

Thanksgiving Addresses of His Eminence Archbishop of Sinai, Pharan, And Raitho to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem



On Sunday, 19 October, at o'clock in the morning, the Patriarchal entourage set forth from the Gate of the Patriarchate, led by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, towards the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Preceding the procession were the Patriarchate's guards holding the staffs and the students of the Patriarchal School, followed by a multitude of monks, clergy, members of the Sinai and Holy Sepulchre Brotherhoods, and Hierarchs.

During the procession, the bells of the Holy Sepulchre joyfully pealed, proclaiming this glad and festive day.

In an atmosphere of profound reverence and splendour, the Patriarchal procession entered the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, following the veneration of the Holy Tomb. In the Catholicon began the Service of the Vesting of the Hierarchs and the other participating clergy, conducted with all solemnity and sacred order, while the

bells of the All-Holy Church resounded.

Thereafter, the Service of the Confession of the Elected Archbishop of Sinai, Pharan, and Raitho, was held, followed by the Divine Liturgy with the Ordination to the Episcopate, presided over by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III. His Grace Stephanos of Hippos represented the Patriarchate of Alexandria, and His Eminence the Metropolitan Ignatios of Demetrias represented the Church of Greece.

Present, among others, were His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, Mr Georgios Gerapetritis, Her Excellency the Deputy Minister of Culture of Cyprus, Mrs. Kassianidou, the Secretary General for Religious Affairs, Mr. Kalantzis, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr. Angelopoulos, as well as a great number of dignitaries and pilgrims.

Before the ordination, His Beatitude addressed the Archbishop-elect as follows:

“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest ... but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels” (Heb. 12:18-22).

Today, in this holy and solemn hour, the Mother Church of Jerusalem — whose throne “was occupied by James, the brother of the Lord” (Eusebius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History II, 1,2) — offers thanksgiving unto the Lord, Who has vouchsafed us to behold in our midst the elevation of a new Hierarch of the venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and Hegumen of the Holy Monastery of the God-trodden Mount Sinai, for the ministry of that sacred place where God was revealed in fire and the Law was given unto man, as it is written:

“And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob” (Exod. 19:3). And again: “And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you” (Exod. 20:18-20).

As on the day of Pentecost, the Grace of the All-holy Spirit descends today upon a man whom the Monastic Brotherhood of Sinai had first elected and the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem has confirmed, him whom God Himself now appoints and the Spirit sanctifies, that he may shepherd that holy and fearful place where the Lord spoke unto Moses out of the midst of the bush, saying,

"Moses, Moses, put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exod. 3:4-5).

And Saint Gregory the Theologian says: "Ascend, O Moses, into the mount, and behold the vision of God; ascend, that you may descend unto the people with knowledge of God; ascend, that descending you may draw up the others."

Even so you also, beloved child in the Lord, ascend today unto the summit of the priesthood, that you may descend in humility and minister in love; you ascend unto the mount of fire, that is, unto the High Priesthood of Chris, that you may teach and proclaim the saving word of truth.

The mission of the High Priest, as Saint John Chrysostom says, is not a human office but a crucifixion: "Nothing is equal to the priesthood; but again nothing is more fearful, if he that draweth nigh be not pure" (On the Priesthood, Book III, PG 48, 643). For the High Priest ascends unto the altar, where he offers himself, and becomes a bridge between God and men, like another Moses, who "stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord" (Deut. 5:5).

Moreover, the Lord calls us not because we are worthy, but because we are willing to be found as lamps burning before God. In times when silence fails and confusion abounds, the venerable Monastery of Sinai and the Holy Archdiocese have a sacred mission; to preserve the holy consignment, namely, the practice of stillness and unceasing prayer which leads to the vision of the glory of God.

Thus you also, your Grace, as a shepherd "just, and having salvation; lowly" (Zech. 9:9) and true, are called to stand as light unto them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, as "a candle set on a candlestick" (Matt. 5:15), a guide in the wilderness and a teacher unto Christ.

Thy Brotherhood seeks to find in you a father, "vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, but gentle, not a brawler, not covetous" (1 Tim. 3:2-3), that is, a voice of mercy and not of judgement, "that the times of refreshing may come" (Acts 3:20).

In this fearful hour, the Church of Jerusalem fervently commends you into the hands of God; and through the laying on of the hands of Our Mediocrity and of the fellow ministers and co-celebrating bishops, by the descent, power, and grace of the Holy Spirit of Christ, (the Church of Jerusalem) proclaims the unbroken continuity of the apostolic and priestly grace which from Jerusalem hath been poured forth unto all the world.

The divine manifestation on the God-trodden Mount, and the Crucifixion and Resurrection in the very place wherein we stand, both bear witness and proclaim the Great Mystery of the Divine Providence, that is, of the Word Who was incarnate and made man through the pure and virgin blood of the Ever-Virgin Mary, conceived supernaturally by the Holy Ghost.

We therefore beseech the Lord that your high-priestly ministry may become a work of enlightenment, an example of reconciliation, unity, and meekness, and a preaching of the divine love unto all men.

And as you ascend the Holy Mount of God, keep in your heart the Lord's command unto Peter: "Follow thou me" (John 21:22), that you may "become a fisher of men" (cf. Matt. 4:19).

The Mother Church, that is, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, blesses you; the Horrendous Golgotha "stirreth thee up by putting thee in remembrance" (2 Pet. 1:13) of the exalted humility; the All-holy Tomb shines with the unwaning light of the Resurrection; and Sinai awaits you as another Moses, as a good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep.

And now, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord (Matt. 25:21)."

Then the Archbishop-elect of Sinai replied with a long and strongly emotional address, which has been posted in the link below:

[ADDRESS OF HIS EMINENCE SYMEON THE ARCHBISHOP OF SINAI AT HIS EPISCOPAL ORDINATION](#)

His ordination followed, performed by His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem, during which, at the vesting of the Hierarch, the clergy and the people cried out with one voice, " Axios, axios!"

After the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, accompanied by members of the venerable Holy Sepulchre Fathers, Hierarchs, Hieromonks, Deacons, and Monks, ascended to the Hall of the Throne of the Patriarchate, under the sounds of the bells of the Holy Sepulchre.

His Beatitude and the Holy Sepulchre Fathers were then addressed once again by

His Eminence Archbishop of Sinai, as follows:

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

“The mind grows faint”, and the tongue is unable to express the feelings that overwhelm my soul after what has just taken place in the Patriarchal Church.

The sacred Mystery accomplished upon my unworthiness through Your precious hands far surpasses my childish desire to one day become a simple minister of the Most High.

This simple minister, through the love of the Sinai Fathers and the honourable vote of the Holy Hierarchs of the Patriarchal Throne of Jerusalem, has been made today a Bishop of the Church.

Great is the Mystery! Therefore, I hold “a deep silence before the dreadful event!”

Yet since both I, the undersigned, and the accompanying Fathers and brethren continue to be recipients of the Abrahamic hospitality of the Mother of the Churches, I desire once more to express our deepest gratitude for the abundance of blessings which we have been found worthy to experience these days in the Holy City.

The genuine love of Your Patriarchal forbearance, the gracious disposition of the most honourable Hierarchs, and the kindness of the Fathers of Jerusalem are not directed only toward our persons, but reflect upon the Holy Monastery of the God-trodden Mount Sinai, of which we are called to be guardians and ministers.

The sacred place where God was revealed to man and entrusted to him His Holy Will meets today the Holy Land of Palestine, where the Divine Founder of the Church lived, taught, wrought miracles, was crucified, rose again, and ascended.

Witnesses of this encounter, as we are deemed worthy to become today under the protection of Your Beatitude, are both the Fathers of Jerusalem and those of Sinai, “in the bond of love.”

This is the message that we shall take with us upon returning to the place of the burning yet unconsumed bush, sanctified by the continual presence of the patron Saint of Sinai, the Great Martyr and All-wise Catherine.

May this love and concord, together with faithfulness in the duty of each one, inspire and guide us always, Your Beatitude, that we may be found worthy, in the end, of the Kingdom of Heaven, glorifying the Most Holy Name of the Triune God!"

A festive meal followed at the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem, during which His Beatitude addressed the newly ordained Archbishop in Greek, as follows:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1).

Your Eminence, Archbishop of the God-trodden Mount Sinai, and beloved brother in Christ, Symeon,

Following the spiritual table which took place in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, wherein the grace of the Holy Spirit appointed Your brotherly love as Archbishop of Sinai, Pharan, and Raitho, there follows this Patriarchal banquet. At this table, presided over by Your most esteemed and dear Eminence, we have as our companions the distinguished Hierarchs accompanying You, together with clergy, monks, and laymen; the Honourable Members of our Holy and Sacred Synod, the venerable Fathers of our Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, the Sinai Brotherhood, representatives of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and of the Church of Greece, the Very Reverend Representatives of the Most Holy Sister Churches of Russia and Romania, Her Excellency the Deputy Minister of Culture of Cyprus, the Most Honourable Secretary General of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs of Greece, and His Excellency the Consul General of Greece.

Following the God-inspired word of the divine Paul addressed to the Corinthians, "whether one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26), we rejoice with all our heart with the venerable and holy Sinai Brotherhood, for it has been deemed worthy by God to receive as Hegumen and Archbishop a man after the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For this reason, the present-day concerns especially the Sinai Brotherhood and its established order, which we have a sacred obligation to preserve continually, whole and unassailed by any foreign or external interference.

Today, we bear joyful witness to the concord and unbroken communion in the Holy Spirit between the autonomous Monastery of the God-trodden Mount Sinai and our venerable Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre. For, as it is written, "For this Agar is

mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is" (Gal. 4:25), showing that the historical and spiritual bond between Sinai and Jerusalem has, from ancient times, been woven into one harmonious and redeeming ministry.

The two Brotherhoods, the venerable Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood on the one hand, and the small yet steadfastly struggling Sinai Brotherhood on the other, are bound together indissolubly. For the God-trodden Mount Sinai belongs to the Third Palestine, that is, Arabia; and its Episcopate is numbered twenty-third in the ancient "Taktikon" of our Patriarchate. Its boundaries and jurisdictions were clearly defined long ago, in the time of Juvenalios, the first Patriarch of Jerusalem, in agreement with the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch.

Both Brotherhoods have ministered for centuries in the Holy Shrines of the Old and New Testaments, enduring many difficult and adverse circumstances, in order to preserve their venerable order, their inalienable privileges, sovereign rights, and historic claims therein.

Their long and turbulent history has often been marked by many trials; yet, in every circumstance, both have survived by divine assistance, for they have been rooted upon the firm foundation of the blameless Faith, upon love and devotion to the sacred Tradition.

And we are confident that, with God's good pleasure, they shall continue their ministry in better and more peaceful conditions, following in the footsteps of the blessed generations of the late Holy Sepulchre and Sinai Fathers.

Filled with feelings of sincere joy and under the fervent power of our prayers for the peace of our region and of the whole world, we raise the cup and drink to the health, prosperity, and long life of Your God-honoured Eminence, of the Holy Sinai Brotherhood, and of all the distinguished, eminent, and dearly beloved guests present with us."

The newly ordained Archbishop replied:

"Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

A short while ago, we had the opportunity to experience the mystery of the Divine Eucharist, which Your primatial hands offered, as well as the mystery of the priesthood, which ordained me, the least worthy, as a bishop of our Holy Church. And now, the spiritual nourishment is followed by the communal table, this

descendant of the apostolic “love feast” of the early Christians, which had its beginning in this Holy Land. And thus our communion is completed also through the material element, without and outside of which human existence cannot be conceived. The gathering around the table constitutes a practical confession that in the Orthodox Church , matter is not to be rejected, since it too is a creation of the uncreated God. The rational use of matter and restraint to the necessities constitutes a blessing and the will of the Beneficent God. Indeed, this gathering in the Holy City under the blessing of Your Beatitude reminds us all of the things related in the Acts of the Apostles concerning the ecclesiastical gatherings of the apostolic age, which constitute a perpetual teaching for Christians of every era.

For the Sinai monks, presence in the Holy City is always an occasion of joy and sanctification. The land of Palestine is a constant reminder of the encounter between God and man, just as, indeed, is the land of Sinai. Furthermore, however, the land of Palestine is the living testimony that “God appeared upon earth, and dwelt among men” [Baruch 3:38]. Both places, Palestine and Sinai, remind and shall remind man of digital technology and space travel that, besides the horizontal, there also exists the vertical orientation of man, however much the conditions of life may change. Furthermore, in many ways, these changes, although they appear to solve problems, rather create new ones. The daily complete enslavement of man to the machine, the unpredictable evolution of developing Biogenetics, and the spread of fear and anxiety in human societies demonstrate the immediate but also timeless need for man’s turning towards heaven. This turning perhaps becomes easier when man, and indeed man of good will, finds himself a pilgrim of the God-trodden Places, which both Brotherhoods, that of the Holy Sepulchre and that of Sinai, serve and preserve.

Your Beatitude,

In this spirit of common duty and shared Confession, we, the Sinai monks, on this auspicious day heartily thank the Mother of Churches for the gracious reception and hospitality shown to the Sinai Delegation, and raising this glass, we proclaim with all our soul:

“Long live His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem and all Palestine, and of the Most Honourd Hierarchs around Him!”

Also, let me raise a toast to the health of all the Hierarchs, clergy, and distinguished guests present, and especially of those who had come from the beloved homeland, His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gerapetritis; Her Excellency the Deputy Minister of Culture of Cyprus, Mrs. Kassianidou; the

Secretary General for Religious Affairs, Mr. Kalantzis, together with their associates; the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr. Dimitrios Angelopoulos, with his staff; and the Ambassador of Egypt to Ramallah, Mr. Ihab Solimen.”



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