

# **CELEBRATION OF THE DORMITION OF THE ALL HOLY MOTHER OF GOD IN JERUSALEM**

The Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Gethsemane remained open continuously after the ceremony of the 'Epitaphios' for the thousands of pilgrims that descended its scales, lighting candles and venerating the all holy tomb of the All Holy Mother of God and her holy icon of Dormition.

The Great Vesper, initiated at 3 p.m., was presided over by His Eminence Christodoulos Metropolitan of Eleftheroupoleos and Elder Dragouman, with participating Hieromonks and Fathers of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre. Also present were sojourned priests from other Orthodox Churches.

On the morning of the feast day, around 7.30 a.m., His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III descended to Gethsemane and presided at the festive Holy Liturgy at the Tomb of the Mother of God concelebrating with members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre; His Eminence Isychios Metropolitan of Capitolias, His Eminence Christodoulos Metropolitan of Eleftheroupoleos and Elder Dragouman, His Eminence Dorotheos Archbishop of Avila, His Eminence Methodios Archbishop of Mt. Tabor, along with many priests. The sojourned Bishop from Greece, His Eminence Eugenios Bishop of Knossos of the Church of Crete also concelebrated with the Brotherhood members. A large number of pilgrims arrived and participated in the Holy Liturgy, lighting candles, filling and brightening the scales of the church.

Numerous devout believers received the Holy Communion from His Beatitude at the Tomb's gate while others received the Holy Communion from the priest serving at the First Martyr St. Stephen chapel and from the priest serving at the chapel of

the righteous Forefathers of God St. Ioakim and St. Anna.

After the Holy Liturgy and the sharing of the Holy Bread – ‘Antidoron’, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, escorted by concelebrates, ascended to the Superior’s house – ‘hegoumenio’ where the Superior Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Filoumenos profusely offered grapes, sweets and refreshments.

His Beatitude bestowed His Patriarchal blessings upon the concelebrating Archbishops and priests, the Superior Rev. Arch. Fr. Filoumenos and the devout celebrating believers and implored the help and protection of the All Holy Mother of God, for her intercession to the Lord for our sanctification and salvation.

His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III thanked the Superior Rev. Archimandrite Filoumenos for the orderly performance of the holy Feast of the Dormition of the All Holy Mother of God and said that the Mother of God ‘Theotokos’ is the cause of the salvation of humankind, since she responded to the call of God and gave her flesh to the incarnate Son and Logos of God, Her Son who became man, our Saviour Jesus Christ. She then served Him throughout His earthly life until His crucifixion and she was the first to receive the message of the Resurrection. The Virgin Mary died as a human and was buried at the all holy Tomb in Gethsemane, but was taken by her son Jesus Christ in soul and body for her All Holiness to the heavens, ever vigilant in intercession and protection of humanity.

This grand Theotokos feast completed the cycle of the devout festive celebrations in honouring the person of the All Holy Theotokos – during the period up to the Fifteenth of August – by the Zion Mother-of-Churches. After eight days, on the 23<sup>rd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> of August, the leave-taking ‘Apodosis’ of this feast took place and the holy icon of the Dormition, placed for veneration in the area of the ‘Platytera’ – behind the Tomb of the Theotokos, was brought to its chapel opposite the

Church of Resurrection.

The feast of the Dormition of the 'Theotokos' was also celebrated with devoutness and generous participation of believers at the town of Abud near Ramallah, where the church is named in honour of the Dormition of the All Holy Mother of God. In Abud, escorted by Fathers from Jerusalem, His Eminence Theodosios Archbishop of Sevasteia, presided at the festive Holy Liturgy preaching the divine word to the believers.

### **Chief Secretary's Office**

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