

# **THE FEAST OF THE ADORATION OF THE SACRED CROSS AT THE PATRIARCHATE AND THE FEAST OF ST. PORPHYRIOS OF GAZA**

On the third Sunday of Lent, the Sunday of the Adoration of the Sacred Cross, on February 26/ March 11, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Adoration of the Sacred Cross, so that by Its power we may continue the Lenten period until we come to celebrate the Holy Pascha.

This Feast was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos according to the order of the Patriarchate as a "Parresia" at the All-holy Church of the Resurrection. Great Vespers was held at the Catholicon of the Church and on the morning of the Feast the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Holy Sepulchre. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were the Patriarchal Commissioner Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Geronda Secretary General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastiya, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the visiting Metropolitan Sioni of the Church of Bulgaria and Archimandrites among whom Elder Kamarasis Nectarios, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacons Anastasios and Sophrony. The choir leader of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos sand on the right and Archimandrite Demetrios on the left. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and many local faithful and pilgrims.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a litany of the Sacred Wood

three times around the Holy Sepulchre and then around the Shrines.

Finally the procession returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters where His Beatitude addressed the guests as follows;

“Cleansed by the grace of the Fast, let us in thanksgiving cry aloud with a pure mind unto Him who alone is pure: Thou hast given Thy blood for all of us, O Word, and Thou dost sanctify us by Thy Cross”, the melodist of the church proclaims.

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The luminous adoration of the Sacred Cross has shone upon all people today, on the third Sunday of Lent, as our Holy Church foretells the Resurrection of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Today all of us who abide in the Holy Land and those who are visiting it, have been deemed worthy to venerate the wood of salvation, namely the Sacred and Life-giving Cross, on which God the Word gave His blood for all of us.

The wood of the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ was placed on the place where His feet once stood, on the Horrendous Golgotha, witnessing the true witness of St. John the Evangelist, according to which; “But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water” (John 19:34).

In other words, the sacred wood of the cross became the means through which, according to the hymn writer “Thy side was pierced and from it flowed the waters of forgiveness, refashioning our mortal nature”. And according to St. Paul, “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and

became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" (Phil. 2:8-10).

Behold why when we venerate the Sacred Cross we become participants of Christ's great power, of blessing and sanctification. "We Christians kiss thee (Sacred Cross) with awe, and glorifying God who was nailed on thee, we cry aloud: O Lord, who on the Cross wast crucified, have mercy upon us, by the prayers of the Theotokos, for Thour art good and lovest mankind". And deem us worthy to venerate Thy Glorious Resurrection. Amen. Many Happy Returns.

Have a good Easter."

On this day there was also the celebration of the commemoration of St. Porphyrios Archbishop of Gaza, who established the Christian faith in Gaza in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The Saint's tomb is preserved there, at the very old and historic Holy Monastery of the Patriarchate which bears his name. The Service was officiated by the Most Reverend Archbishop Alexios of Tiberias and it was attended by many Christians-citizens of this town.

#### **From Secretariat-General**

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