**His Beatitude Youssef Absi**

For the past 150 years the Patriarchs of the Melkite Catholic Church have served as the Spiritual Protectors of The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem.

On May 6, 1973, Youssef Absi was ordained a priest and became Chaplain of the Missionary Society of Saint Paul. After the conclusion of philosophical and theological studies at the Major Seminary of St. Paul in Harissa (Lebanon), he obtained a licenciate in philosophy at the Lebanese University, licenciate in theology at the Institute of St Paul in Harissa, and a doctorate in musical science and hymnography at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik.

On June 22, 2001, he was appointed Titular Archbishop of Tarsus of Greek Melkites and Curial Bishop and Auxiliary Bishop in the Melkite Patriarchate. Melkite Patriarchate of Antioch Gregory III Laham, BS, was his consecrator and the co-consecrators were Archbishop Jean Mansour, SMSP, titular archbishop of Apamea in Syria dei Greco-Melkiti and Archbishop Joseph Kallas, SMSP, Archeparch of Beirut and Jbeil, on September 2, 2001. From 2001 to 2006, he was Superior General of his religious community. Since 2007 he has been Patriarchal Vicar in the Archdiocese of Damascus. He assisted as co-consecrator at the Episcopal Ordination of Yasser Ayyash, Archbishop of Petra and Philadelphia in Jordan.

Bishop Youssef Absi was elected on June 21, 2017, as the patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. The election of Bishop Absi came a month after Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Gregory III Laham.