

# THE FEAST OF ST. IOANNIS THE NEW HOZEVITE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday July 28/August 10, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of Saint Ioannis the New Hozevite at the Holy Monastery of his repentance and ascesis, ever since his arrival from his country Romania.

Having been distinguished in ascetic striving, writings of spiritual strengthening and having been glorified by God through many signs, and healing of illnesses, Saint Ioannis was canonized a Saint by the Church of Jerusalem in 2015.

On Thursday night there was an all-night vigil in his honour, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis. The choir was formed by Mr. Leonidas Doukas, choir leader of the Holy Metropolis Iliou, Mr. Gregorios Zarkos, choir leader of the Holy Metropolis of Pireaus, Mr. Christos Stavrou, choir leader of the H. Church of St. Paraskevi in Attiki, and Mr. Dionysios Thanasoulis, left choir singer of the H. Church of Faneromeni in Holargos, Attiki, while the service was attended by many faithful who prayed in contrition.

The Hegoumen of the Coenobitic Brotherhood and renovator of the Holy Monastery Archimandrite Constantinos addressed His Beatitude upon His arrival as follows;

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

With Your Reverend Entourage,

Today, for one more time we celebrate the commemoration of St.

Ioannis the New Hozevite, one of the myriads of the Holy Ascetics who turned the desert of Judea into a marvelous spiritual paradise.

Today's honoured Saint of the Lavra of Hozeva, despite having completed his earthly life in solitude, had had full cognition of the problems of his time, and could also foresee things in the future.

He writes in his epistle "The contemporary Babel Tower"; "Today's Babel Tower is neither a stone-building nor a building made of bricks, but the impetuous pursuit of new inventions. People say that the invention of new devices and weapons make man's life easier, and provide him with security, in other words, they protect him. How deceitful this opinion is! We see all this time, that since our world became 'modern' and the inventions multiplied, wickedness also multiplied. ...Nowadays, despite the progress of the civilization, the world has become more turbulent and desperate than ever before. As we see, this progress and fashion have taught people to walk naked, in other words it has driven away their sense of shame. It has taught people not to seek God any more. ... Science has become rich, while faith has become poor. The contemporary civilization has shortened men's clothes, and made people cut short their beards and hair. After that, it has made them abolish their Holy Tradition! In short, with this villainous progress in which the world boasts, the tears have multiplied more than ever, the cemeteries have become bigger due to the wars, the horizon has darkened by the smog of the engines, the sky has been filled with huge "fowls" with the iron beak which are ready to kill people".

The aforementioned description records the tenebrous condition of the time we live in with an amazing trueness.

Nevertheless, filled with optimism by the Divine Grace, the Saint writes in November 1952 the bright hope he foresaw in the future of the Jerusalem Church. And foreseeing the future,

he wrote in his metaphorical poem "The granite castle of Hozeva";

"Today, however, in the Holy Land, a new tender plant blossoms, stemming from an ancient root, which springs up through the thorns"!

Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Welcome!

Let us begin the Feast!"

His Beatitude addressed the Congregation as follows;

*"But the righteous live forever and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them. Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the Hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will shield them"(Wisdom of Solomon 5:15-16). [The righteous live forever and their reward is at the Lord's hands; The Most High takes care of them. For this reason, from His hand will they receive the glorious Kingdom of Heaven and the Royal crown on their heads, because the Lord will overshadow them with His right hand and He will protect them from their enemies] according to wise Solomon.*

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

*Noble pilgrims,*

*The sacred commemoration of God's luminary, our Father among the Saints Ioannis the New Hozevite, has gathered all of us in this sacred Church, where he had ministered the Lord for several years, so that we glorify the Name of the One Who glorified him, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

*Since the prime of his youth, our Father among the Saints Ioannis loved Christ with all his soul and mind, hearkening to the Lord's Gospel words; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*

*with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37).*

*In order to reach this goal, he followed the ascetic path of monasticism, the path of righteousness that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven. And he chose the desert of the river Jordan to be the place of his striving, as well as the unwelcoming caves of Brook Chorath, the Monastery of Saints George and Ioannis the Hozevites, where a multitude of Saints and righteous men received the divine light, according to the psalmist; "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart" (Psalm 97:11). Commenting on these words, St. Cyril of Alexandria says: "He has dawned [sown] instead of dawns [change of tense]. The divine light dawns on the mind and heart of every single pious and righteous man".*

*This very divine and noetic light dawned in the mind and heart of our Father among the Saints Ioannis. "Therefore he will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the Hand of the Lord" (Wisdom of Solomon 5:15). And this divine and noetic light dawned in the mind and heart of St. Ioannis, not only during his earthly life, but also during his heavenly life, as his incorrupt relics witness before our eyes, giving out the fragrant scent of the grace of the Holy Spirit.*

*Behold therefore, why the wise Solomon says; "the righteous live forever and their reward is with the Lord" (Wisdom of Solomon 5: 15), while Prophet David urges us saying; "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Ps. 55:22). Likewise St. Peter says; "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7).*

*In other words, my dear Brothers and Sisters, the righteous in Christ is the one who by his "perfect manner of living" reaches the "likeness of God" according to St. Basil the Great, or "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephes. 4:13) according to St. Paul. Righteous is the*

one who reaches deification, in other words, his perfection in Christ, not only by his own power, namely his own free will, but also with the cooperation of the Divine Grace.

Referring to the new life in Christ, St. Paul says; "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephes. 4:24). This "new man" did our Father Ioannis put on, "who has been created after God".

Today's commemoration of our Father among the Saints Ioannis calls us to consider our Christian name. To consider the fact that our faith has been built on righteousness and holiness of truth: "I am the way the truth and the life" (John 14:6) the Lord says.

In other words, putting away the old man of sin is not enough; we should put on the new man of the grace of the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul orders by saying; "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:12-14).

Having applied these God-inspired orders of St. Paul, St. Ioannis became indeed "a light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79), to the people of our contemporary era of confusion, where – according to the foreseeing words of our Holy Father "man himself is preparing again to build the Tower of Babel on earth, seeking to destroy the foundations of the "Divine Law". Almost all of the tongues [languages] have been established and the hour of conflict will not delay much longer".

Therefore let us entreat our Holy Father Ioannis the New Hozevite who dances with the Angels on high, and has become a

*luminary and friend of Christ, so that he may intercede for us along with our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, for the salvation of our souls and the prevailing of peace in our tested region. Amen."*

After the spiritual and sanctifying feast of the Divine Liturgy there was a hospitable monastic meal.

**From Secretariat-General**