

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY AT JACOB'S WELL

On Sunday, June 1/14, 2020, Feast of All Saints and day of commemoration of St. Ioustinos the philosopher and martyr, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Shrine of Jacob's well, making up for the lack of the festive celebration on the Sunday of the Samaritan woman due to the coronavirus. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth and Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, the Hegoumen of the Shrine Archimandrite Ioustinos, and Archimandrites Ignatios, Leontios and Artemios. The chanting was delivered by Mr. Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the right and the Rafidia Community choir on the left in Arabic, with a quite a few faithful present, but not as many as in the past.

On this occasion, His Beatitude read the following Sermon:

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven...And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me"(Matthew 10:32-38).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all, amidst the imposed restriction measures due to coronavirus pandemic, in

this holy biblical shrine of Jacob's well and the place of the meeting of our Lord Jesus Christ with the Samaritan woman, in order to celebrate in Eucharist the feast of All the Saints of the world, and especially the commemoration of the Holy Martyr Ioustinos the philosopher, who was born in this place "the town Flaouia of Palestine".

The feast of All Saints is a projection of the great feast of Pentecost, namely of the Holy Spirit that came down from heaven like tongues of fire, upon the Holy Disciples and Apostles of the Lord.

And this is so , because those who compose the cloud of all the Saints, Prophets, who preached Christ around the world, Apostles who enchanted the nations and fishermen of men, Martyrs who suffered tortures and toil, God-bearing Fathers who established the doctrines by the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit and the healthy faith of the Church, the chorea of the holy and righteous and the chorea of the holy women and of all the saints who mortified their flesh so that they are rejoicing with the angels in the heavens now.

All these became communicants and partakers of the gifts of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, through Who – according to St. Paul – "have come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect"(Hebrews 12:22-23).

The city of the Living God is the famous Jerusalem; but the Heavenly Jerusalem, namely the Church of God's Saints, the heavenly Church, the Kingdom of heaven, according to Zigavinos. The earthly Jerusalem, the earthly Church, is the type and icon of the heavenly Church.

This means that the Church, being the body of Christ (Col.

4:24), and Christ being the head of the body of the Church (Col. 1:18), the Church is the place where the Holy Spirit essentially dwells and puts together and constitutes the whole institution of the Church. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"(Col. 2:9) St. Paul preaches.

In other words, Christ became an example to imitate for all people who want to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps", St. Peter teaches (1Peter2:21).

Indeed, all the Saints of the Church became imitators of Christ, each according to the gifts and the struggles they suffered, hearkening to the advice of St. Paul: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ"(1 Cor. 11:1). And, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"(Philippians 1:21). Interpreting this phrase, St. Theophylactos says: "I live a new life, and Christ is everything to me, breath and life and light". And St. Gregory of Nyssa says: "Nothing of the human and material passions lives in me, neither pleasure, nor sorrow, nor anger, nor fear...nor any other thing of those who stain the soul, but He is the only One that exists in me, Who is nothing of the above. For having cast out everything that is foreign to His nature, I have nothing in me, which is not of Him; by Whose grace, Christ lives in me".

All the Saints of the Church are recognized as genuine ministers and workers of both the Old Testament of God the Father and especially of the New Testament in Christ the Son and God. St. Paul calls the preachers of the Gospel "a sweet savour of Christ" which is well-pleasing to God: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish" (2 Cor. 2:15). This sweet savour of Christ is no other than the holiness of the friends, namely the Saints of Christ, according to the saying: "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy"(1 Peter 1:16/ Leviticus

11:44). And the saints of God are those who praise and narrate His glory, as David chants: "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works"(Psalm 145:4-5).

This is precisely what St. Ioustinos, the honoured among All the Saints today did, who was called "most marvellous" according to Tatian and "philosopher and witness" according to Tertullian. And according to Eusevius of Caesarea, having been condemned because of his Christian faith by the false accusations of [the idolatrous philosopher] Crescent, Ioustinos "is adorned with a death by a divine martyrdom" beheaded along with other Christians during the reign of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, in Rome, approximately in the year 165 A.D. Not only his "divine martyrdom", but also his defending of the Christian faith letters "speak of and proclaim the magnificence of the glory of the holiness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Saints of the Church became worthy of the name of Christ, because they did not refuse "to take His Cross and follow Him"(Matt. 10:38). Their benefit and repose and rest were to suffer for the sake of reverence according to Basil of Cicely (P.G. 85,464, B). And St. Ignatios the God-bearer calls Christ "my own love [eros]" just as St. Paul says: " I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). Having become communicants of God's grace, they are recognized along with the holy Apostles as benefactors of the Church, just as St. Chrysostom says about the Apostles: "They were indeed doctors of the world, and farmers and captains; doctors because they healed the infirmities; farmers because they sew the word of reverence; and captains, because they stopped the rough waves of the fallacy".

As for us, my dear brethren, praising the commemoration of All the Saints, and especially of the Most Blessed Theotokos and

Ever-Virgin Mary, let us say along with the hymnographer: "Let us now worthily extol the haven of salvation, the Baptist; the apostles, the prophets and martyrs; the ascetics, the divine teachers, the priests; the assembly of the patriarchs, the glorious hieromartyrs, the women beloved of God, and the righteous and the just" (Pentecostarion, Feast of All Saints, Matins, Ode 9 of the Saints, troparion 2). Amen! Many happy returns!"

After the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen and renovator of this Shrine and of the Church of St. Foteini the Great Martyr the Samaritan woman, Archimandrite Ioustinos hosted a meal for the Patriarchal entourage.

From Secretariat-General