

Doxology on the 19th enthronement anniversary of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III



On Friday, November 9/22, 2024, at 10.00 am, a Doxology was held at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the 19th enthronement anniversary of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The Doxology was presided over by His Beatitude and with Him their Eminences the High Priests of the Throne, Holy Sepulchre Hieromonks, and Deacons, and Priests from the various parishes of the Patriarchate. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon, as the service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Dimitrios Anengelosopoulos, Mrs Anna Mantika and faithful from Jerusalem.

After the Doxology, led by the Patriarch, all present went to the Patriarchate Reception Hall.

There, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Chief Secretary, addressed His Beatitude as follows:

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

The Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of the Churches and the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood of old, celebrate today the 19th Anniversary of the Enthronement of Your Holy Beatitude to the glorious Throne of Saint James the Brother of God. This event is of particular importance in the history and life of the Church of Jerusalem, but also of the Church as a whole, since it took place in a time of crisis and upheaval, which upheaval, however, did not lead to the collapse of the Church of Jerusalem. The Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, waking up on the morning of March 2005, found its valuable property in the Old City of Jerusalem, not far from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, depopulated and stored in a corruption-serving agreement of corrupt interests. The Brotherhood, rising to the occasion, reacted immediately. It condemned these agreements as invalid and denounced their initiators. Subsequently, the Synod of the Patriarchate, following the rules of the Church, was referred to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which convened a Pan-Orthodox Synod, through the decision of which the way for a Patriarchal election was opened. These elections were conducted per the rules of the Church and the Jordanian Law of the Patriarchate and ended in the holy Church of the Holy Sepulchre, on August 9/22, 2005, electing Your Holy Beatitude as the 141st Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem. The seal of these elections was the event, which the Church of Jerusalem joyfully celebrates today, the Enthronement of Your Holy Beatitude in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, on November 9 / 22, 2005, with the participation of Representatives of all the Orthodox Churches, the Representatives of the governments of Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, the President of the Republic of Greece, Mr Karolos Papoulias and the Representative of the Emir of Qatar.

Under such conditions, the Inter-Orthodox, Inter-Christian and international recognition of Your Beatitude in charge of the Church of Jerusalem, was directly involved in civil and judicial disputes on the payment of huge sums of money for the annulment of the illegal agreements and therefore, the preservation of the property rights of the Patriarchate, the Status Quo of the Holy Places of the Old City of Jerusalem and the rights of the Christian Community in the Holy Land, the cradle of all Christianity.

At the same time, Your Beatitude attached great importance to the unity in Christ of the Orthodox Churches in the bond of peace through a true Christian witness to the world. To this end, You made a peaceful visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Patriarchate of Moscow, the Patriarchate of Romania and the Churches of Poland, Finland and Albania, to convey to them, too, the fabulous and hopeful message of the Resurrection, which emanates incessantly from the life-giving Tomb of the Lord. In this spirit, Your Beatitude also participated in the Inter-Orthodox Synod held in Chambesy in Switzerland, for the succession to the Throne of the Church of Cyprus. Also, the contribution of Your Beatitude, either through Your representatives or in person, was very active in the work of preparation and convening of the Great Synod of Orthodoxy in Crete, and very strong was the reiteration of Your position regarding the resumption of an Inter-Orthodox dialogue for the return to the Orthodox society and unity that has existed from the beginning.

The relations of the Patriarchate with the other Christian Churches were determined by Your Beatitude by redefining Your participation in the World Council of Churches and the Middle East Council of Churches and by strengthening the institution of the Council of Heads of Local Churches, convened to the current Patriarchate under the auspices of Your Beatitude to study and deal with problems of the Christian Churches of the Holy Land, such as the granting of residence permits (visas), imposition of unacceptable municipal taxes, incidents of violence at the expense of pilgrims and affected Christians from the violence of the previous year and now the raging and endless war in Israel, in the territory of the Palestinian Authority and in the Monastery of Saint Porphyrios of Gaza. For this work of Yours of preserving the peaceful cooperation of the Christian Churches of the Holy Land, Your Beatitude was praised by the recently visiting our Patriarchate, His Eminence the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr Justin Welby. For Your interfaith pacifying work, You were recently awarded the first peace medal from the Republic of Kazakhstan. Your Holy Beatitude often invited government agents and diplomatic representatives of many countries to the Patriarchate, always giving the necessary

priority to our motherland and explaining to them the multifaceted Pastoral and pacifying work the Patriarchate conducts.

Your Beatitude's concern was unwavering for the observance of the rights of the present Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood in the Holy Places, such as in the Grotto of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the renovation of which is already underway. Also, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with the participation of the Brotherhood in the ongoing strengthening and conservation project, by expert professors and technicians from the Sapientia University of Rome, the subsoil and the floor of the area around the Rotunda, around the Deposition Slate, under the Seven Arches and in the Entrance of the Church with the cooperation of the Three Major Christian Communities. These works contribute greatly to the decency of the precious habitation of the Lord's glory, the pan-Orthodox and pan-Christian monument of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This decency was greatly enhanced by the adornment of the chandeliers of the Catholicon of the Church, our private space, and by the maintenance of the one hundred canticles of the large Russian-made dome of the 19th century.

The renovation work carried out by Your Beatitude continued without interruption under the expert conservator of icons and manuscripts from Cyprus, Mr Stavros Andreou, in the buildings of the Archives and the library. Moreover, in the house of the blessed Patriarch of Jerusalem Diodorus, the construction of a Museum, where old icons and other valuable ecclesiastical objects testifying to the cultural legacy of the present Patriarchate to the Holy Land will be exhibited. Likewise, there is an ongoing project for a Theological Research centre in the historic Monastery of the Holy Cross and for the utilization of the surrounding agricultural area, preserved by the blessed Patriarch of Jerusalem Benedictus.

The above-mentioned, are only a few words, extracted from the rich spiritual legacy of the Pastoral and Administrative activity of Your Beatitude, not for boasting, since according to the Apostle Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6,14) but for the strengthening of us the Holy Sepulchre Fathers, so that in fraternal solidarity we cooperate with each other, bearing fruit, and increasing in good works and in obedience, and we support Your Beatitude in the precious and God-pleasing Patriarchal work.

Raising the glass, Your Beatitude, in the name of the Holy Synod and of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, I wish You many returns, healthy, peaceful, happy, stable, full of governmental support from above, so that You may continue to lead the ship of the Church of Jerusalem to salvation, for the praise of our blessed nation and the

glory of our Triune God. So be it."

Then the Consul General of Greece Mr Dimitrios Angelopoulos addressed His Beatitude as follows:

"Your Beatitude,

During the joyous celebration of the completion of 19 years since Your ascend to the Patriarchal Throne of Jerusalem, I have the great honour to express to You the warmest congratulations of the Hellenic Republic and me personally for today's glorious anniversary. I also have the honour to assure You of the profound respect and appreciation of Greece for Your Beatitude and the arduous and great work that You have been doing for decades, with devotion and love, in the service of the Patriarchate and Your flock.

The past year since the previous anniversary of Your enthronement has been full of adversity, challenges, disappointments and anxiety. We wished the war conflict to end. On the contrary, it spread throughout the wider region, with incalculable destruction and an increase in human suffering. The juncture is a milestone in the political history of the Middle East, where sad and covered in blood new chapters are unfortunately being written. Extreme nationalism, intolerance and tribalism are testing the strength of fundamental principles and norms and making the peaceful coexistence we long for in the Holy Land increasingly precarious.

In this environment, where the creation of negative and often violent acts is relentlessly and cynically promoted, the Patriarchate is called upon daily to continue its work, but also the guardianship of its rights and its two-thousand-year heritage and tradition. It does so, emerging, once again, as a fixed point of reference within the turbulent turmoil, as a guiding star within the disorienting darkness.

Under these gloomy circumstances, Your Beatitude inspires in all of us, with Your daily struggle, patience, fortitude, perseverance, as well as with determination to save precious values and principles. Your efforts to support and comfort your Flock, but also our other suffering fellow human beings, are constant. You have undertaken valuable actions and initiatives in favour of the rescue and relief of those in danger. Above all, You have remained a pillar of moderation, settlement and peace and a protagonist of unity and mutual support between the Christian Churches, but also of mutual respect and cooperation between religions, which make up the unique, brilliant mosaic of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

However, at the same time as facing these challenges, you continued to work, with an eye to the future, in favour of the prestige and global radiation of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, with a systematic renovation project and maintenance projects of the holy places, libraries and the valuable legacy of the Holy Foundation, as well as with organized initiatives which will further enhance its intellectual contribution and legacy.

Your Beatitude,

I am happy and grateful for the honour of serving the unshakable will of the Hellenic Republic to come to the aid of Your efforts and that of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood. On the occasion of today's anniversary, I renew its assurances that it will continue to be by the side of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Your Beatitude, ready to work with You and contribute to the success of the high goals You have set, in favour of the institution of the Patriarchate.

I relay to you, on behalf of the Hellenic Republic and all my collaborators at the Consulate General of Greece, our most sincere and warmest wishes for health, success in Your work and many happy returns on the glorious Throne of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem."

Holy Sepulchre Hieromonks and others from various places of the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate also addressed His Beatitude.

Finally, His Beatitude thanked all present with the following address:

"My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord because he hath dealt bountifully with me (Ps. 12,5) the psalmist proclaims.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece, Mr Dimitrios Angelopoulos

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Reverend Christians,

"Blessed be the Lord our God, who guarded his house in Jerusalem" (cf. 2 Esdras 7,27) and demonstrating our Mediocrity the one hundred and fortieth and first (141st) successor to the throne of Saint James the Brother of God and first Hierarch of the Church of Jerusalem.

Today's solemn Nineteenth anniversary of our ascend to the historical, apostolic and Patriarchal Throne of James the Brother of God and Hieromartyr, has a special significance for the God-founded institution of the Church of Christ in the world, "which The Lord made no man" (Heb. 8:2). And this, because the Church of God is established on Christ's election of the Twelve Apostles, who were chosen among His disciples. "And when it was day, he addressed his disciples, and choosing twelve of them, he named them apostles" (Acts 6:13). Moreover, the Church is founded on the martyrs, whom God himself chose: "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee" (Acts 26:16), says the Lord to Saint Paul, according to the apostle Luke.

We say this because this enthronement anniversary does not refer to Our person, but to the sacred institution of the Church, which we were called to serve, witnessing and correcting the word of truth (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15), hearing the order of Peter the Chief of the Apostles, saying, " Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Pet. 1:10).

Therefore, we too, being grateful for the Lord's blessings, went with the accompanying High Priests, priests and hieromonks, honourable members of our Venerable Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and rendered a thanksgiving Doxology to the Holy Triune God "Who doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number" (Job 9,10) according to the righteous Job.

Heeding the words of the wise Paul to the elders of Ephesus, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28); we did not rest, at the exhortation of Saint Paul, “engaging in prayer” (cf. Rom. 12:12) continuing in it in thanksgiving, praying together and caring for the Christians and for our pious Rum Orthodox flock, of those under the spiritual and ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the current Venerable Patriarchate.

And yet, being born heirs of the physical testimonies of the mystery of the divine providence, that is, of the Holy Places, we in no way neglected the mission in Him, the protection, as it were, of the ab antiquo indescribable privileges and rights of the pious and royal race and nation of the Rum Orthodox Christians.

On the other hand, many efforts are being made in every direction religiously, politically and diplomatically, locally and internationally for the preservation of the internationally recognized special religious status quo of the holy city of Jerusalem, threatened by organized groups of extremist settlers. The status quo of Jerusalem, on the one hand, provides for the unimpeded act of worship in the holy places; on the other hand, the protection of church properties, that is, lands recognized as biblical. It should be noted that for this we have accomplices of the Primates and of the other local Christian Communities, as well as the diplomatic corps of Jerusalem in general and that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece in particular.

Needless to say, we are watching with agony and awe the intensely indescribable and indeed dramatic developments of the current military conflict, both in the destroyed Gaza Strip, as well as in the country of Lebanon, as well as in the West Bank. We are in awe of the acts against the imprisoned Gazans in the Holy Monastery of Saint Porphyrios in Gaza, indeed of our Holy Sepulchre brothers, Our Patriarchal Representative His Eminence Archbishop Alexios of Tiberias, and the ministering Priest, Reverend Archimandrite Silas, serving with self-sacrifice to the remaining “remnant” (Rom. 11,5) of our Christian flock. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his soul for the sheep” (John 10:11), says the Lord.

Our Venerable Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood and Our Mediocrity, faithful in our spiritual mission, entrusted to us under divine providence, and remembering the order of Saint Paul, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved...and above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called” (Col. 3:12-15), work to evangelize the love, peace and righteousness of Christ, “always pursuing good in one another and in everything” (cf. 1 Thes. 5.15).

According to His rich mercy, our Lord and God, having made us successors of the apostolic office of Saint James the Brother of God, “ they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem” (Acts 16,4), but also care for the unity of the brothers and like-minded people of the holy faith, of the Orthodox Churches, listening to the voice of the holy martyr Ignatius, “love unity, avoid divisions; be imitators of Jesus Christ, just as He is of His Father”.

In this Ecclesiastical and Patriarchal ministry of keeping right the Gospel word of Truth and keeping in the hearts of the most holy Primates of the sister Churches of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (cf. Eph. 4:3), we have communicants and co-recipients of the respected and beloved in Christ our Holy Sepulchre Fathers and brothers, High Priests, priests, hieromonks, deacons and monks, those who are distinguished, according to Paul, being “ likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:” (Rom. 15.5).

Inspired and supported by Paul’s preaching, “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair” (2 Cor. 4:8), we continually give thanks and pray to the Lord God, Who “hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18), to pacify our region, which is suffering from the fire of war.

So let us pray to our Lord, so that “rooted and built up in him” (Col. 2:7) He may direct our hearts to His love and to the patience of Christ (cf. 2 Thess. 3:5), through the intercessions of the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary and by the prayers of our holy Father Nektarios, Bishop of Pentapolis. May the grace of the Holy and Life-giving Tomb strengthen and protect us all during these difficult and critical days.

Regarding all the above, we call upon all those who prayed with Us and honoured with their presence the enthronement anniversary of Ours, wishing them power from on high, the illuminating energy of the Holy Sepulchre and every blessing

from God, expressing warm thanks and to those addressing Us, the Elder Chief Secretary, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, speaking on behalf of the honorable members of the Holy Synod and the respected Brothers of our Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, His Excellency the Consul General of Greece, Mr Dimitrios Angelopoulos, the Ambassador of Russia to Israel Mr Anatoly Victorov, the representative of the Holy Church of Russia, Reverend Archimandrite Vassianos, who conveyed the wished of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Moscow Cyril, the reverend representative of the Holy Church of Romania, Archimandrite Theophilos, who conveyed the wishes of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Romania Daniel, His Eminence the Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, whose address was read by the Elder Chief Secretary, His Eminence the Metropolitan Benediktos of Diosaecarea, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Bethlehem, His Eminence Archbishop Damascene of Yaffo, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Yaffo, His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, who spoke on behalf of the Russian speaking Beer Sheba community and that of Haifa, the reverend Archimandrite Ignatios, who spoke on behalf of our flock in Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, the reverend Fr Farah Bandour, who spoke on behalf of Saint James Cathedral parish, Mr Samaan, who spoke on behalf of Ramallah and Taybe areas, the new Principal of Saint Dimitrios' School Mr Arges and the students, Mr Yusef Nasser, and Mr Athanasios Abu Aeta, and all who participated in this celebration."

The event concluded with a meal at the refectory of the Patriarchate, to celebrate as well the feast of Saint Nectarios Bishop of Pentapolis the wonder-worker.

From the General Secretariat































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