

THREE-DAY CELEBRATIONS AT ST SAVVA THE SANCTIFIED MONASTERY

A. The feast of St John Damascene

On Thursday the 4th/17th of December 2015, the memory of St John Damascene was observed at the chapel within St Savva Monastery, which also contains his tomb.

As is well known, St John Damascene, hailing from Syria, had lived as a monk at the Monastery of St Savva the Sanctified, where he went on to triumph as a great theologian, poet and musician with his work “An Exposition of the Orthodox faith” and the dogmatic hymns of the Octoechos.

At the aforementioned chapel that had been the cell of St John Damascene, the Most Reverend Joachim, Metropolitan of former Zambia, led the d. Liturgy and Vigil. Co-officiating with him were Archimandrite Ignatios, hegoumen at the Monastery of the Shepherds, and Hierodeacon Markos. Hagiosabbite Fathers sang in the presence of pious Hagiotaphites and members of the Arabic-speaking flock from the Village of the Shepherds, Bethlehem and Beit Jala.

On the conclusion of the d. Liturgy, guests were treated to *kollyva* and bread with wine and cake at the Monastery’s narthex.

B. The feast of hosios Savva the Sanctified

Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem arrived specifically from Jerusalem for the feast of St Savva the Sanctified, and went on to lead Vespers with the Compline service, the Salutations of St Savva and the Breaking of Bread, followed after midnight by Matins and the divine Liturgy. Co-officiating were

Metropolitan Joachim of former Zambia, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Archimandrite Ignations, other Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Arabic-speaking presbyters, Archdeacon Evlogios and deacon Markos. Archimandrite Aristovoulos sang in Greek and Russian, with Archimandrite Philotheos singing in Arabic. Attending the service were Hagiotaphites and Hagsabbites, as well as members of the Arabic-speaking flock from Jerusalem, mostly the Village of the Shepherds, Bethlehem and Beit Jala.

To the pious congregations His Beatitude Theophilos preached the Word of God in Greek.

The divine Liturgy was followed by procession thrice around the Tomb of St Savva, after which the Patriarch distributed the *antidoron*.

Kollyva, bread and wine were offered at the Narthex, followed by monastic meatless lunch, blessed by His Beatitude.

After lunch, the Patriarch went on to venerate at the Monastery of Abba Theodosius the Cenobiarch before leaving for Jerusalem.

From the Secretariat-General

