

THE FEAST OF SAINT JOHN THE NEW HOZEVITE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, 28 July/ 10 August 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of Saint John the new Hozevite, who came from Romania and lived in asceticism at the Brook of Chorath in the Holy Monastery of Hozeva in the 20th century. He was canonized a Saint by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 2015. His holy relic is kept incorrupt in the Monastery of his repentance.

In honour of this Saint, an all-night Vigil was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the co-celebration of their Eminences; Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Hieromonks Chrysogonos and Marcellus, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Patrikios, while the chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and the Monastery Monks.

His Beatitude was welcomed by the renovator of the Monastery Hegoumen Archimandrite Constantine with the following words:

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Along with Your Reverend Entourage,

We celebrate again the commemoration of Saint John the new Hozevite, whose incorrupt relics is treasured in the Holy Monastery of Hozeva. Our heart is full of joy and sadness at the same time!

Joy, because we celebrate the victory of one of us against the passions and the “world”. The victory of one man just like us, a Hieromonk of Hozeva who reached the height of holiness by the Divine Grace; Saint John the new Hozevite, who came from

Romania.

Sadness because we march along a period of unbearable and significant testing. In the midst of an incredible unleashing of morals and unrepentant life worldwide, for a year and a half, the terrible pandemic of COVID plagues humanity, and millions of victims fall every day. And recently, high and greedy flames engulf houses, forests, the lungs of oxygen ...

Difficult years and we all ask for consolation.

And where else will we find refuge, if not in God, the Theotokos and all the Saints?

In a letter of Saint John, we read the following words of consolation which, dissolving sorrow, give strong hope and firm optimism to all of us:

“Therefore, we are not strangers at all, although we live far away. The spiritual bond between us is very close, even if we do not realize it. I am neither a teacher nor an Abbot, and the Lord knows that I do not want such a thing. Your situation, however, is not indifferent to me. ‘H modesty of your life is also for me an honour, an occasion of consolation...

Think that we are living in the most challenging years and the most dangerous for the soul’s salvation. Think that we have all been left as orphans, far removed from our homeland and deprived of spiritual food. Think that the enemies of our faith have multiplied more than ever, and our salvation is in greater danger. If we have a wounded soul, there is no one to heal us, and if we fall, there is no one to lift us up. Now there is a need for more unity and brotherly support. Now there is a need for more unity and brotherly support. Although we are not all together, at least spiritually to be united and to bear the weaknesses of each other with mercy...

Let us stand well; let us stand after fear in the Holy Faith

and show mercy with peace to all, by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

Pray that the Good Lord, through the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos of Hozeva, and our Holy Father John the new Hozevite, will lead all the people and us to a safe harbour and path of repentance and salvation. Amen.”

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious and full of compassion, and righteous” (Psalm 112:4), the psalmist exclaims.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

The light of the Lord dawned today with the holy memory of our Holy Father John of the new Hozevite in the shadow of death caused both by the incurable infectious corona disease and by the ongoing earthquakes, disasters, fires, and other signs of the divine rage.

Therefore, we are gathered in this biblical place of our Holy Father John’s asceticism, to honour in eucharist the holy man of God according to the words of the psalmist: “Sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts” (Psalm 96: 1,8). “It is not of the ungodly but of the righteous to sing praises unto the Lord”, Theodoret the interpreter says.

Saint John is classified among the many sons of God, who has elevated them to the status of Christ’s glory, as Saint Paul says: “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For

both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:10-11)

Interpreting these words of Saint Paul, Saint Theophylactos says: "The Father made it worthy of His philanthropy that the firstborn of all the future sons would enjoy His glory more brightly than the rest, proving his worth through his sufferings, to show to the rest in which way they should strive".

Our Father John, as his biographer mentions, endured many sufferings since his early youth and many temptations during his monastic life in the surroundings of the River Jordan and in the desert of Hozeva, where he became a faithful witness of the passions and the striving of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Martyrs are not only those who receive death for their faith in Christ but also those who die for the keeping of His commandments," Saint John of the Ladder says. And Saint Paul says: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Romans 8:35).

Interpreting these words, Saint Chrysostom says: "When Paul talks about tribulation, he talks about prison cells, and bondage, and slander and exile and all other afflictions; and he refers to all the human sufferings with a single word".

These "all the human sufferings" did the Hieromonk of obedience and patience John endure, for the love of the Chief of men's salvation, our Lord Jesus Christ. Being guarded by the power of his faith in God, the humble in heart John also had the certainty of the guarantee that his hope would not be dashed, and he became a participant of the inheritance which is kept in heaven, as the Chief of the Apostles Peter preaches: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ

from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-4).

We have before our eyes the guarantee of the heritage in the heavens that is incorruptible and immaculate and does not wither. And that guarantee is no other than the incorrupt and fragrant relics of our Holy and wonder-worker Father John the new Hozevite from Romania.

In other words, the body of our Holy Father John, which became incorrupt and fragrant by the Holy Spirit, is an indisputable and irrefutable testimony of the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ, but also our living hope.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15), the psalmist says. This means, my dear Brethren, that we did not come here today in the feast of Saint John to honour him, but rather to participate in the honour the Lord does to him, who is His Saint. Moreover, we came to be taught the ordinances of the true life in Christ by him, Holy John the new Hozevite and the multitude of the Saints of Hozeva before him.

Our Holy Father John indulged unceasingly in the holy scriptures according to the word "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways" (Psalm 119:15) and became a faithful disciple of Saint Paul, applying in both words and actions his redeeming advice: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

This Paul's advice, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2), is

what Saint John says to all of us, as he has boldness before God along with all the Saints and our Most-Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. Saint John gives this advice to us, my dear brethren, “that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:7). Amen. Many happy returns!”

During the Vigil, His Beatitude prayed for the salvation of our fellow men, the fire victims in Evvoia of Greece.

A monastic meal followed the Divine Liturgy.

From Secretariat-General