

THE FEAST OF ST JAMES THE BROTHER OF GOD AT THE PATRIARCHATE (2016)

On Saturday, the 23rd of October/5th of November 2016, the Patriarchate observed the memory of St James the Brother of God, first Bishop of Jerusalem, at the Cathedral dedicated to his name, connecting the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood with the Church of the Resurrection and used, over the last centuries, for the veneration needs of the Arabic-speaking Rum Orthodox Community of Jerusalem.

St James is called Equal to the Apostles for, as son to Joseph the Betrothed, he is considered the Lord's brother by law. This was established by the Lord so that he would become, after His Resurrection and Ascension, the first Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem. During his diaconate, St James had played a significant role in the affairs of the Church of Jerusalem, leading the First Apostolic Synod of Jerusalem in 49 AD, and writing his Catholic Epistle in the New Testament "on the twelve tribes of Israel in diaspora". He suffered a martyr's death for Christ, when pushed down by the Jews from the arch of the Temple of Solomon.

His Beatitude Theophilos led Vespers, Matins and the divine Liturgy for the feast, having as concelebrants Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebaste and Michael of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, i.e. the Elder Kamarasis, Archimandrite Nektarios, the vicar of the church, f. Charalambos-Farah Bantour, Archdeacon Markos and deacon Agapios. The congregation consisted of Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox faithful, and pilgrims from Greece, Russia and Ukraine.

To the pious, His Beatitude spoke in Greek, quoting words from the Catholic Epistle of St James and the significance of patience in Christ: *"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him"* (James 1, 12). Similarly, Patriarch Theophilos quoted the Apostle Paul from the Epistle to the Romans (5 2-5): *And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

"The value of patience" the Patriarch added, *"has been demonstrated by the Lord Himself, who said: "By your patience, possess your souls" (Luke 21, 19). In other words, patience is compared to fire through which gold is tried and cleaned, just like men are welcomed by God once they have been through the furnace of humility, namely of patience through temptation"*.

The commemoration of St James' death for Christ, Patriarch Theophilos added, invites us, in the words of the Apostle Paul, *"to be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God"* (Col. 1, 9-10).

After the divine Liturgy, His Beatitude and Entourage walked to the roof of Sts Constantine and Helen Church, passed through the Gate of the Central Monastery, and received "blessed loaves of bread" from Archimandrite Paisios and Elder Nun Seraphima.

At the Hall of the Throne, after a supplication and the Patriarchal Polychronism, Patriarch Theophilos wished on everyone the mediation of St James, first elected Bishop of

Jerusalem.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/Vl5c7L0PB80>

