

THE FEAST OF SAINT EUTHYMIOS THE GREAT AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, January 20/February 2, 2024, the commemoration of our holy Father Euthymius the Great was celebrated by the Patriarchate in the Holy Monastery named after him in the Old City of Jerusalem in the Christian Quarter near the Patriarchate.

On this feast, the Church remembers that Saint Euthymios was descended from Melitina of Armenia, born in AD 376 from pious parents Paul and Dionysia, taught the sacred scriptures by his uncle Eudoxios and by the Bishop of Melitina Otreios. Because of his virtue, he was ordained a Presbyter and secluded himself in the Monastery of his homeland. Not accepting to lead others, he left his homeland and came to the Holy Land in 406. He initially secluded himself in the Lavra of Saint Chariton in Faran. He was connected through spiritual friendship, fellowship and cooperation with Saint Theoktistos. From the Feast of Theophany to the Feast of Palms, he withdrew to the desert for prayer and other asceticism. In the desert of Kutila, shepherds of Bethania made him known to Christians and monks, who begged him to found a monastery for them. Saint Theoktistos founded a Koinobion for the novice monks and Saint Euthymios a Lavra for those advanced, in the Judean desert between Jerusalem and Jericho. Saint Savvas also joined this group, who came to the Holy Land in the year 456. Saint Euthymios and Saint Theoktistos became pillars and luminaries of the monastic spiritual life and directed thousands of Christians and monks and were teachers of Saint Savvas. Saint Euthymios asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem Juvenalios in the year 427 to baptize a tribe of Persian nomads, who came to his Monastery and he introduced the ordination of their guardian Aspevetos as Bishop of Paremvolon. He was known for his miraculous and prophetic gift and brought back thousands of

Christians and monks from the fallacy of Monophysitism to Orthodoxy, among whom the Empress Eudoxia. In 429, Patriarch Juvenalius inaugurated the Lavra of Saint Euthymius and the Saint was extremely happy about this. Seven months later he slept in the Lord and left Archimandrite Elpidios as his successor in the leadership of Lavra. The Lavra, destroyed by raids, is preserved today as a visitable archaeological site.

In his honour, Vespers was held in the evening and Divine Liturgy in the morning, presided over by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, with the concelebration of the Archimandrites, Philoumenos and Makarios, the Priests Farah Bandour and Nectarios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and the students of the Patriarchal School of Zion with the participation of monks, nuns and Christians from Jerusalem.

During the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Holy Sepulchre Fathers came for veneration.

The Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages and the congregation were offered a treat by the good carer and Abbess of the Monastery, reverend nun Sarrah.

From Secretariat-General