

# THE FEAST OF ST. CONSTANTINE AND ST. HELEN THE EQUAL-TO- THE APOSTLES AT THE PATRIARCHATE.

In the person of Emperor Constantine the Great and his mother Empress St. Helen, the Church acknowledges the Saints as divinely crowned royals and equal-to-the-apostles.

It is so because they embraced Christianity, they gave an end to the three century long Christian persecution and allowed the free practice of Christianity by believers through the royal decree of Mediolanum of 312 A.D.

The Church of Jerusalem, the Church of the Holy Places, has special reason to honour St. Constantine and St. Helen since they distinguished the Holy Places that were, up until then, in darkness due to heathenism. It was they that founded the Church of Resurrection in Jerusalem, the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem and others in the Holy Places.

The Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre as guardian and protector of the Holy Places is proud that the Church of the Brotherhood is named after these Saints, equal-to-the-apostles and illustrious royals.

The feast was celebrated at this Church, contiguous to the Holy Sepulchre, with particular splendour, grace and order by the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> of May / 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2010.

In the early evening Great Vesper was performed along with the ceremony of the Blessing of the Bread, presided over by the Superior of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, His

Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

According to the custom following the Vesper, His Beatitude and the Fathers shared 'kollyva', bread and wine at the duly prepared forecourt of the Church.

On the morning of the feast day His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III presided at the Matins and the Holy Liturgy concelebrating with priests, members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.

After a resplendent and devout Holy Liturgy, His Beatitude in full Vestment together with concelebrating priests and Archbishops of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, headed in chanting procession to the Patriarchate.

While exiting the Central Monastery towards the Patriarchate, traditional bread for blessing was offered to all the participants by sister Serafima and hierodeacon Paisios who are responsible of the Patriarchate's bakery.

His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III received the participating devout believers at the Throne Hall.

A monastic Lenten lunch then followed for the members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.

**Chief Secretary's Office.**

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