

THE FEAST OF ST PHILOUMENOS THE HIEROMARTYR AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday the 15th/28th of November 2013, the Hieromartyr Saint Philoumenos the Hagiotaphite was commemorated one day in advance due to pastoral reasons.

The feast was celebrated at Jacob's Well, where the then Hegoumen, Archimandrite Philoumenos, had suffered a martyr's death on the 16th/29th of November 1979. Following a decision in 2009 of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Saint's martyrdom was added to the Synaxarion of Hieromartyrs (Martyrology).

His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, led the divine Liturgy on the morning of the aforementioned day. Co-officiating were the Most Reverend Kyriakos, Metropolitan of Nazareth; the Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem, His Eminence Theophylaktos, Archbishop of Jordan; and the Most Reverend Isaiah, Metropolitan of Tamassos and Orinis, visiting from the Church of Cyprus. The liturgy was held in the presence of a crowd of local Orthodox faithful from the region of Samaria but also from Jerusalem, and pilgrims from Greece, Russia, Romania as well as a group from Cyprus, led by the Metropolitan of Tamassos, Isaiah. The choir chanted under the direction of the Head Cantor of the All-Holy Church of the Resurrection, Archimandrite Aristovoulos, in Greek, Arabian and Russian.

During the *Koinonikon* of the divine Liturgy, His Beatitude preached the Word of God in Greek. This is an excerpt from His speech:

[...] Christ's martyrs occupy a prominent position in the ranks

of saints of the Church. And this because their blood, shed for the light of truth in Christ, has made them communicants of Christ's redeeming blood, "who hath purchased the church of God, with his own blood", (Acts 20, 28). After all, those without hope, and without God in the world, according to the wise Paul, "who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ...consequently, they are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household", (Eph. 2, 12-19).

In other words, my dears, the blood of the martyrs is what has made them fellow citizens of the first-born saints and members of Christ's household. And this is exactly what the memory of the holy martyrs calls upon us, to become fellow citizens of the saints and members of Christ's household. "Have you honoured the martyr by presence? Honour him, too by correction of kin. Because to honour the martyr is to emulate the martyr", says the Holy Chrysostom. And this because: any disorderly attachment to the body and to the vanity of this world is a burden and a weight that hinders us from running the good race, the race "marked out for us" (Hebr. 12, 1) "throwing off the burden of the living things and their concerns, and with them negligence and sloth", says the commentator Ecumenios.

Martyr Philoumenos whom we celebrate today, having joined the cloud, namely the crowd of the martyrs of the Church of Christ, is not only a witness of this world, but keeps witnessing in heavens in favour of truth and the redeeming faith in Christ, though invisible amongst us.

The divine Liturgy was followed by lunch, hosted by the founder of the Church that stands on Jacob's Well in the name of St Photini of Samaria, Hegoumen, Archimandrite Ioustinos.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/QCWHbViSWRw>

