

# **THE FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE VENERABLE AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS AT THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM.**

The Feast of the Elevation of the Venerable and Life –giving Cross was celebrated at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> / 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2011 according to the centuries-old traditions of the Holy Lands.

The origins of this feast can be found in the year 326 A.D. when during the Consecration of the Church of the Resurrection, the construction of which lasted from 326 to 336 A.D. the then Archbishop of the Church of Jerusalem, Makarios elevated – along with St. Helen – the Holy Cross, so that not only the Lord's people who were at close range but also the people who were congregating from afar would also be able to see it.

This act remained in the consciousness of the Church and is performed every year, not on the date commemorating the Consecration of the Church of Resurrection on the 13<sup>th</sup> September, but on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the same month.

On the eve of the solemn feast, the Great Vesper was performed at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, after the formal entrance and the veneration of the Stone of Anointment and the Holy Sepulchre. The ceremony of the Blessing of the Bread then took place, presided over by the Superior of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III. Archbishops, Fathers and believers participated devoutly.

On the morning of the feast day a Patriarchal Holy Liturgy was

performed at the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, presided over by His Beatitude celebrating along with Archbishops of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and sojourned Archbishops from the Church of Greece, Russia, Serbia and Estonia. Hieromonks of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre also participated along with priests of other Orthodox Churches.

After the Holy Liturgy, the Litany commenced from the Catholicon through to the Stone of Anointment, to the chapel of Adam and the chapel of the Thorn Wreath and concluded at the cave where the Holy Cross was found.

In this area, the Holy Cross was elevated by the Patriarch towards the four points of the Horizon according to the rights and traditions of the Orthodox Church. His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, Fathers and the General Consul of Greece in Jerusalem His Excellency Mr. Soterios Athanasiou, venerated the elevated Holy Cross, which contains a piece of the Holy Wood.

From this point, where the Holy Cross was found, the procession continued towards the Holy Calvary, where once more the Holy Cross was elevated towards the four points of the Horizon by his Beatitude.

From the Holy Calvary the Litany processed through the internal staircase to the Holy Altar of the Catholicon and then solemnly ascended to the Central Monastery the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

In the Throne Hall, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III received the devout pilgrims blessing them on the occasion of this worldwide feast of the elevation of the Venerable and Life-giving Cross of our Lord.

**Chief Secretary's Office.**

