

# **PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM DELEGATION VISITS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH AHEAD OF AMMAN FRATERNAL GATHERING**

Jerusalem Feb 15, 2020

A high level delegation formally representing the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was commissioned by H.B. Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem, to meet with His All Holiness Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, to further explain the importance of the fraternal gathering scheduled to be held in Amman, Jordan later on this month with the participation of the vast majority of Orthodox Patriarchs and heads of Churches, to discuss global orthodox unity and to enhance inter-orthodox dialogue and reconciliation.

The delegation assured H.A.H. the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew during a 2-hour meeting held today at H.A.H. headquarters in the presence of members of the Ecumenical Synod, that the Amman fraternal gathering does not constitute a formal Synaxis but rather a familial gathering of the Orthodox Primate for the purpose of dialogue.

The delegation carried a letter from H.B. Theophilos III in which he extended H.A.H. Bartholomew an invitation to the Amman gathering, and pointed out his sincerity in upholding the Holy Canons of the Church and respecting H.A.H. the Ecumenical Patriarch's acknowledged seniority.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE LAMENTATIONS OF THE THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, August 14/27, 2018, the Service of the Lamentations of the Theotokos was held at the Tomb of the Theotokos in Gethsemane.

This service is perhaps unique in the Orthodox Church, and preserved by the Typikon of the Church of Jerusalem and Mother of Churches.

For this Service, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood marched down Via Dolorosa, headed by its Hegoumen, His Beatitude and our Father the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

After arriving at the Hegoumeneion, His Beatitude's welcome reception took place at the courtyard of the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos, as the Priests who were dressed in their liturgical vestments chanted the hymns of the Dormition under the lead of the Choir Leader of the Patriarchate Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos.

After the veneration of the Theotokos' Tomb and the icon of the Theotokos on the south side of the Tomb, His Beatitude put on His Patriarchal vestments, the Archbishops and the Priests did likewise, and having taken the Epitaph of the Theotokos in the middle of the Church the Service of the Lamentations with the 3 stases began.

At the end of the Lamentations, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Theologos of Serres delivered a Sermon, then the Eulogitaria, the Praises and the Doxology were chanted and His Beatitude with the Archbishops venerated the Epitaph. The procession of the Epitaph at the entrance of the Church followed, and a

special prayer was read. Finally the procession of the Epitaph returned at the south side of the Church, to be followed by veneration and dismissal. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos.

Once the Service was over, the Hegoumen Most Reverend Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela offered a reception for the Patriarchal entourage and many faithful at the Hegoumeneion.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE VISITS THE ALL-HOLY SHRINES**

On Thursday morning, June 15/28, 2018, His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge Prince William, firstborn son of Prince Charles of Wales and of Princess Diana, and Grandson of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain Elizabeth, visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre while on a trip to the State of Israel and the State of Palestine. His Royal Highness was escorted by the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem Most Reverend Souhel Dawani, members of the Consulate of Great Britain in Jerusalem and of the Israeli Police force.

His Royal Highness Prince William was escorted and guided around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the All-Holy Tomb, St. Nicodemus Tomb, the Horrendous Golgotha and the Sacristy where the Sacred Wood of the Cross is, by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers.

At the Horrendous Golgotha, His Beatitude addressed Prince William as follows:

Your Royal Highness,

Your Excellency, Mr. Ambassador,

Your Excellency, Mr. Consul General,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Distinguished Friends,

We welcome you, Your Royal Highness, to the Holy City of Jerusalem and to this most Holy Place, where our Lord Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, shed His blood to bring reconciliation and peace to humankind. Here, reconciliation was made manifest between God and humanity, and within the human family. Here, our common human destiny was revealed.

As we read in the Psalms, *Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other* (Ps. 85:10). Here, this meeting was accomplished on the Cross.

You come to the Middle East and to the Holy Land as a pilgrim of reconciliation and peace, a witness to the truth that reconciliation and peace are of utmost importance to the human community. This region in particular cries out for a new birth of reconciliation and peace, a new birth that will come only from the greatest labour. For without such a sacrifice, without such willingness to give everything for reconciliation

and peace, there can be no way forward.

The Christian Community has managed to remain in this region for over 2000 years, because we are a community of reconciliation. The Cross of the risen Christ is the Cross of hope, for the Cross is the assurance that just such peace and reconciliation are possible.

We appreciate your presence among us, for your presence brings hope in turbulent times. We wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the Duchess of Cambridge on the recent birth of your son, Prince Louis. We pray to Almighty God that you will be sustained in your mission, and that you will draw strength from your visit to the tomb of your noble Grandmother, Princess Alice, as well as to this Holy place, to be an agent of reconciliation and peace in our world. Thank you.

Finishing His address, His Beatitude offered the Prince and icon of the Sacred Edicule and then a reception was offered to His Highness at the Office of Geronda Sacristan Most Reverend Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis.

Having completed His visit at the most historic and sacred shrine of Christianity, as He said, and thanking for the welcoming reception, His Highness the Duke of Cambridge departed in order to continue His mission.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE FEAST OF SAINT ONUPHRIOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, June 12/25, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our Father among the Saints Onuphrios of Egypt, at the his Holy Monastery which is located at a short distance from the Biblical Siloam pool in East Jerusalem.

This district is also named “The potter’s field”, because it on the field that the Lords’ of the Jews bought with the thirty silver coins Judas the traitor returned to them when he regretted his crime. They wanted to use the field for “the burial of the foreigners”. For this reason the Monastery is build above caves carved in rocks that were used as tombs. One of these tombs belongs to the first Patriarch of Jerusalem St. Iouvenalios (451 A.D.).

At the Holy Church of this Monastery, Vespers was held in the evening, and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the morning of the Feast, led by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, with co-celebrant Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the Archimandrites Ignatios and Kalistos, Archdeacon Mark and Hieromonks and Deacons from the Holy Metropolis of Patra from the Church of Greece. The hymns were delivered by the Reverend Archimandrites Eusevios,( who is also the Choir leader of the Central Monastery of the Patriarchate), and Demetrios, while the service was attended by nuns, and noble pilgrims.

His Eminence read the Sermon of the day on behalf of His Beatitude as follows;

“Godly-wise Father Onuphrios, in spirit thou didst become great Elias’ follower, for thou dweltest far removed from the turbulence of the world; thou didst deny all the yearnings of the flesh and didst abide in the barren wilderness, where,

with exceeding joy, thou, O blessed man, didst soar aloft in soul to the Heavens where thou truly hadst thy citizenship". The Hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The Grace of the Holy Spirit that has dwelled in our Father among the Saints Onuphrios has gathered us all in this sacred shrine of the potter's field, where the Holy Monastery dedicated to the Saint lies, in order to celebrate the great sacrament of the Eucharist, the bloodless sacrifice to our Trinitarian God.

Our Father among the Saints Onuphrios, who came from Egypt, became a citizen of the kingdom of heaven and conversed with the Angels. He managed this after he had heard of the lives of zealot Prophet Elijah and of St. John the Baptist and Forerunner. Our Father Onuphrios became imitator of these Holy prophets and Hermits, retreating to the inner desert where he lived for sixty years, "having seen no man in all these years" according to his synaxarist.

By his escape in the inner desert, our Holy Father became "an emigrant from this world of confusion" and "disclaimer of the passions of the flesh" hearkening to the words of St. Paul saying: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

So arduous and great was the asceticism of our Holy Father in the dry desert, that "he didst soar aloft in soul to the Heavens where He hadst his citizenship" according to the hymn writer. St. Onuphrios accomplished this hearkening to the words of David and Paul. St. Paul says; "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). And in more detail; do not marvel that we suffer persecution and sorrows. For reasonably thinking, I am convinced that what

we suffer and endure in this current time cannot be compared to the glory which is destined to be revealed and given to us.

And Prophet David sings; "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more" (Psalm 103:15-16). The days of man, David says, are like the fresh and temporary grass. Just like the flowers of the fields, man flourishes for a little while. When the hot wind blows over the flower, it is destroyed and the flower is no more, leaving no trace behind of its former presence. Likewise, man goes away and never comes back, and he is forgotten.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, our Holy Church, the faithful members of its body, are rejoicing today on the glorious commemoration of our Father among the Saints Onuphrios. And this is so, because our Holy Father "from Heaven didst receive gifts transcending the mind of man, piously imparting them unto those, who longed for tokens of his ascetic feats;" according to the hymn writer.

And we ask ourselves, what are the attributes of St. Onuphrios' asceticism? They are the fact that our Holy Father became a vessel of the grace of the Holy Spirit, he became son of God, as St. Paul preaches; "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). This means that all those who are governed by God's Spirit are sons of God.

In other words, God's Spirit is the One Who should lead all the actions and deeds of our lives, as St. Ekoumenios says; "They will make [the Spirit of God] charioteer and leader for all their lives. And according to the Church Father Theodoritos Kyros "The regal Spirit" is the spirit, the mind, which rules and thus leads and helps man to overcome his passions and weaknesses. Wherever the "Spirit of God" blows, namely the Spirit of the Lord, there freedom lies, as St. Paul



preaches; "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:17). Our Father Onuphrios became participant of this liberty of the Spirit of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The exceptional character of the ascetic of the desert St. Onuphrios of Egypt, is not only an example to imitate, but also an exhortation to all the faithful and those who honour his commemoration, to protect themselves from the "spirit of error" (1 John 4:6), which unfortunately dominates the minds and hearts of many of our Christian brethren, as St. Jude preaches by saying; "How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost; Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 18-21).

Let us therefore entreat our Holy Father Onuphrios and our Holy Father Peter of Athos whom we also commemorate today, along with the Theotokos the Mother of God the Word, the Most Blessed One, the Ever-Virgin Mary, so that by their intercessions to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we may heal the passions of our souls. Amen."

After the Divine Liturgy, there was a special prayer for the fruit and a memorial service at the tomb of the founder of the Monastery and the tomb of Nun Seraphima.

Finally the Abbess of the Monastery Nun Paissia offered a festal reception to the Episcopal entourage at the Hegoumeneion and to all the pilgrims at the courtyard of the Monastery.

**From Secretariat-General**