

## Deacon's ordination at the Jerusalem Patriarchate



The ordination of Monk Marcellus to Deacon by His Eminence, Geronda Sacristan and Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis was held during the All-night Vigil at the Holy Sepulchre, on 3/19 December 2020. The ordained Deacon Marcellus is distinguished for his Higher Education, the excellent command of foreign languages and his spiritual education in a long-term preparation by the Reverend Geronda Ephraim of Arizona. He became a Monk there and after a two-year ministry in the Shrine of Bethlehem, has recently been appointed by H.H.B. Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and the Holy and Sacred Synod as the Hegoumen of the Shrine of Saint George in Lydda.

Just before the ordination, the ordaining Archbishop addressed Fr Marcellus with the following fatherly words:

“Reverend Sub-deacon Marcellus,

The grace of God has deemed us worthy to be here in the Holy Sepulchre and proceed to your ordination to Deacon, after the decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod. It was indeed an unexpected decision for you, a decision you had not even

considered, because, when you decided to abandon the worldly life, you had as a prototype a great ascetic, the memorable and blessed Fr Ephraim, who was a disciple of a great Saint, Joseph the Hesychast. You envied his life of Hesychasm and this was your goal, as Peter of Damascus says: "Hesychasm is greater than everything else, and without it, we cannot be cleansed from our passions, nor the cunningness of the devil, as moreover, we are unable to realize God's power and providence that we find in the divine words that are chanted and read in the Church Services".

At some point in your life, you were attracted by the Holy Land, as many Saints were in the past. You left your beloved Monastery in the U.S.A. and travelled miles away, to be at the places that were blessed and sanctified by the Incarnate Presence of our Saviour. You had the privilege to serve in Bethlehem, where we are going to celebrate the joyous event of the Incarnation of the Divine Word in a few days.

However, the demand of the time, the needs of the flock, the logical sheep of Christ, forced you to leave your beloved hesychasm and be involved in the turbulence of the world. From now on, you will need to put yourself to a spiritual test.

You will strive to keep the three virtues of hesychasm; temperance, silence and self-condemnation, the queen of virtues, which is humility, as you will have to combine them with the pastoral ministry, the liturgical teaching, and the discretion in the shaping of souls. Too much toil, and too little time. You will lose the precious time you enjoyed when you could retire to your cell and were devoted to your studying and prayer.

Now you will have an open ear to the agony of the parent, the pain of the patient, the complaint of the mistreated, and at the same time, you will fatherly reprimand the one who is led astray, you will re-direct in the right path the one who is misled, and you will make yourself a shield, to protect Christ's flock from the various enemies of the Church, both near and afar.

There will be times when you will be too busy to pray like you used to. But in those times, you should remember Starets Parthenios, who sacrificed himself in the ministry of the faithful, and when the noetic lions came to devour him, then the prayers of the faithful people protected him from the temptation.

The Church of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos, and the Holy and Sacred Synod, do not send you alone and defenceless in this fight. On the contrary,

they arm you with the greatest weapon, the Priesthood, which is held on earth but has its place in heaven.

The divine grace of the All-holy and Ceremonial Spirit will overshadow and enlighten you to always act according to God's will and strengthen the souls of the Christians who are burdened by the worldly life and cares.

Accept, therefore, this divine gift in humility, and kneel before the greatness of the Thrice-holy God, especially here, in the Holy and Life-giving Sepulchre, where you have the special blessing to stand, and let yourself be altered by the Divine Grace."

Then Fr Marcellus entered the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre by the Angel's stone.

With the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the placing of the Archbishop's hands, those present honoured the ordained with the exclamation "Axios, Axios".

The ordination was followed by a reception at the Office of Geronda Sacristan.

The next morning, the newly ordained Deacon received His Beatitude's blessing at the Patriarchate Headquarters.

**From Secretariat-General**

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