

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY MONASTERY OF HOZEVA

On Tuesday the 8th/21st of January 2014, the feast of the Holy Monastery of Hozeva was celebrated.

The Monastery is one of the most ancient in Palestine; it lies on the slope of the torrent of Horrath which, passing through Jericho, flows into the Dead Sea.

On the footsteps of the first ascetics, Promon, Aias, Zenon and Yannaïos, the Monastery had distinguished Hegoumens, i.e. St John the Bishop of Caesarea, Palestine who came here after abandoning his Episcopal duties in the fifth c., as well as St George the Cypriot, who in fact renovated the Monastery in the wake of the destructive Persian invasion in 614 AD.

It is to the name of these two saints, considered to be the Monastery's proprietors, that the Monastery is dedicated, having survived several damages through a turbulent history. Remembered fondly as Hegoumens of the Monastery are – the late Archimandrite Amphilochios, its dedicated servant for more than thirty years; the late Archimandrite Antonios of Thessaloniki, killed when a wall of the Narthex collapsed during repairs; the late Archimandrite Germanos of Thessaloniki, murdered on his way to the Monastery by an unholy hand; the Hegoumen of Abba Gerasimus of the Jordan, Archimandrite f. Chrystostomos, who took over as Hegoumen for a transitional period of time after a rock had landed on the Monastery. Today, Archimandrite Constantinos is the Hegoumen, having joined the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood from the Church of Greece.

In this historical Monastery, which is greatly loved and very often visited by pilgrims, either Orthodox or not, both Christians and non Christians, His Beatitude Theophilos, our

Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, was received warmly by the Hegoumen, Archimandrite Constantinos.

In his welcome speech, Archimandrite Constantinos referred to Sts Johns and George as “having given breath to the barren desert, given life to the area of the torrent of Horrath. The purpose and objective of their arrival to this consecrated site was their pure intention to cleanse themselves from passions.”

“Therefore”, the Hegoumen went on to say, “they became models to be emulated from that time to the present day; models of safe and successful sailing across the sea of life. Because only if man offers God his exclusive love, when he does everything there is to cleanse his heart, when he fervently wishes to communicate with God, only then shall he be given the evangelic: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5, 8).

At the conclusion of the Hegoumen’s speech, His Beatitude Theophilos led the commemoration of Sts John and George the Hozevites during a nocturnal vigil. Co-officiating were the Patriarchal Commissioner, His Eminence Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias; the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina; and the Hegoumen, Archimandrite Constantinos. A crowd of pious Christians, monks and nuns, locals and pilgrims participated in the celebration.

To this pious congregation His Beatitude preached the Word of God in Greek, referring to the Epiphany of Christ in the Jordan river, through which He “vanquished the domain, the power of sin, investing within Himself our human nature with the new garment of imperishableness”.

“It is precisely this garment of the divine and sanctifying and unapproachable light”, His Beatitude added, “that Hosios Father George, hailing from Cyprus, had put on. Of the same garment of the divine light of the Holy Spirit we are called

to become communicants and sharers”.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the Patriarchal Retinue as well as the entire congregation were hosted to lunch at the monastery, after which His Beatitude left for Jerusalem.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/MPYI2p4CJDk>

