

THE FEAST OF ST GEORGE THE GREAT-MARTYR IN LYDDA

On Saturday the 3rd/16th of November 2013, the feast of the translation of the relics of St George the Trophy-Bearer and Great-Martyr was celebrated in the Holy Church dedicated to him in Lydda.

The Holy Church of St George was the first to be built in his honour after the Edict of Milan was issued by St Constantine in 313 AD, by his mother St Helena who came to the Holy Land in 326 AD. St Helena built the church on the grave wherein the saint's holy relics had been translated by his servant from Rome. In Rome St George suffered a martyr's death after having confessed his faith in Christ, thus abandoning the Roman army to join the army of Christ's martyrs.

This holy Church conquered the force of time and the alternation of powers in the Holy Land. It has been conferred on the basis of the building's history and structure, half of the building has been seized to be used as a mosque.

In the remaining magnificent part of the church, on top of the tomb which has been preserved in the form of a crypt-chapel, His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem led the Divine Liturgy. His Beatitude was welcomed by the Boy Scouts of the city of Lydda; the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery, the Very Reverend Archimandrite Sophronios; the Greek-Orthodox Council, Majlis, and the Acting Mayor of the city of Lydda, Mr Abib Wasserman. Co-officiating were the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Capitoliass, and His Eminence the Archbishop of Joppe, Damaskinos; the Elder Secretary-General Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina; the Most Reverend Metropolitan of Archangelsk, Daniel, visiting from the Church of Russia; the Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod, His Eminence Demetrios, the Archbishop of Lydda;

the Exarch of the Holy Sepulcher in Constantinople, His Eminence Nektarios, the Archbishop of Anthedon; Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, the Hegoumen of Remli, Archimandrite Nephon; Arab-speaking Presbyters and Hierodeacons; the Greek Ambassador to Tel Aviv, Mr Spyridon Lambrides; the Serb Ambassador, and a great crowd of faithful from the city of Lydda and the neighbouring countries of Joppe and Remli, but also from the cities of Galilee and the occupied areas of Judea and Samaria, whilst, under the direction of the Head Cantor of the All-Holy Church of the Resurrection, Archimandrite Aristovoulos, the choir chanted in Greek, Arabic, Russian and Romanian, the congregation participating piously.

To the faithful, who had gathered to venerate the tomb of St George in piety, respect and devoutness, His Beatitude preached the Word of God during the *Koinonikon* of the Divine Liturgy. This is an excerpt from His speech in Greek:

[...] The festive commemoration of the martyrdom of St George, my dear brothers, as well as his time, is not the historical past; it is indeed the present and the future. And this we say in the face of an indisputable reality of displacement, of persecutions and martyric deaths of innocent children and our fellow human beings, especially our brothers in conviction and religion, both near and far from what Paul has termed our temporary stay; to this very reality the word of the Gospel can be fully applied: "in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God" (Jn: 16:2) Indeed: as if this weren't enough, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think that not only is he not committing a crime, but that with this murder he is worshipping God. [...]

In other words, the work of the devil has many times been conducted in the guise of God's deacon and many times ferocious enemies of the truth in Christ sat "in the Temple of God", (2 Thessalonians, 2:4)

In Arabic, the speech may be read here:
<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2013/11/16/2822>

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, Archimandrite Sophronios offered refreshments and pastries to the Patriarchal Retinue and the crowd, in the Hegoumen's Quarters opposite the church. At noon, lunch was offered by the Hegoumen and the city's Community Council at "Nandi" –Orthodox Group, in the presence of the Acting Mayor of the city of Remli, Mr Abib Wasserman; former MP, the Christian Nadia Heloue, and a representative of the Islamic Community of Remli.

There, His Beatitude addressed those present with this speech:
<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2013/11/16/2821>

and went on to offer monetary assistance for the benefit of the Community and the Boy Scouts of the city of Lydda.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/WQhwDhVGbhI>

