

THE FEAST OF STS CONSTANTINE AND HELEN AT THE PATRIARCHATE (2016)

On Friday, the 21st of May/3rd of June 2016, the Patriarchate observed the memory of the glorious and pious kings, Constantine and Helen, recognised by the Church as equals to the apostles. Constantine the Great had proclaimed, with the Edict of Milan in 312 AD, the freedom for Christians to spread their faith and worship and build Christian churches, the first of which was the Church of the Resurrection, erected on Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre.

To commemorate these two saints and protectors of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, Vespers was held at the church dedicated to their names, led by Patriarch Theophilos. Archimandrite Eusebius sang on the right and Archimandrite Alexios on the left, with Hagiotaphite Fathers as concelebrants. Members of the Arabic-speaking flock in Jerusalem and members of the Greek Parish attended the service.

On the conclusion of Vespers, Fathers sat in the forecourt where they received *kollyva* [boiled wheat] and rusk with wine.

On feast-day, Matins and the Divine Liturgy were led by Patriarch Theophilos, having Hagiotaphite Hieromonks as concelebrants in the presence of the Greek Consul-General to Jerusalem, Mr G. Zacharoudiakis, monks, locals and pilgrims from Greece, Russia and Ukraine.

After the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude and officiating Priests and Primate walked in procession to the Patriarchates. Passing through the gate, they received the blessing of bread made by Hieromonk Paisios and Elder Nun

Seraphima. At the Patriarchate, a supplication was made before the Patriarch addressed guests in Greek.

“The first among idolater Roman Emperors to be proclaimed king of the Christians, Constantine the Great, has sealed the world in general and the Holy Land in particular with the salvaging instrument of the Holy and Life-giving Cross of our God and Saviour, Christ”, said Patriarch Theophilos. “The Cross, for which St Paul says “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians, 1, 18). “The salvaging power of the Cross”, added His Beatitude, “is proclaimed and confessed by the most holy shrines of the mystery of the divine economy, namely the Nativity, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, upon which fine Churches and Monasteries, known as Constantineans, have been erected and in which the honourable members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood have taken up residence as guardians, deacons and officiants”. “The Church of the Resurrection”, the Patriarch concluded, “is where the testament of the Evangelic and apostolic truth is maintained alive and unscathed, alongside the hope of the Resurrection and new life in Christ”.

This great feast of the founders, patrons and protectors of the Most Holy Shrines and of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood was sealed by tangible and spiritual communion and participation in festive monastic lunch.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/WcMlJXjuhWo>

<httpv://youtu.be/FdDRpF5Hyhk>

<httpv://youtu.be/rJxZB-l6qW4>

