

THE FEAST OF ST THEODOSIUS THE CENOBIARCH

On Saturday, the 11th/24th of January 2015, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of St Theodosius the Cenobiarch in the Monastery dedicated to his name and which lies in the desert of Judea.

The Monastery was founded by St Theodosius himself, having arrived in the Holy Land from his homeland of Cappadocia after the middle of the 5th century. Here he set up a Cenobium, leading all cenobites in Palestine, hence the epithet "Cenobiarch". In parallel to his monastic work, he also set up a Home for the Old and an Orphanage.

The Cenobium numbered approximately 400 monks and four Churches. For a monk to enter the Monastery, he was required to work with his hands. A school for monks also operated within the Cenobium. Their Beatitudes Sophronius and Modestus, Patriarchs of Jerusalem, hailed from this Cenobium.

Hosios Theodosius was a fellow countryman of Hosios Savvas the Consecrated. The two of them played a significant role against the heresy of Monophysitism and in favour of the Christological dogma of the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon, namely Christ's single hypostasis and two natures.

The Monastery, damaged by time and raids, was first renovated in the early 20th century by Monk Leontios of Crete, then by Archbishop Bartholomew of Madaba. Today, its Abbot, Archimandrite Ierotheos, carries on the work of its restoration and protection.

His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, led the Divine Liturgy on the day of the feast, with co-officiating Primates, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, visiting priests, Arab-

speaking presbyters, Archdeacon Evlogios and deacon Markos. Archimandrite Aristovoulos sang in Greek, Arabic, Russian and Romanian, in the presence of a crowd of faithful, mainly from the Village of the Shepherds, and pilgrims from Greece, Cyprus, Russia and Ukraine.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a procession in the forecourt of the Monastery, in the Cave of the Magi, wherein lies the tomb of St Theodosius, and at the tomb of the late Archbishop Bartholomew of Madaba, where prayers were read for the repose of his soul.

During lunch at the Monastery, Abbot Ierotheos thanked His Beatitude for His interest in the affairs of the Monastery and for His presence in the feast. Patriarch Theophilos praised the Abbot for his diligence and wished that he be guided by St Theodosius in carrying on his work.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/PJ1U9pzFfz4>

