

THE FEAST OF ST. THEODOSIOS THE CENOBIARCH AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday 11th/24th January 2017, the Feast of St. Theodosios the Cenobiarch was celebrated by the Patriarchate at the Monastery founded by him and dedicated to him, which is located east of Bethlehem and Beit Sahour, at the desert of Judea, at an 8km distance from the Lavra of St. Savvas the Sanctified.

This monastery was founded by St. Theodosios when he came from Cappadocia, at the place of the cave which hosted the Wise Men when "they returned to their country following a different path" (Matt.2:11-12). It was a Cenobion where the novices were trained for years in order to be accepted at the Lavra. St. Theodosios was the leader of the Cenobitic life in Palestine, while St. Savvas the Sanctified led the monks living in Lavrae. The monastery worked with four Churches and seven hundred monks, who were led by St. Theodosios in the monastic life and the charity actions, due to its neighbouring position with the world, and the people who kept knocking on the doors asking for help. The monastery's slogan was "Let no one lazy man enter herein". With the work of the monks it sustained an old people's home, an orphanage and a School, that is a School for monks. From this monastery came St. Modestos and St. Sophronios, Patriarchs of Jerusalem. St. Theodosios with his co-patriot from Cappadocia St. Savvas played a significant and decisive role in the fight against Monophysitism and the establishment of the doctrine of the two natures of Christ in one Hypostasis, the human and the divine, that is the doctrine of the 4th Ecumenical Synod in Chalcedon. The Monastery thrived in monastic life until 638A.D. and ever since it has survived the insults and transitions of the history of the world.

In the beginning of the 20th century the Cretan monks Leontios and Galaktion undertook the refurbishment of the Monastery of the constructive damages, while in the decade of 1960s, the Hagiotaphite Archbishop Bartholomew of Madaba, from Krini of Minor Asia, reconstructed the Church. His successor was the Hegoumen Archimandrite Iakinthos from Samos. At present, and for the last forty years, Hegoumen has been the Hagiotaphite Archimandrite Ierotheos from Crete, who has protected even by putting his own life in danger the surrounding territory of the monastery. He has recently reconstructed new wings of the Monastery, paved the Church with marble and completed the icon painting on the walls according to the Byzantine art.

In this historic Monastery, for the feast of St. Theodosios, Vespers was held in the evening led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia. On the day of the feast, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos came and was warmly received, and He led the Matins and the D.Liturgy, with concelebrants the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Methodios of Thabor and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, as well as the praying with them, Most Reverend Archbishop Theophylactos of Jordan and Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, first of whom was the Hegoumen of the Monastery of the Shepherds Archimandrite Ignatios, at the singing of the choir leader of the Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos on the right in Greek, Russian and Romanian, and the Beit Jala choir on the left in Arabic, by Mr. Ibrahim Moukarker, with the praying Arab-speaking people of the neighbouring towns of Beit Jala and Beit Sahour.

At the Koinonikon of the Divine Liturgy H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos gave a Sermon to the congregation in Greek, and the translation is as follows:

“Brothers, remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith you follow,

considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:7-8). [Brothers, remember the holy example of your spiritual leaders and elders, who have taught you the word of God. You should recall and study Their holy and God-pleasing end of life and behaviour and imitate their faith, St. Paul preaches].

Beloved brothers in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The Sacred memory of our Father among the Saints Theodosios the Cenobiarch, rose like a star again this year in his Holy Monastery, meaning the place of his asceticism and burial, where we are gathered today, in order to thank and glorify our Saviour Jesus Christ, baptized by John in the river Jordan and made manifest in the flesh in the world on the one hand, and to festally honour the spiritual cultivator of the arid desert of Palestine on the other.

Our Father among the Saints Theodosios, imitating the faith of St. John the Baptist as well as that of the holy Apostles was highlighted "our Hegoumen, who spoke to us the word of God", in words and in actions. This is witnessed by his works until the present time, that "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to day and for ever".

St. Theodosios was proclaimed a teacher of the desert. And this is so, because while following the exhortations of the Bible, he did not neglect the schooling of the Lord through sorrows, which however brings spiritual benefits. Neither was he discouraged being controlled and tested by the Lord. "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth", (Hebrews 12:5-6/ Acts 3:11-12) St. Paul says referencing to the Proverbs.

Clad in the sacred garment of the monastic and ascetic life, at his arrival at the Holy City of Jerusalem from the town Mogarissos of Cappadocia, he went to Antioch near Symeon the Great the Stylite, "near whom he was engaged with the works of virtuousness, as he was meant to become a shepherd of many logical souls" according to his Synaxaristis.

Indeed, our Father among the Saints was established a universal citizen of the desert of Palestine, the very desert which bore the greatest among the Prophets John the Baptist, it hosted in the cave of Bethlehem our God and Saviour Jesus Christ with His Mother, the Most-Blessed and Ever-Virgin Theotokos Mary, it gave the shepherds who remained in their fields, and watered with the spiritual drink (1st Cor. 10:4) the multitude of our God-bearing Fathers among the Saints, such as Euthymios, Savvas, Georgios the Chosebite and the Patriarchs of Jerusalem who shone forth from his Cenobitic Monastery and were preeminent through their asceticism, Saints Sophronios and Modestos.

Our Father among the Saints Theodosios proved in himself that indeed the Only-Begotten Son and Logos of God became man and deified our human flesh that He took upon Him, as the hymn writer sings about him: that being a man in nature, he became co-citizen with the Angels, living as if having no flesh and despising all bodily needs. St. Theodosios achieved this by practising the Lord's words: "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Commenting on these words of the Lord, St. Theophylactos says: "He did not say that the light is in me, but that I am the light", while St. Cyril of Alexandria notes "the Only-Begotten Son is light by nature, as from light of the by nature light God the Father". This irreproachable light, meaning the Holy Spirit, is what Jesus saw descending in the form of a dove and staying on Him at his baptism by John in the river Jordan "And

lo, a voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt 3:17).

Having become partaker of this divine and irreproachable light, that is of the Holy Spirit, St. Theodosios confessed and preached with all his strength the two perfect natures, both the divine and human of the incarnate Logos of God our Lord Jesus Christ, as his hymn writer says; the one that makes the world clean is baptized for me, becoming human while he is God; the two natures of whom, blessed Theodosios proclaimed.

This sermon my beloved brothers, meaning the festal memory of our Father among the Saints Theodosios, in his famous Monastery, is not a memory of some historic event, but merely a communion of the born in Bethlehem and baptized in Jordan our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. For this St. Paul advises us by saying: "Those who have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ" (Gal.3:21). And again "ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24).

This new man, meaning Christ, who has given us humans incorruptibility and victory over death by His resurrection, we are called to put on, by the prayers of the Most-Blessed our Lady Theotokos Mary and by the supplications of the God-Bearer, our Father among the Saints Theodosios the Cenobiarch.

Let us also entreat St. Theodosios, as he has parresia towards Christ our God, to pray for the peace of our souls and our afflicted area. Many peaceful returns. Amen.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen Archimandrite Ierotheos offered His Beatitude and the congregation a festal meal.

From Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/w64QNA6E8o>

ngg_shortcode_0_placeholder"

order_by="sortorder"

```
order_direction="ASC"  
maximum_entity_count="500"]
```

```
returns="included"
```