

THE FEAST OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF ST GEORGE THE TROPHY BEARER IN LYDDA

On Wednesday, the 3rd/16th of November 2016, the Patriarchate celebrated the translation of the relics of St George the Trophy Bearer in the city of Lydda.

The feast commemorates the translation of the holy relics of St George from Rome where he had suffered a martyr's death to his mother's birthplace in Lydda. The relics were then placed in a tomb upon which, between 326 and 336 AD, St Helen founded a magnificent Church that went on to serve as veneration centre for the Christian Community in Lydda. The city draws its origins from the years of the New Testament (Acts 9, 32).

Patriarchal Liturgy was held on the aforementioned day, led by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who had as concelebrants: Metropolitan Panteleimon of the Church of Xanthi, Greece; Archbishop Damascene of Joppa, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Joachim of Zambia, and Metropolitan Theodosios, visiting from the Church of Russia; Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, led by Archimandrite Ieronymos, hegumen in Fhes, as well as priests from Communities adjacent to Lydda, and deacons Agapios and Markos. A crowd of faithful from cities of Israel and the Palestinian Autonomy venerated the Tomb of St George, as Archimandrite Aristovoulos sang on the right in Greek, Russian and Arabic. Members of the Rum Orthodox Community of Lydda sang in Arabic in the presence of the Serbian Ambassador in Tel Aviv.

To the pious congregation, His Beatitude preached the Word of God in Greek, pointing out that when St George proclaimed himself a Christian in front of Diocletian and the Roman Parliament, he suffered cruel torture and a martyr's death.

“The saint’s desire”, said His Beatitude, “was neither emotional nor illusory. It was a fervent desire, moved by the enlightening power of faith in Christ, the light and truth of the world. *“Whoever believes in me”* said the Lord, *“has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.* (John 3, 36); and elsewhere: *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”* (Mathew 16, 24-26).

“In other words”, Patriarch Theophilos added, “George’s desire for Christ was the desire to acquire freedom in Christ, freedom that relieves man of the worship of material and earthy things, whilst bringing out the magnificence of his soul”.

In Arabic, the Patriarch’s sermon can be reached here:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2016/11/15/25377>

On the conclusion of the divine Liturgy, Archimandrite Nicodemus, hegumen at St George, hosted the Patriarchal Entourage at the hegumeneion, together with Ambassadors, the members of the Church Board, and others.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/izvyaFy95wk>

