

# THE FEAST OF ST. SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER AT THE PATRIARCHATE (KATAMON 2018)

On Friday February 3/16, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of St. Simeon the God-receiver, who held in his holy arms our Lord Who was brought to the Temple according to the Law when He was forty days old. The feast was held at the Holy Monastery of St. Simeon where his tomb lies, at the Katamon district of West Jerusalem.

St. Simeon was especially honoured at his Holy Monastery as the one who received the Lord when He was forty days old at the Temple. He was honoured by the Divine Liturgy on the morning of the feast, which was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina and Geronda Secretary-General, Methodios of Tabor and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the Hagiotaphite Archimandrites Ananias, Hegoumen of the H. Monastery of St. George in Al Hader, Porphyrios, the representative of the Patriarchate in the U.S.A. (Long Island) and Ieronymos, the Hegoumen of Fhes in Jordan. There were also Arab-speaking Priests, visiting Priests from the Orthodox countries of Russia, Ukraine, and Romania, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacons Anastasios and Sophrony. Present was also the Master of Ceremonies Fr. Bartholomew. The right choir was led by the choir leader of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos and the left by Mr. George Alvanos, who sang in Greek, Arabic, Russian and Romanian. The Service was attended by a large congregation of Greeks from the local Greek Community and pilgrims from Russia, Greece and Romania.

His Beatitude preached to them the Divine word as follows;

*"When Isaiah beheld God symbolically on an exalted throne*

*attended by Angels of glory, he cried: O wretched man that I am! For I have seen beforehand the incarnate God, the Lord of peace and unwaning light” the hymn writer of the Church St. Kosmas Bishop of Maiouma exclaims.*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Noble Christians and pilgrims,*

*The almighty grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all in this sacred burial place of St. Simeon the God-receiver, at the Jerusalem suburb “Katamon”, so that we praise in thanksgiving the God-receiver, and with him chaste Anna, who were Prophets of God and saw Him made a babe for our sakes.*

*Prophet Isaiah beheld symbolically the incarnation of the Word of God through the Ever-Virgin and Most Blessed Theotokos Mary and this was confirmed by “a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law. Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:25-32).*

*The incarnate God, “the King Lord of hosts” according to Isaiah (Isaiah 6:5) and the “salvation of God” (Luke 2:30), according to Elder Simeon is no other than Christ, who is the Lord of the unwaning light and of peace. For this reason St. Kosmas the melodist says “Our Lord and God Jesus Christ is the*

Master of the unwaning light and of peace", while according to St. Paul, God dwells in light near which no man can approach unto; 'whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:16). And according to St. John the Theologian, God is the light which radiates holiness and truth and inside it there is no sign of darkness, ignorance, nor sin. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). According to prophet Isaiah the ordinances of God are light to the people on earth; "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9).

This unapproachable light, my dear ones, is the Holy Spirit, which sat on each of the Apostles in the form of a tongue of fire on Pentecost day; "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:3-4). The Holy Spirit enlightens and sanctifies every man that comes in the world. "The earth was lightened with God's glory" St. John the Theologian preaches (Revel. 18:1).

This very Holy Spirit, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets (Creed) is the One who was with the Righteous Simeon. "And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:25-26). In reference to these, the melodist says; "The joy of the afflicted is come, the Redemption of Israel hath truly appeared as an infant in His Temple, letting me depart unto the lift that is to come, cried Simeon rejoicing". Regarding the infant's coming to the Temple, Isaiah says "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isaiah 9:6). "The first is born, the latter is given; the first for what was seen, the latter for what was understood" St. Amphilohios of Ikonion interprets.

*This infant, born in the Cave of Bethlehem from the pure blood of the Ever-Virgin Theotokos Mary and held in the arms of the Righteous Simeon, becomes "seen and understood" continuously throughout the ages to all those who want to be saved and inherit the eternal life. This is accomplished through our participation, my dear brothers, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, the divine and bloodless sacrifice of praise which is offered to God the Father through Jesus Christ, as St. Paul preaches; "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15). And according to Prophet David, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God" (Psalm 50:23).*

*In other words, the only way to salvation is found in honest reverence and in healthy faith. Related to this, the Father of the Church Theodoritos says: "it is appropriate not only to praise God and offer the sacrifice of praise, but also to walk upright and adjust our personal life accordingly".*

*"The salvation of God", Christ, Who "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God" (Hebrews 9:14) is the One Who will deem us worthy to worship the Living God as we should, St. Paul preaches.*

*Behold my brothers, a time pleasing to us, a time for repentance, "He Who is full is emptied out; He Who is before eternity receiveth a beginning; the Word taketh on the grossness of matter; the Artificer is fashioned; the Uncontainable, assuming a body, is contained in thy womb, O Virgin graced of God".*

*Let us entreat the Righteous and God-receiver Simeon, whom we commemorate today, that by the intercessions of himself and of Anna the prophet we may be deemed worthy to see "the salvation of God" and the Son of the Ever-Virgin Mary, our Lord and God Jesus Christ, to Whom belongs all glory and power unto the*

*ages of ages. Amen."*

The Hegoumen and renovator of the Holy Monastery for over 40 years, Archimandrite Theodoritos offered a reception to the Patriarchal entourage and the Congregation at the hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Monastery after the Divine Liturgy.

### **From Secretariat-General**

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