the historic and worldwide famous Shrine of Madaba, where lies the scientifically and culturally invaluable Byzantine mosaic map of the Holy Land from the time of Christ's presence on earth. In this Shrine our representative Hegoumen Reverend Archimandrite Innokentios has developed an unprecedented wondrous work that can withstand the power of time in the pilgrimage, ecclesiastical and educational fields. The Hagiotaphite Brotherhood expresses its gratitude and takes for granted the offering of his valuable experience to the support and co-operation with your Grace.

In this place you are called to teach the doctrines and tradition of our pure Orthodox Faith and cultivate the Byzantine Music, following Prophet David in his saying "I will sing unto my Lord as long as I live", organizing Musical and Pastoral Conferences that will promote the long-term mission of our Patriarchate and the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood for reconciliation, peace and cultural development in the places of its jurisdiction, namely the three Palestines as far as Qatar. Your Grace has been proven a worthy Apostle of this ministry of our Venerable Brotherhood and today you are called to continue in this ministry and service as a Hagiotaphite Bishop.

Thanking therefore God for this gift, and trusting in His mercy, come forth into this Holy and primary Altar which has been founded by the blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on the Cross, on Which the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has been built, and as fervently the Grace of the All-holy and Ceremonial Spirit, as we commemorate the Holy Fathers of the

*1<sup>st</sup> Ecumenical Synod and the Appearance of the sign of the Cross on the sky of Jerusalem; this Spirit may elevate you a chosen vessel for the salvation of souls and the glory of our God in one Trinity, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Then the Archbishop-Elect of Madaba addressed His Beatitude and the Fathers as follows;

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Honourable members of the Holy and Sacred Synod,

“All the nations in the town of David saw wondrous things  
when the Holy Spirit came down in tongues of fire”

Is there a greater honour than this? The Holy Spirit filled Christ’s disciples and changed them. The Church was founded and the earth became a Paradise. The beguiler master of this world “was cast out” and the former enslaved man was liberated and became son of God by grace. Which king has ever given such an honour to his subjects? How easily did we become heirs of the eternal Kingdom? Which worldly power can be compared to the grace of the Holy Spirit? “The Holy Spirit provideth all things; He gusheth forth prophesy; He perfected the priesthood; He hath taught wisdom to the illiterate. He hath shown forth the fishermen as theologians. He holdeth together the whole institution of the Church”.

This Holy Spirit strengthened St. Stephen the First Martyr and gave him wisdom to silence the loquacious and profane disclaimers of Christ before the court. This Holy Spirit transformed the persecutor Saul and gave the Church the chosen vessel, the Apostle of Nations, the Great Paul. This Holy Spirit guided St. Sophronios the Patriarch of Jerusalem to stand steadfast, all by himself, as an unshakable pillar against the scattering waves of heresy and contributed greatly

to the victory of Orthodoxy against Monothelitism.

Considering the greatness of the honour and glory of the Holy Spirit I fail to interpret the criteria by which the Holy Spirit has enlightened Your Holy Beatitude and the Holy and Sacred Synod to choose me the unworthy for this High Ministry.

Up until now, I find it difficult to comprehend the reasons of my election. Only God's Providence would capsize my human logic, because, under the current circumstances, I was left with the impression that I would leave my last breath as the Choir Leader of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection. I had already begun my students' preparation for the hymns of the Holy Week for next year. However, "People may have certain thoughts, but God orders things in a different way".

And now I wonder, how will I stand firm as a Bishop "according to the manner and the form of Christ" when I cannot apply to myself the Lord's advice: "Learn of me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" (Mat. 11:29). How will the Grace of the Holy Spirit come down to me the irritable, the negligent and indolent, knowing that: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5 & James 4:6).

What comforts me is the Lord's assurance according to which: "What is impossible with man is possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

Despite my hesitations, I take very seriously the advice You gave me, Your Beatitude Father and Master, and I bow my head before the Church, obeying Your spiritual orders.

Heavy is the burden of responsibility and my shoulders weak, when I recall that: "An elder must be blameless as he manages God's household, not overbearing, not quick-tempered, but hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined" (Titus 1:6-9).

I am nevertheless encouraged to overcome my hesitations,

having the Church Fathers a living example of patience and endurance, along with You, Your Beatitude, who has continuously been receiving fierce attacks from anti-ecclesiastical groups.

Unfortunately we live at a time when as the Lord foretold: "For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many" (Mat. 24:5), and as the Apostle of Nations Paul prophesized: "savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

Indeed, the Church all over the world has been harassed since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century from the fallacy of Phyletism which was condemned by the Holy and Great Pan-Orthodox Synod of Constantinople in 1872, and by the Great Synod of Orthodoxy in 2016.

Unfortunately the same anti-ecclesiastical groups have targeted, roaring like an angry lion, our martyred Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and seek fertile ground in the Holy Land for the completion of their lurking plans. Misleading they are deluded, not realizing what St. Paul says: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

Within this worldly frame, I reiterate thanksgiving Doxology to God, Who has united me with bonds of unshakable brotherly love with the Most Reverend Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis, with whom I sat at the same desk at the Patriarchal School, we were tonsured monks on the same day, ordained Deacons together, he was first and I second, with one-day difference, and now again, we were deemed worthy to receive the Episcopal Grace, with only a day's difference.

The great and unadulterated love that has united us for 30

years is the reply to the arrogance of the enemies of the Church who want to sow weeds between us. To all of them we reply that no matter how much they fight us, we will keep our Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate united by the power of the Sacred and Life-giving Cross and the grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, under the protection of You, Your Beatitude, and as the memorable and -according to me – Saint Augustine Kantiotis, Bishop of Florina used to boldly proclaim, we will fight “for a free, living Church”.

And now, form this position, before You, Your Beatitude Father and Master, and before the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb and the Horrendous Golgotha, I make my humble promise, that I will consume myself again for the sake of the free living Church. I am well aware that sorrows and inconveniences lie ahead, but seeking the power of the Sacred and Life-giving Cross, that our Church honours especially today, on the commemoration of the miracle of Its appearance in the sky of the Holy City, and placing my hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is Resurrected and Ascended, we will be able to endure every temptation until the end.

Your Beatitude Father and Master,

From this position I owe to express my wholehearted gratitude for the love You have shown me since the very beginning of my joining the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood. I remember when during those first years, quite often, the proximity of our cells gave me the opportunity to sit and discuss with You various theological matters, either at the cell of the memorable Fr. Photios, or at the cell of the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, or at Your cell. I remember a phrase You used to say very often: “Work at your obedience as if you were going to keep it for life, but at the same time, be always ready to hand in the keys as soon as you are asked by the Patriarchate”. I admired the greatness of self-denial in that phrase.

I remember when I was a graduate student at the Patriarchal School, You had come to celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the Feast of the Holy Spirit and at the reception you wished me: "may we have you in Jerusalem next year too", when You knew very well that I had already bought the ticket of my departure from the Holy Land, and I was going to leave after the Pan-Hellenic Exams.

This prophetic phrase was fulfilled a few days later, when during the feast of St. Constantine, instead of leaving to the airport, I cancelled my ticket and declared my final firm decision to join the Brotherhood.

Since the moment that the Holy Spirit elected You at the Throne of St. James the Brother of God, You had not forsaken me, and you immediately sent me to complete my studies in Theology at the University of Athens.

Then You saw to my enrolment to the Institute of the Inter-Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Shambesy for my Post-Graduate studies where I also learnt the French language. There, I was acquainted with the Most Reverend Metropolitan Jeremiah of Switzerland and His Grace Bishop Makarios of Lampsakou, who had actually been present at my christening when I was an infant in Germany. During my studies, I had the honour and the blessing to have as my supervisor Professor Vlassios Feidas, who helped me in my research about the life and work of St. Sophronios the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

You appointed me a Librarian Assistant and that way I came to direct contact with the manuscripts, this invaluable treasure of our Patriarchate.

My ministry at the Central Library brought me close to the Byzantine Music Professor Mr. Demetrios Balagiorgos, with whom I developed a fruitful cooperation for the benefit of the Patriarchate.

You entrusted me with the pastoral ministry of the Russian-speaking parishes and with Your guidance, in 2008, I began the reconstitution of the parishes in South Israel, with Ber-Sheba as my base. This obedience gave me the chance to practise the Russian language and become familiar with the problems of our Russian-speaking Congregation. Simultaneously I worked at the pastoral ministry of the prisoners, which was initiated by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra, under adverse circumstances, and there I appreciated the value of the gift of freedom, which of course, those who had the misfortune to find themselves out of the law lack in many ways.

Three years ago You sent me to Nazareth, to teach the art of the Psalter to our congregation and I experienced very closely the hospitality of Abraham by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, who supported me in every way for the success of this mission, which will be continued with my guidance by my excellent student and associate Archimandrite Leontios. Your decision, Your Beatitude to appoint me Patriarchal Representative in Madaba of Jordan will enable me to learn the Arabic language more efficiently.

I thank my spiritual Father, Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who since the day of my arrival in the Holy Land has never left me alone, and has always supported me, listened to me, advised me, rebuked me in a fatherly manner and endured me. I ask him from this position to continue admonishing me and support me spiritually in my new ministry.

I thank the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, who since the beginning of his management at the Financial Committee, he has entrusted me totally and has very willingly funded my trips, as he also paid for the monthly rent of Abraham's House of Prayer in Ber Sheba.

I especially thank the Most Reverend Archbishops Makarios of Qatar and Isidoros of Hierapolis, for their love and support,

as well as the Elders and Hegoumens Chrysostom of St. Gerasimos of the Jordan and Eudokimos of St. Savvas and Archimandrite Leontios who never denied their support and encouraged me both morally and materially.

I thank my brother Fr. Eirinarhos, Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of the Holy Apostles in Capernaum, alongside whom I decided to leave Florina and come to the Holy Land to study at the Patriarchal School, and later on we decided together to join the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

I thank all those who travelled from afar in order to participate in my personal joy, among whom is the Abbess of the Holy Monastery of St. Athanasios Kolindros, Gerondissa Eirini, who despite the health problems that trouble her came to participate in my spiritual joy.

Especially I thank the Byzantine Music Professor Mr. Demetrios Balagiorgos, the Professor of the School of Theology at the University of Athens Mr. Athanasios Glaros and the dear colleague Teacher of Byzantine Music and Phd Student who honoured me by delivering the hymns in my ordination.

I prostrate before all the Fathers and Brothers I may have grieved in the past, either by word or by deed, and ask their forgiveness.

As far as the Russian-speaking congregation of South Israel that I have been serving since 2008 is concerned, I promise I will not abandon it. I will continue my efforts to find the land for the building of the three-domed Church dedicated to the Holy Patriarch Abraham, St. Sophronios the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Holy Macaws.

Finally, I thank God, Who has given me my mother, who raised me in self-denial, and taught me with her own example our faith, as well as my brothers and sister in flesh, with whom we share a great spiritual love.



And now, Your Beatitude, Father and Master, I humbly bow my head and ask you to pray to the Almighty God in order to send down His All-holy Spirit and overshadow me, strengthen me and make me Minister of His Sacraments, so that I may be able to sanctify and be sanctified. Amen. So be it.”

After the addresses there were the ordination hymns during the three-times circling of the Holy Table, the placing of the hands on the head of the ordained by His Beatitude and the Archbishops with the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the exclamation of “Axios” as the newly-ordained was putting on the Episcopal vestments with the help of His Beatitude and the Archbishops in the Holy Altar.

Before the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy His Beatitude gave the Episcopal Staff to the ordained saying “receive this staff...”. The ordained gave the Holy Communion to the faithful at the end of the Divine Liturgy in the Catholicon. Then there was the Procession on the commemoration of the appearance of the sign of the Cross in the sky of Jerusalem. After the Procession everybody returned in the Catholicon where the ordained gave the blessed bread to the faithful who congratulated him and kissed his hand. Having finished the Service, all congregation returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

There His Beatitude congratulated the ordained once more and wished him a fruitful and rich ministry, while the ordained thanked Him for his election and ordination and promised to work alongside His Beatitude and the Church of Jerusalem for the spiritual development and progress of the Patriarchate’s Congregation in Madaba.

### **From Secretariat-General**

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# **ELECTION SERVICE TO ARCHBISHOP OF THE ARCHBISHOP- ELECT ARISTOVOULOS OF MADABA**

On Saturday afternoon, May 6/19, 2018, the Election Service of the Archbishop-Elect Aristovoulos of Madaba was held after the Service of Vespers at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen. The ordination will be on Sunday May 7/20, 2018, at the Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, day that we commemorate the Appearance of the sign of the Cross in the sky.

The Election Service was held according to the Typikon Order of the Church, including the election announcement to the Elect, his acceptance of the election, the signing of the Code of Consignment by the Archbishops and Hieromonks who are members of the Holy Synod, and have voted for Archimandrite Aristovoulos to Archbishop of Madaba.

Before the end of the Service at the Reception Hall of the Patriarchate, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the Elect as follows;

*Your Grace Archbishop-Elect Aristovoulos of Madaba,*

*In its last session our Holy and Sacred Synod having unanimously accepted Our Patriarchal and Fatherly suggestion for your promotion to the Episcopal Office, has duly casted its votes and elected Your Grace, Archbishop of the famous Diocese of Madaba in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and a spiritual shepherd of its southern district.*

*Our Holy and Sacred Synod decided this, hearkening to the wise words of the Apostle of Nations Paul who ordered his disciple Timothy; "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine... But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:3-5), in other words, fulfil your ministry in all things.*

*Your Grace Archbishop-Elect Aristovoulos of Madaba; our Holy Church of Jerusalem has called us to the outmost honour of the Episcopal Office on the one hand, and on the other it has designated us with the kenotic Apostolic ministry of the Hagiotaphite, which you have been practising with God-inspired zeal, obeying St. Paul's preaching; "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men... For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4).*

*We wish that the Grace of the All-Holy and Life-giving Spirit be with you at the undertaking of the new Episcopal duties, referring to the spiritual and pastoral care of our full Christian Congregation under the Ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Venerable Greek Orthodox Jerusalem Patriarchate. And the intercessions of the Most Blessed our Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary along with those of your Patron Saint Holy Apostle Aristovoulos may accompany you always and at all times.*

*Be Axios and steadfast in faith.*

The Elect returned the address thanking His Beatitude as follows;

*“Your Beatitude Father and Master,*

*The phrase You used to convince me accept the decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod still echoes in my ears: “The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few” (Luke 10:2).*

*Pray, Your Beatitude, that God may deem me worthy, by the Grace of the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, to become a simple worker in His vineyard and on the Day of Judgment I may be able to return to Him fruit of a hundred-fold.*

*I raise my glass in a toast to the health of Your Beatitude, of the Hagiographite Brotherhood and of our noble congregation”.*

**From Secretariat-General**

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**EPISCOPAL      ORDINATION      OF  
ARCHBISHOP-ELECT**

# CHRISTOPHOROS KYRIAKOUPOLIS

# OF

On Saturday May 6/19, 2018, the Ordination of the Archbishop-Elect Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis took place at the Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Holy Sepulchre, according to the decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Jerusalem Patriarchate in a recent session.

The Sacrament of the Ordination was held during the Divine Liturgy according to the Order of our Orthodox Church.

This Order commands the reading of the Confessions of faith and the libels against the heretics during the Service of Matins.

The Divine Liturgy began and the Service of the Ordination continued before the readings of the Bible.

Then His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos addressed the Ordained as follows;

*Your Grace Archbishop-Elect Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis,*

*The Grace of God the Father has deemed all of us worthy today to celebrate the Sacrament of the Divine Liturgy, the Eucharistic bloodless sacrifice, in the centre of the earth, in the place where our salvation was accomplished, through the Sacred Cross and the Resurrection from the dead of His Only-Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*In this Sacrament, there is an additional one, your ordination to an Archbishop, after the unanimous casting of the votes of the Holy and Sacred Synod members, for your election to Archbishop of the luminous Archdiocese of Kyriakoupolis of old, undertaking at the same time the Trusteeship of the Orthodox Congregation of Amman in the Hashemite Kingdom of*

*Jordan and its outskirts.*

*The Holy and Sacred Synod came to this decision having appreciated your studies in the Patriarchal School since your early youth and after that, your joining the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, by which you have been brought up and taught the love for the All-holy Shrines and the respect of the Ecclesiastical principles and the consignment of the Holy Fathers. Inspired by these principles you have worked for many years at the Patriarchal Delegation in Amman and especially at the Holy Monastery of the Life-giving Spring in Dibin. You have founded, built and renovated buildings, but above all you have been a steadfast supporter to young, old and suffering people of our Congregation.*

*You have cultivated the gifts (talanta) God gave you by the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, and you have increased them twofold. From today onward, you are again called to cultivate these, strengthened by the Grace, the validity and the authority of the Episcopal Office and offer them in the ministry of the Orthodox Congregation in Amman, so that it may remain faithful to the doctrines of our Orthodox faith and devoted and solidly united with its Motherly Church, the Mother of Churches, which is based in Jerusalem, the City of the Great King, remembering that our Orthodox Church of old, acting according to God's orders, has endued all men as the image of God, evangelizing the word according to Apostle Paul's consignment: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:27-28).*

*Come forth, therefore, Your Grace Archbishop-Elect Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis to the Holy Altar and pray fervently, so that by the placing of the hands of Our Mediocrity and Our concelebrant Holy Bishops, the Grace of the All-Holy and Ceremonial Spirit which heals all infirmities and*

*replenishes what is incomplete, may come down to you and through the intercessions of our Most Pure Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary may elevate you a chosen vessel, enduring all things with Job's patience, according to the type of St. Job who we celebrate today, and according to the type of your Patron Saint Christophoros the Great Martyr, becoming "Christophoros" (Bearer of Christ), bearing Christ in your soul and conveying Him to the people's souls, for their consolation, strengthening and salvation, for the Glory of our God in One Trinity.*

The Ordained replied with the following address in return as follows;

"Your Beatitude Father and Master,

I stand before You at the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, in front of the Holy Altar of the Catholicon, between the Horrendous Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre, between death and life.

"Thy Cross O Christ we venerate and we praise and glorify Thy Holy Resurrection". This message of the joy, love and salvation through the resurrection has its origin in our Church of Jerusalem. "Behold, through the Cross there is joy for the whole world".

As we commemorate righteous Job today, I stand before You, Your Beatitude, the Father of us the Hagiotaphites and Patriarch of Jerusalem and I am called, the least among my brethren, to live my personal Pentecost, by the Grace of the All-graceful God, through Your sacred hands.

I believe that nothing in our lives comes by chance, and this is something that comes from heaven for me. Today I am called to receive the Episcopal Grace, the ultimate degree of ministry in the Church. According to the Chief-Shepherd, Christ Who said; "He came to minister and not to be ministered" and that "He lays down His life for the sheep",

and His words to St. Peter: "Do you love me Peter? Feed my sheep!" I admire the greatness of love, of sacrifice and responsibility!

Christ wants works and sacrifice from us, not words. For this reason, when I look deep inside me and see my weaknesses, my passions and sins, I tremble with fear, and recalling the saints of our Church I see that they fled away from offices of authority! I fear even more, but my soul finds peace when I hear our Christ saying: "my strength is made perfect in weakness".

Pray, Your Beatitude, that I may draw strength and hope from the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to be able to bear the cross of my new ministry.

Moreover, I draw power from You, Your Beatitude, watching you leading the ship of the Church with so much strength and patience, with so much love and self-will, among so many problems and difficulties, in a much tested region with many political, national and religious conflicts.

My memories and thoughts go back to my childhood; I was born in Jerusalem and as a little child I used to serve at the Church of St. George in my village Jifna; I was a member of a small, simple but humble and blessed family.

My father Kamal, was a farmer, he loved the land and looked after it and cared for it in many ways; and what joy would I see in his face when the land brought fruit! My mother Giasemi, loved the education and worked in various governmental and social posts. I remember my only brother Mussa, with whom I went to the same school in Ramallah, until I left them. Now he is married and has four children. They gave me a lot in my life, I love them and I pray that God keeps them well and grants them the Paradise.

As a child that I was at the time, I didn't know anything about the Orthodox monasticism, but I wanted to become a monk



and a Priest. I showed this with most of my works and games, but I don't know how and why. What I know is that I came at the Patriarchal School of Zion at Class A of High School, despite the opposition of my family and especially that of my mother and our social environment.

The memorable Patriarch Diodoros "ever-lasting His remembrance" received me with much love in Christ and fatherly care. I used to hear Him from the Patriarchal Throne at St. Constantine's Church to say to me when I read the Apostle with my little Greek as a 12-year-old; "Bravo, Hanna – bravo John" He encouraged me in such a way that He made me love not only Him, but everything around me, the Congregation, the All-holy Shrines, the Church, Greece, even Jordan before I ever went there.

He gave me the monastic cassock at the Monastery of Prophet Elijah in 1984 and send me to serve at the Horrendous Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre under the obedience of the memorable Geronda Sacristan Daniel, ever-lasting his remembrance! With him I learned solemnity and responsibility. I learned how the genuine Hagiotaphite should be: he should divide the night between prayer and the Holy Services, the Divine Liturgy and rest, so that the day would be devoted to the ministry of the Shrines. He taught me what the genuine monk should be like; peaceful, humble and patient in order to receive the pilgrims with such distinction that would make Christ's Grace and presence noticeable. This is what I tried to do and how I have been during my ministry in Jordan for 28 years.

I was tonsured a monk by His hands, and He gave me the name of His Spiritual Father from Chios, "Christophoros" who had sent Him at the Shrines. On that same day, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba was tonsured a monk with me. And the Church calls us to minister in Jordan together again. It seems that nothing is at random. God's Grace and providence provide for everything.

I remember the words of His Eminence Basil of Caesarea (ever-lasting his remembrance) on the day of my ordination to Deacon at the Horrendous Golgotha in 1988: "My child, keep your soul clean, so that it will shine with holiness". And today I confess before You: I didn't keep it clean! I sinned! I sinned, I ask for forgiveness, the mercy and long-suffering of God.

With the memorable Patriarch Diodoros' blessing I went to Jordan in 1989, but I also followed the council of His Eminence Timotheos of Bostra. He told me that I had to choose between Jerusalem with all its advantages and my education.

In the first year I studied the Arabic language at the University of Amman in Jordan and then I studied Law and Sociology.

On Christmas Eve, January 6, 199, I was ordained a Priest at the Cathedral of the Annunciation by the memorable Archbishop Constantinos of Kyriakoupolis "ever-lasting his remembrance"!

This marked a new era in my life, new horizons opened. I got to know the congregation and share with the faithful their worries, needs, queries, their thirst for Orthodoxy. I was watching our congregation threatened by "wolves", the heresy was tearing apart their souls, their Orthodox identity, their Romiosyne. I was watching their Liturgical and Spiritual senses deteriorate and the waves of Islamic fanaticism made their spiritual reality more painful. Along with the young people we started praying, I taught them to say the Jesus Prayer with a praying rope. I started celebrating the Divine Liturgy, I was hearing confessions, and gave speeches. Our goal was to introduce the Orthodox icons in every house, to bring the books of our Holy Fathers translated in Arabic.

So we founded the monastery of the Life-giving Spring in Dibin, with the blessing of the memorable Patriarch Diodoros. And it was completed with Your blessing, and with the prayers

and the hard toil of Gerondissa Eirinaia and the nuns Katherine and Thecla and the novice nuns along with the toils of the whole congregation.

I cannot omit His Eminence Benedict of Philadelphia. He accomplished an important mission in Jordan in various areas and his presence and pastorate are everywhere visible. May God give him health and strength.

The hour has come, Your Beatitude. Allow me to thank the Almighty God, the Most Holy Theotokos, St. Christophoros and righteous Job, who we commemorate today and all the saints, for all things they gave me in my life.

Your Beatitude, I would like to thank You too, from the depths of my heart, and all the Archbishops of the Holy and Sacred Synod of our Patriarchate who honour me with their presence. I thank my brothers the Hagiotaphite Fathers, who are with me today. I thank the clergy and the people who are with me at this hour. I have enclosed in my heart the whole congregation and I thank them for their love.

Finally, I would like to assure you that I will be a genuine Hagiotaphite until my last breath and I will work under Your guidance for the unity of the faithful and their salvation, within the unity of our Church of Jerusalem, because, as You always say reasonably, our Patriarchate is the security and guarantee for the continuing presence of Christianity in our region.

May God preserve and keep under His protection His Majesty the King Abdullah II Bin Al-Husein and Jordan, Palestine and the whole world. May God give peace and security in our region. Amen. So be it.

It is time to work for the Lord,

Holy Master, give Thy blessing.”

After the addresses the Ordained was led three times around the Holy Table in the Altar under the Ordination Hymns, followed by the placing of the hands on the head of the Ordained and the prayer for the coming down of the Divine Grace by His Beatitude and His concelebrant Archbishops; the Most Reverend Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth, Timotheos of Bostra, Benedict of Philadelphia, and the Most Reverend Archbishops; Damascene of Joppa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Demetrios of Lydda, Makarios of Qatar, Isidoros of Hierapolis and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis. At the exclamation of "Axios" there was great cheerful approval by the congregation of the Hagiotaphite Fathers, relatives, friends and spiritual children of the Ordained from Jordan.

Before the end of the Divine Liturgy His Beatitude gave the Ordained the Episcopal Staff saying " Receive this Staff...".

Upon dismissal the Ordained Most Reverend Archbishop of Kyriakoupolis distributed the blessed bread and accepted the congratulations from all those who came to kiss his hand.

At the meeting in the Patriarchate a while later, His Beatitude addressed the Ordained congratulating him for his promotion and wishing him the grace of the Holy Spirit the Comforter, while the new Archbishop thanked His Beatitude and assured Him that he will minister the Orthodox Congregation in His co-operation and unity with the Mother Church of Jerusalem.

### **From Secretariat-General**

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# THE MESSAGE OF THE ELECTION OF ARCHIMANDRITE CHRISTOPHOROS TO ARCHISHOP OF KYRIAKOUPOLIS

On Friday evening May 5/18, 2018, the Service of the Election of Archimandrite Christophoros to Archbishop of Kyriakoupolis took place after Vespers at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen with the Great Message of his ordination to Archbishop at the All-Holy Church of the Resurrection the next day, Saturday morning, May 6/19, 2018.

The Service was held according to the Typikon of our Orthodox Church which ordains the signature of those who voted for the Elect at the Code of Consignment inside the Holy Altar.

The Elect was honoured by the participation at the Election Service the members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, his parents, brother and other relatives and members of the Congregation from Jordan, where he has been serving for years.

After the Election Service all attendants went to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

There the newly-Elect addressed His Beatitude in Greek as follows;

*Your Beatitude Father and Master,*

*This is a special day in my life. Allow me to thank God, the Most Holy Theotokos and You personally. I thank you and*

*promise to follow the path of the Brotherhood and live up to its expectations and of the Congregation of the Patriarchate which I have been serving for many years as a Hagiotaphite.*

His Beatitude addressed the newly-Elect in return as follows;

*Your Grace Archbishop-Elect Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis,*

*In its recent session our Holy and Sacred Synod having unanimously accepted Our Patriarchal and Fatherly suggestion for your promotion to the Episcopal Office, duly casted its voting and has elected Your Grace, Archbishop of the luminous Diocese of Kyriakoupolis of old, and appointed You Patriarchal Commissioner and spiritual shepherd of our Christian Congregation inhabiting the city of Amman in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and its outskirts.*

*Our Holy and Sacred Synod did this hearkening to the God-inspired words of St. Paul saying: "For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:13).*

*Your Grace, Archbishop-Elect Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis, our Holy Church of Jerusalem has called us to the outmost honour of the Episcopal office on the one hand, and on the other, it has designated us with this indeed sacrificial mission of the resurrection through the cross in quite critical times for the Christian presence in our hard-tested region of the Middle East.*

*We wish that the Grace of the Holy Spirit which heals all infirmities and replenishes what is incomplete, strengthens You in the completion of the new Hagiotaphite duties and the God-pleasing mission of the Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem that has been entrusted to you, and guide your footsteps towards the working of the commandments of the Grand Shepherd our Lord Jesus Christ, especially towards the safekeeping of the solid unity of our full Christian Congregation on either*

*side of the banks of the River Jordan, by the intercessions of our Most Pure Lady Theotokos and of Your Patron Saint Christophoros the Great Martyr.*

*Be **Axios** and steadfast in faith.*

**From Secretariat-General**

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**THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF  
HAGIOTAPHITE ARCHIMANDRITE**

# NARKISSOS

The Funeral Service of the Hagiotaphite Archimandrite Narkissos, Hegoumen of the Greek Orthodox Community of Beit Jalla took place on Friday morning, April 28/May 11, 2018, at the Central Monastery Chapel of St. Thecla the Equal to the Apostles and First Martyr. The Archimandrite had died the day before, after a several-month trial with the illness of aggressive cancer.

The Funeral Service was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Hieromonks, Priest George Siahouan on behalf of the Community that the deceased used to minister, and the participation in prayer according to the spirit of mourning in Christ, of monks, nuns and laity from Beit Jalla.

The requiem was delivered by Geronda Secretary General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina as follows;

Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Most Reverend Archbishops,

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece,

Reverend Fathers,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We stand before the dead body of our beloved brother Hagiotaphite Hieromonk Narkissos who has left us for the heavenly dwelling places, in sorrow, awe and surprise. In deep thinking we wonder how the man who has been created according to the image and likeness of God has fallen into corruption and came into union with death?



To these human questions the answer comes from heaven, from the Person, the mission and the teaching of the One who came down to earth from heaven, the Incarnate, Crucified and Resurrected Jesus Christ our Saviour; from the One Who conquered death by His own death; from the One who died and behold, He lives. Since He died on the Cross and was resurrected, we who believe in Him and have died along with Him in His Baptism, having departed from our earthly body, we live along with Him in soul and spirit in His heavenly and eternal kingdom.

This mystery is already made manifest to our brother Archimandrite Narkissos who has been taken up into heaven after a painful illness. He already lies in the arms of his Creator and awaits His philanthropic judgment. Being present with him to his last earthly residence, and seeing him off to the eternal heavenly one, we praiseworthy recall his life in this world.

He came to the Holy Land from his hometown Patra of Peloponnisos and studied at the Patriarchal School of St. Demetrios. After his graduation he joined the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, was tonsured a monk and he was given the name Narkissos (his name in the world was Nikolaos). He was ordained a Deacon and a Priest and ministered at all the shrines or pastoral ministries he was appointed with devotion and zeal. He served at the shrines of the Basilica of Bethlehem, Kana of Galilee, the Shepherds, at the Patriarchate's Metropolis in Amman, as the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of St. George Al Hader, of Prophet Elijah, as the President of the Real Estate Committee, and for the last fifteen years as the Hegoumen of the Community in Beit Jalla. He conveyed to the clergy and the members of the Community the order and tradition of the Typikon of the Orthodox Church, the solemnity of the Church Services, the love of the decency of the House of God, while he lived at the Tower of Joassaph the Hagiotaphite in Beit Sahour, preserving and refurbishing it.

By saying these, we fulfill our human and brotherly duty towards him, moreover, we especially send our prayers to the Most High for him, asking Him, that as a righteous and philanthropist Judge He may notice his good works and his trial during the illness that ended his life, and forsake every sin made by him, willingly or unwillingly and place him in the land of the living along with the righteous ones, and resurrect him in the common resurrection in the Last Day. May his remembrance be ever-lasting.

Our beloved Hagiotaphite brother was escorted to the Cemetery in Holy Zion for his burial by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Narkissos of Acre of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, who was a spiritual child of the deceased.

The Hagiotaphite Brotherhood wishes for his ever-lasting remembrance.

#### **From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE DEATH AND FUNERAL OF MEMORABLE JOHN TLEEL**

The funeral service of the deceased memorable dentist John Tleel, exceptional member of the Greek Community and devoted child of the Patriarchate, took place at the Holy Church of the Holy Trinity in Zion, on Wednesday of mid-Pentecost

afternoon, April 19/May 2, 2018.

The funeral service of the ninety-year-old deceased was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with many co-celebrant Archbishops and Hagiotaphite Fathers, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and the honourary participation of members of the Greek Community and the Arab-speaking congregation.

The requiem referencing main parts of the deceased man's life was delivered by Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina as follows;

*Your Beatitude Father and Master,*

*Most Reverend Archbishops,*

*Your Excellency Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem,*

*Dear Fathers and Brothers,*

*Honourable Members of the Greek Expatriate Community and of the Arab-speaking Congregation of Jerusalem,*

*The present deceased man, who is very dear to us, has left the earthly and temporary things for the heavenly and eternal ones. Most of the deceased and the living Hagiotaphites, if not all of us, have known this man since the years of our youth, and we had been visiting him at his family house near the Patriarchate, as well as his memorable parents Nikolaos and Katherine, who used to pray quite often along with the Hagiotaphites at their Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen.*

*We have known him as a devoted to the Patriarchate person, where he found refuge and asylum in the year 1948 from his house of residence outside the walls of the Old City of*

Jerusalem. We have also known him as a dentist, who offered his medical treatment free of charge to the Hagiotaphites, the members of the Greek Community of Jerusalem and the Greek Orthodox Arab-speaking congregation as well as many others, regardless of their religion and nationality, following the example of his memorable brother David.

We watched him participating in many matters related to the Greek Community energetically and efficiently. He was the editor of the magazine "Trifilon" for many years, conveying in its issues his deep reliance on his Roman-Orthodox descent and the Roman Orthodox manner of living, in elegant artistic writing. However, he presented his own Roman Orthodox identity and that of the Arab-speaking Congregation, in his approved and original book "I am Jerusalem". In this book, not only him, but also every member of the Christian Community is proven to be not only a pillar and column of Jerusalem, but as the very Jerusalem itself. Moreover, each Patriarch of Jerusalem is a direct spiritual descendant of Patriarch Abraham. Out of these, this man, at the fullness of his age, lived to see six Patriarchs, as he used to say to the members of the Patriarchate himself.

This ecumenical man of Jerusalem, born of a Roman Orthodox Arab-speaking father and a Greek mother, who worthily represented the Patriarchate in important delegations and Conferences, the link between the Patriarchate and its congregation, "Jerusalem" as he liked to call himself, has fallen. He fell as a man, having fulfilled his common duty, to die once and for all, however his consignment remains an example, especially to these difficult times that Jerusalem encounters.

Having remained a faithful member of the Church all his life, he hopes in the retribution of his toil by the righteous Judge, Christ our God, Who has conquered death through His death on the Cross and was resurrected from the dead. We beseech this philanthropist Judge, to forsake every

*sin, voluntary or involuntary that was committed by our dearest and reverend deceased brother of ours, and place his soul in the land of the living along with the righteous ones, and resurrect his body in the common resurrection on the Last Day of Judgment.*

*Seeing the deceased as a special child of them, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood express their condolences to his close relatives and thank all present for honouring him in his funeral service. Ever-lasting remembrance of him.*

After the funeral, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the deceased man's nephew Evaggelos, received the condolences of all present at the Patriarchal reception hall, as the deceased is considered to have been an exceptional child of the Brotherhood.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE EPITAPH SERVICE AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Good Friday night, March 24/April 6, 2018, the Epitaph Service took place at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and all Monasteries of the Patriarchate.

This contrite and modest service was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrant

Hagiotaphite Archbishops of the Throne and the Most Reverend Mark of Serbia, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and visiting Priests from other Churches.

The canon of Holy Saturday was sung at the beginning of the service.

Then the Patriarchal Entourage came out of the Catholicon and went up to the Horrendous Golgotha via all the Shrines outside the Catholicon at each of whom there was a stop with a special prayer.

Then the 7<sup>th</sup> Gospel of the Holy Passion was read, which narrates the Lord's Cross (Mat. 27:33-54), and there was a special prayer followed by veneration.

After the narrative, four Archbishops took the silk corporal which symbolizes the body of Christ, and placed it on the slab of the Holy Deposition, having completed three circles around it, and the Patriarch read the Gospel of Deposition, according to St. John.

This was followed by the procession three times around the Holy Sepulchre, with the Archbishops holding the silk corporal, and after the procession the silk corporal representing the Body of the Lord was placed on the slab of the Holy Sepulchre.

At the end of the procession, the three stases of the Epitaph Lamentations began;

1. "Thou who art the Life wast laid in a tomb o Christ..."
2. "It is right to magnify Thee, Giver of Life..."
3. "Every generation, O my Christ, offers praises at Thy burial..." with the Patriarch offering incense while at the previous two stases the incense was offered by the Archbishops according to their ranking place.

Before the evlogitaria the sermon of the day was delivered by

Geronda Secretary-General, Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina as follows;

*Sermon of Geronda Secretary-General*

*Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina*

*At the Epitaph Service on Holy and Great Friday*

*(24 March/6 April 2018)*

*Your Beatitude Father and Master,*

*Reverend chorea of Hierarchs,*

*Your Excellency Consul General of Greece,*

*Devout clergy,*

*Noble pilgrims,*

*God in His philanthropy honoured man, when in the beginning He brought him into "being", created him according to His image and likeness and placed him to live in the world "considering it to be quite good". When man embezzled his gift of free will, and was led to his fall and corruption, then God, by His ineffable philanthropy honoured man again. He offered man "prosperity" through His Only Begotten Son, in Whom He was well pleased. At the end of times He sent Him in the world and He became man, incarnate, by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, taking upon Himself our human nature with its irreproachable characteristics; hunger, thirst, toil and death, namely the separation of the soul from the body.*

*The One Who was born in Bethlehem during the reign of Caesar Octavius Augustus, Who lived in Nazareth and was called Jesus of Nazareth, was associated with the people,*

taught them love as a manner of living, even love for the enemies, fed the hungry, cured the incurably sick, resurrected the dead, called "the least ones", the homeless and the prisoners His brothers – "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Mat. 25:40) – had compassion on man, healing the sick even on the day of Sabbath, for as He said, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Those wounded by sin and despised by society were to Him worthy of healing, restitution and salvation. He taught that He did all these deeds according to the Will of His Father, from Whom He came forth. At the High Priest's question "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark 14:61), He boldly answered "I am" (Mark 14:62). The people considered these words a blasphemy (Mark 14:64). They did not see the God-man in Jesus the Nazarene, but a person who "being a man, made Himself God" (John 10:33), therefore, they bound Him with ropes and sent Him to Pontius Pilate the Governor, who in a trial-parody delivered Him to them, in order to be crucified. Having derided and smitten Him down, they crucified Him in Golgotha, the place of skull, while the whole creation was lamenting and trembling with fear.

At the good will of the Father, Christ willingly accepted this death, again revealing the fullness of His love for man "to give his life a ransom for many" (Mat. 20:28), "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2), "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). According to the Apostle of Nations, Paul the Great, "with the blood of His cross, Christ reconciled the two worlds, God's Israel and us the nations (Gentiles), the sons of the Covenant and us, who at that time were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, and made us all one new man" (Eph. 2:11-17). "That the Gentiles



should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:6).

Having suffered dispassionately as God, and died as man on the cross, Christ descended into Hades and looked there also for the sheep that was astray. As the Orthodox hymnology chants, "When Thou didst descend unto death, O Life immortal, then didst Thou slay Hades with the lightning of Thy Divinity...and Thou didst raise the dead out of the nethermost depths". "Thou didst abolish death by Thy Cross; Thou didst open Paradise to the thief". "Thou stood before those in Hades, calling aloud to them, enter again into Paradise". "Thou hast despoiled Hades, and wast not tried thereby, and Thou hast opened for us the Paradise of old". As the God-bearer Father of the Church St. John Damascene says, "He descended into Hades, with a deified soul, and having released those who had forever been bound there, He was instantly revived from the dead, leading the way to our resurrection" (Publ. Orthodox Faith, 73).

The event of Christ's Life-giving Cross and His burial in God's body does the Church celebrate this venerable evening of Holy and Great Friday, before the dawn of Holy and Great Saturday; the Church that has been gushed forth from His pierced side. It celebrates not in a spirit of a weeping lamentation for His death, but in a spirit of a modest hopeful chant of the epitaph, foreshadowing the feast of the Resurrection.

At this Feast, let St. John Damascene from the Lavra of St. Savvas seal the word by saying the following about the Cross; "Every deed and wonder of Christ is great and divine and marvellous, but most wondrous of all is His Cross, through Which death has been abolished, Hades has been despoiled, resurrection has been granted, our nature sat at the right side of God, we have become sons and heirs of God... the Cross has been given to us as a sign on our foreheads, a shield and trophy against the devil, dissuasive of all evils, cause of

*all good things, refutation of sin, plant of resurrection, wood of life eternal. This sacred wood, on which Christ gave Himself a sacrifice for us, is worshiped as truly venerable since it has been sanctified by the contact of the holy body and blood, and likewise, worshiped are the nails, the spear, the garments and the sacred places where He abided, which are the manger, the cave, the Golgotha of redemption, the life-giving tomb, Zion, the acropolis of the Churches" (Pub. Orthodox Faith, 84).*

*The Mother and "acropolis of the Churches", the guardian of the Divine Shrines, under its Head and Officiator of this Feast of the Epitaph, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, wishes to its congregation on all parts of the earth and to the noble pilgrims that honour it, the strength of our Lord, Who was crucified in the flesh and suffered the termination of His life in the flesh as a mortal King, and the delight of the light of His Resurrection. So be it.*

The service continued with the "evlogitaria", praises, readings, intercession and dismissal. The return to the Patriarchate was done under the mournful bell tolling.

### **From Secretariat-General**

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

On Saturday March 11/24, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, on the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs of Lake Sebastia of Pontus, one of whom is Holy Martyr Theophilos.

## 1. VESPERS

In the evening of the feast the 9<sup>th</sup> Hour was read at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen and then, bells tolling, according to the established Typikon order, Festal Vespers was held at the Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Participants in prayer were Archbishops, while the Priests were co-celebrants, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The choir of singers was under the lead of Mr. Demetrios Balagiorgos, while the service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and a congregation of many pilgrims.

## 2. ON THE DAY OF THE FEAST

On Saturday morning March 11/22, 2018, the Divine Liturgy on the commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs and the Name Day of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was celebrated at the Catholicon of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, officiated by His Beatitude, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishops, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Most Reverend Archbishops, Aristarchos of Constantina and

Secretary-General, Methodios of Tabor, Demetrios of Lydda, Nectarios of Anthedona, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and Hagiotaphite Hieromonks with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The choir was formed by Archimandrite Aristovoulos and the choir of Professor Demetrios Balagiorgos. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and many pilgrims from various countries. After the Divine Liturgy there was a Doxology and finally the full congregation returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters.

There Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina was the first to address H.H.B. as follows;

***Address of Geronda Secretary-General***

***Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina***

***on the Name Day of H.H. Beatitude***

***our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III***

***March 9, 2018***

*Your Beatitude Father and Master,*

*The Commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs, the crowned athletes who confessed Christ at the Lake of Sebastia of Pontus, is a spiritual replenishment depot of the Orthodox faithful for the continuation of their race towards the welcoming of the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ.*

*This feast of the One Holy and Catholic Church of Christ is celebrated by the Mother of Churches with special emphasis, as its Holy Head, Your Beatitude, bears the name of one of these forty martyrs, St. Theophilos.*

*For this reason, today we celebrated the bloodless sacrifice, followed by a Doxology at the All-holy Church of the Resurrection, "this holy dwelling place of the glory of God", attended festively by the full body of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the reverend clergy and faithful of our Patriarchate, who have come from all places of its jurisdiction, namely, Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian State.*

*Having prayed in the Holy Sepulchre for the health and longevity of Your Beatitude, and now returning in this historic reception hall of our sacred dwelling place, we render the fair praise for all righteous and worth-praising deeds Your Beatitude has been labouring for our venerable Patriarchate.*

*To start with our commemoration, it is undeniable that last year's completion of the historic project of the restoration of the Sacred Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre by the National Technical University of Athens, was a work majorly owed to the inspiration of Your Beatitude and Your safeguarding of the balanced cooperation of the Three Major Communities, while during the current year, Your Beatitude has toiled tenaciously for the support of our nation's rights, every time they were threatened by violations of the Status Quo by the Armenians, at the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre and the chapel of the finding of the Sacred Cross. Moreover, Your Beatitude has striven and worked tirelessly towards the solution of the issue of the Ethiopian's chapel by the Gate of the Church of the Resurrection, which remains closed to this day due to their lack of cooperation.*

*There has also been a special interest in the spiritual guidance of the Arab-speaking congregation of the Patriarchate, through the printing and distribution of the appropriate books, among which the Liturgical texts of the Patriarchate in Arabic to be used by the Priests. Similarly, restoration and refurbishment projects of the congregation*

have been funded in both Jordan and Israel, as for example the Church of Koufr Smea Community. The Patriarchate has also taken care of its Russian-speaking congregation, especially in Beer Sheba and the neighbouring areas.

As far as the support and claiming of our property rights are concerned, these were continued by the appeal of our Patriarchate under Your Beatitude's command to the Israeli Court of Appeal, after the wrongful decision of the Israeli District Court which gave effect to the illegal and corrupt long-term contracts for the Jaffa Gate Hotels, to the settler group "Ateret Kohanim".

However, the undiminished and vibrant interest, as well as the determination of Your Beatitude were made manifest recently, when the Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, imposed illegitimate taxes on Church property, contravening the long established tax exemption rights of our Patriarchate and of the other Churches, as well as the established through the sacred history Status Quo of Jerusalem, and also, during the proceedings for the proposed bill to the Knesset by Member of Knesset Rachel Azaria, which threatened to deny the Churches their right to freely deal with their own properties. Having no other solution, Your Beatitude then took the initiative of the cooperation of the Three Major Communities and the decision of the closure of the Holy Sepulchre, after the Divine Liturgy of the Sunday of Orthodoxy there, on February 12/25, 2018, as a sign of protest against these measures.

The All-holy Church of the Resurrection which is overcrowded by thousands of pilgrims on a daily basis, remained closed for them until the Israeli Prime Minister Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu intervened with a statement, according to which, all actions from the Municipality regarding the collection of taxes as well as all legislative activity on Church properties was suspended, including the "Bill of Church Lands" proposed to the Knesset by Member of Knesset Rachel Azaria. There was also a decision to establish a professional team led by Minister

*Tzachi Hanegbi with the cooperation of the representatives of the Churches in order to solve these current issues. Consequently, the Three Major Communities agreed on the re-opening of the Gate of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the morning of Wednesday, February 15/28, 2018.*

*The aforementioned endeavours, which are a representative sample of the grand total of your servitude, inspire us the Hagiotaphites to have courage in order to continue working and cooperating in a brotherly spirit among us, and in a spirit of obedience to Your Beatitude, in order to safeguard our Fathers' inheritance and consign it twofold to our successors, for the praise of our Patriarchate and our blessed nation and for the glory of our Trinitarian God.*

*Raising my glass on behalf of the Holy and Sacred Synod and all the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, I wish You, Your Beatitude, many happy returns, in peace, stability, benevolence, pastoral fruitful guidance and in abundance of heavenly gifts. So be it.*

The Consul General's address as follows;

Your Beatitude,

Your Eminences,

Reverend Fathers,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today's feast has a special significance to all of us, as the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and the noble Congregation, the pilgrims and the Orthodox Community honour with the appropriate grandour the Name Day of the Head of the Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches, His Holy Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

It is a special honour and joy for me to be present at this feast and I would like, Your Beatitude, to convey our

wholeheartedly wishes for health, longevity and strength, in order to continue Your important mission, which increases every day in significance in this hard time.

On this occasion, I would like to express our undivided support to the sacred Institution, the Ambassador Jerusalem Patriarchate, which throughout the ages has played a supremely significant role, and as the centre of Orthodoxy in the Holy Land, it remains an inexhaustible source of hope, projecting from the Holy City the values of Christianity and the message of the salvation of man to all directions.

The Jerusalem Patriarchate is, of course, a steady reference point for all Greeks, wherever they are, and symbolizes the long presence of the Greeks in the Holy Land, while it never fails to represent a strong bond of friendship and cooperation with other nations, as it also represents the Orthodox Christians in the region, safeguarding the valuable traditions and conveying the ecumenical message of Orthodoxy to all directions. For all of us, the Sacred Institution is, of course, the depositary of the most important Sacred Shrines of Christianity, which the Hagiotaphite Fathers defend in devotion and self-denial on a daily basis, and always inspire and strengthen the faith and reverence of the faithful around the world, as well as the bonds with the Church of Jerusalem.

Your Beatitude,

The sincere intention of understanding and reconciliation You systematically display and cultivate, so much so among your relations with the other doctrines and religions, as also in Your wider attempts for reconciliation and peace-making in this much-suffered region, adds to the moral stature of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, within the efforts of defending the Christian presence in the Middle East, promoting its role as a factor of moderation and stability in a period of instability and turbulence, that seem to feed the intolerance and rivalry.



Your Beatitude,

The burden upon Your shoulders is heavy and the fight coinciding from it is long and arduous. I know you face challenges, aware of the criticality of the circumstances and the necessity to defend the Status Quo in the Holy Land, which has safeguarded the peaceful co-existence of all religions here for centuries. It is my deep belief, that with God's help and the active support of all of us, You will continue and succeed in Your mission.

All the Consulate staff, as much as myself, pray that You may have health, strength and longevity for the benefit of the Patriarchate, of the Brotherhood, of Your Greek-Orthodox Congregation, of Orthodoxy and of peace in the Holy Land.

Many Happy Returns.

There were also other addresses, as His Beatitude thanks them in His address below;

*"Having left every military array of the world, ye cleaved unto the Master Who is in the Heavens, O Forty Prizewinners of the Lord; for having passed through fire and water, O blessed ones, ye rightly received glory from Heaven and a multitude of crowns" the melodist of the Church proclaims.*

*Your Excellency Consul General of Greece*

*Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos,*

*Reverend Fathers and Brothers,*

*Noble Christians and pilgrims.*

*As today our Holy Church and especially the Church of Jerusalem honours and venerates the sacred commemoration of the Holy Forty Martyrs, and in particular their co-martyr Theophilus, whose name is given to Our Mediocrity, we came down to the All-holy Church of the Resurrection along with the*

reverend members of the venerable Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, where we festively celebrated the Divine and Bloodless Worship, and we also rendered a thanksgiving Doxology "unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God" (1 Tim. 1:17).

"At the commemoration of Thy martyrs, O Lord, the whole creation keeps festival; heaven with the angels greatly rejoices, and the earth with all mankind makes glad" St. Theodore of the Studion says.

Our Patriarchal Mediocrity along with all the members of the Hagiotaphite Fathers chorea and the pious members of our Christian congregation are participants of this festal jubilation and gleefulness. And this is so, because Our sacred Name Day is not referred only to Our Mediocrity, but especially to the institutional status of the Patriarchal office of the Church, the mystical body of our God and Saviour Christ in the world.

By honouring the commemoration of Christ's martyrs and all the saints, whom we are named after, we actually honour our regeneration (paligenesis) of salvation in Christ and His Holy Spirit, as St. Paul preaches: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;" (Titus 3:5-6).

And we have been grafted in the good olive tree, namely the Church, the body of Christ, through the regeneration and renewal of the waters, the Holy Baptism; while the holy martyrs in general and today's honoured Forty martyrs of the lake of Sabastia, have been renewed through their martyr blood of Christ's love.

And we claim this, because the foretold Church by the Law of Moses, the Patriarchs and the Prophets, the Church of "the

*Great Will of the angel" (Isaiah 9:6), was revived and regenerated through the sacred blood and water that came out of the pierced side of the Son of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ Who was Crucified for our sake.*

*This witness is witnessed by St. John the Evangelist and confirmed by the sanctified place of Golgotha, whose true witness is confessed and evangelized over the centuries by the chorea of the ministering Hagiotaphite Fathers together with their Father and Hegoumen, namely each and every Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem who is the successor of St. James the Brother of God.*

*Today therefore we honour and celebrate the commemoration of St. Theophilos, the co-martyr of the Holy Forty Martyrs. These blessed martyrs went through water and fire and worthily gained the divine glory and praise by our Holy Trinitarian God.*

*These Holy Forty martyrs, along with their co-martyr Theophilos, who made heaven on earth and illumined the universe, and now stand by the Holy Trinity in three hypostases, intercede for us.*

*Let us entreat these Holy Forty Martyrs whose commemoration of glorious prizewinning we celebrate, and the Most blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and Mother of God, the refuge of our souls, to grant us the great mercy and peace towards the three-day Resurrection of our God and Saviour of our souls.*

*On this occasion, we pray for all who joined Us in prayer and honoured this feast, that they may have power from on high, and the grace of the All-holy Tomb, patience and every blessing from God, expressing our warmest thanks to those who addressed Us; Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, who spoke on behalf of the members of the Holy and Sacred Synod and the Hagiotaphite*

*Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, Reverend Archimandrite Alexander, representative of the brotherly Holy Church of Russia, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, Reverend Archimandrite Theophilos, representative of the brotherly Church of Romania, who conveyed to Us the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, Reverend Archimandrite Philotheos, who spoke on behalf of the congregation of Acre-Ptolemais, Reverend Fr. Farah Bandour, who spoke on behalf of St. James Cathedral, the School Director of the Patriarchal School of Zion Reverend Archimandrite Mattheos, the teacher of St. Demetrios School Mrs. Chrysi Triantafilaki and all participants in this feast."*

At noon there was a festal fasting meal.

#### **From Secretariat-General**

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