

THE FEAST OF SAINT EUTHYMIUS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday 20 January/ 2 February 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of our Holy Father Euthymius the Great, at the Holy Monastery dedicated to him, which is adjacent to the Holy Monastery of Panagia Sayda Naya in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, near the Patriarchate.

On this feast the Church commemorates Saint Euthymius according to Cyril of Skythopolis who wrote his biography. Saint Euthymius was born in Melitini of Armenia, joined a Monastery in his country and arrived in the Holy Land at the age of 30, in AD 406, where he lived in the Judea desert along with Saint Theoktistos, his fellow in asceticism. At their agreement, Saint Theoktistos founded a Coenobitic Monastery for the beginner Monks, while Saint Euthymius founded a Lavra for the advanced in asceticism Monks. These two Fathers became illumined by the Holy Spirit, teachers of thousands of Coenobitic and Lavraeotic Monks and of thousands of Christians.

They were the teachers of our Holy Father Savvas the Sanctified, when he came in the Holy Land in 456. Saint Euthymius did not accept him in his Lavra because he was still a boy, but sent him to Saint Theoktistos' Coenobion, where Saint Savvas remained for fifteen years before he received the blessing to retreat for a hesychastic life in the deeper desert.

Saint Euthymius also worked as a missionary, because he received near his monastery a tribe from Persia with their leader Aspevetos, he catechized and baptized them and asked Archbishop Iouvenalios of Jerusalem to ordain Aspevetos Bishop of Paremvolon.

Saint Euthymius fought for the decisions of the 4th Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon in 451, defending the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, the divine and the human in one hypostasis. Many people, among whom the Empress Eudoxia returned to the Orthodox Faith by the teachings of Saint Euthymius.

The Saint was given by God the gifts of clairvoyance and of healing the sick, as witnessed in his synaxarion. The Lavra of Saint Euthymius has been destroyed by the various raids and the passing of time, and is currently kept as an archaeological site, after excavations that were held in 1929 and again 30 years ago.

In honour of this great beacon and luminary of the monastic life of the Orthodox Doctrine, Vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning were held at the Monastery bearing his name in the Old City of Jerusalem. The Services were officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, with the co-celebration of Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, Archimandrite Makarios, Priest Nectarios and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by the Byzantine choir leader of the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen Archimandrite Eusevios and Mr Vasilios Gostopoulos. The services were attended by Monks, Nuns and faithful Christians from Jerusalem.

During the Divine Liturgy H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos came to the Monastery for veneration.

The Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages along with all the congregation were offered a reception at the hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Monastery by the new Abbess Nun Sarah.

From Secretariat-General