

INAUGURATION OF THE RESTORED OLIVE PRESS OF THE CHURCH OF RESURRECTION

On Saturday 23rd of May 2009 at the Church of Resurrection the ceremony of the Blessing of the Water was performed on the occasion of the inauguration of the restored part of the Church known as 'doheo'.

The site, located west of the Holy Sepulchre, is one of the most ancient parts of the Church of Resurrection and it is in the complete and sole sovereignty of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate. At this site there is an ancient olive press, stone aqueducts for the canalization of olive oil into a reservoir or 'doheo' for preservation in order to be used for the lighting of the numerous suspended oil lamps in the Church. This olive press dates back to the early years of the Church's construction from the time of St.Helen and thus is of great archaeological importance, not just for its age but also for its functionalism in producing and distributing the oil.

This ancient part of the Church aroused the interest of His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III from when he was ministering as the Sacristan of the Church of Resurrection and soon after His election to the Patriarchal Throne he took the opportunity and suggested to Mr. Petros Kyriakidis to undertake the cost of restoring and distinguishing this ancient olive press and its surrounding functions. Mr. Kyriakidis expressed his alacrity and donated the finances for securing and restoring the olive press, cleaning and revealing its adjacent operating parts with the supervision by the Architect and director of the Technical Office of the Church of Resurrection Mr. Theodosios Mitropoulos, along with a specialist workforce. The restoration was carried out over a

year or so and was completed recently. On completion of the restoration works the sponsors were invited to Jerusalem to attend the inauguration.

On Saturday morning of 23rd May, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III descended to the Church of Resurrection accompanied by Archbishops and priests of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, the prominent guests Mr. Petros Kyriakidis and his son, together with Mr. Lavrentis Lavrentiadis escorted by the director of the N.G.O 'Romiosini', Mrs. Ekaterini Diamantopolou, a philologist and doctor in philosophy.

They venerated the Stone of Anointing and the Holy Sepulchre and walked behind it where the site of the olive press 'doheo' is located. Firstly the ceremony of the Blessing of the Water was performed and then Mr. Mitropoulos showed the guests around the restored olive press and its adjacent functions. Following this, they venerated the Holy Calvary, the Chapel of Adam and the Sacristy of the Church of Resurrection.

His Beatitude, on the occasion of Mr. Kyriakidis and Mr. Lavrentiadis' pilgrimage to the Church of Resurrection, took the opportunity and spoke about the beneficial effect this Holy place has for the souls of believers and the role that the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre fulfils. He then commented on the renovations carried out on the Church of Resurrection, such as the Catholicon and the ones ought to, expressing the Patriarchates' gratitude to the sponsor, the Greek Government.

From the Church of Resurrection, His Beatitude, with the prominent guests and the Fathers, ascended to the Patriarchate.

In the Throne Hall His Beatitude thanked Mr.Kyriakidis and Mr.Lavrentiadis for their good intentions and their material contribution to the Holy Sepulchre and decorated each one as 'Great Commander of the Order of Orthodox Cross-bearers of the Holy Sepulchre'. This has always been the established decoration that the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre has honoured heads of Churches and States or other personalities that contributed ethically or materially to the Holy Pilgrim Places.

His Beatitude characterized the decorated guests not only as pilgrims but also as benefactors to the Patriarchate and to the Brotherhood's mission in safeguarding and preserving the Holy Places, the tabernacle of our Lord Jesus Christ who was incarnated, crucified and Risen for us, substantiates the Roman Orthodox Nation and is the source from which we derive power.

Mr.Kyriakidis and Mr.Lavrentiadis were deeply moved and thanked His Beatitude and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, stating that not only themselves but also their descendants will be forever friends and indeed supporters and defenders of the Holy Sepulchre.

After the honouring ceremony His Beatitude invited the honoured guests accompanied by Fathers of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre for lunch.

On Saturday afternoon, Mr.Kyriakidis with his son, Mr.Lavrentiadis and Mrs. Diamantopoulou visited the Grotto at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the historic Monasteries of St. Savvas and St.Theodosios, the leaders of coenobitic and lauretic way of life in the Judean desert. On Sunday morning they participated in the Holy Liturgy at the Church of Resurrection and afterwards visited the Monastery of

the Temptation of our Lord (Sarantarion) and St. Gerasimos in the Jordan desert, accompanied by clergy of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood before departing for Athens.

Chief Secretary's Office

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