

THE FEAST OF THE PROPHET ELISEUS IN JERICHO

On Thursday the 14th/27th June 2013, the feast of Prophet Eliseus was celebrated by the Patriarchate in Jericho, at the Church dedicated to St Eliseus the Prophet. The existence here of this holy church in the name of St Eliseus is explained by the fact that he, hailing from the town of Meouli in the region of the valley of the river Jordan, was active in the city of Jericho, too. One of the many miracles he had performed in divine power and fortification, was the transformation of the waters of a living spring in Jericho from bitter and deadly to sweet, drinkable and wholesome, to this very day.

From Jericho, the prophet Eliseus departed with his teacher, the Prophet Elias, and on the river Jordan he beheld him being taken up in a fiery chariot, whereupon he requested and received his grace and mantle, with which he crossed the river Jordan. The Holy Monastery dedicated to his name lies on the spot where according to tradition stood Zacchaeus' sycamore tree.

To this Monastery came His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem on the morning of the aforementioned day, and led the divine Liturgy. Co-officiating were the Most Reverend Aristarchos, Grand Chancellor and Archbishop of Constantina; the Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem, Theophylaktos, Archbishop of Jordan; Archimandrite f. Ieronymos from the Archbishopric of the Church of Cyprus; the Hegoumen of the Monastery of St Gerasimos of Jordan, Archimandrite f. Chrysostomos; the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of Hozeva, Archimandrite f. Constantinos; Archdeacon f. Athanasios and deacon f. Makarios and other Guardians of the Holy Sepulcher. Members of the Greek Orthodox Arab-

speaking Community of Jericho and pilgrims from Jerusalem and other cities participated devoutly.

To the pious congregation, His Beatitude preached God's word, an excerpt of which is cited here:

Today's feast of St Eliseus the Prophet coincides with the post-festive period of the Sacred and Great feast of Pentecost, namely the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of fiery tongues upon the disciples and apostles of God, Our Saviour Jesus Christ. This fact truly has a great significance, as on the illustrious day of Pentecost, the Holy Church of Christ was perfected, according to the words of the Holy Chrysostom.

And this spirit is the Spirit of promise, and the completion of hope, in other words the Paraclete about whom the Lord said to his disciples: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (Jn 14, 16-17). "He will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning" (Jn 15, 26-27).

[...] This means that all Prophets through whom the truth of the Holy Triadic God was revealed to the world, as well as the Holy Disciples, through whom was preached the Gospel of Salvation, namely Christ, the Incarnate Word, across the entire world, comprise together with the martyrs of Christ's love, the cornerstones on which is build the visible and invisible house of God, namely, the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ within which the great and indeed paradoxical sacrament of man's salvation is performed". [...]

After the Liturgy, His Beatitude read the prayer of the saint's *kollyva* [boiled wheat], blessed fruit, figs and grapes and was received at the hegoumen's quarters by the hegoumen, Archimandrite f. Philoumenos, who subsequently offered lunch to the Patriarchal retinue and the congregation.

From the Secretariat-General

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