

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, September 8/21, 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos.

On this feast, the Church commemorates that God released the bonds of the bareness of Joachim and Anna and gave them Mary as the fruit of Anna's womb, from whom came forth Christ the Saviour of the world through the Holy Spirit.

That is why the Church joyfully chants: "Joachim and Anna were freed from the reproach of childlessness, and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death, O immaculate one, by thy holy nativity, which thy people, redeemed from the guilt of offences, celebrate by crying unto thee: the barren woman giveth birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our life" (Kontakion).

The Patriarchate celebrated this feast at the town Sahnin of northern Israel, in the Holy Metropolis of Acre-Ptolemais, at the newly-built marvellous Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos, which was built by the community and the help of the Patriarchate and was inaugurated two years ago.

The Divine Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth, Isychios of Capitolias, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, local Priests, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Simeon. The service was attended by faithful Orthodox Christians of the community and the local authorities, donors and pilgrims, with the honourable presence of Mr Cesar Marjieh and Mr Iriad Shirhan.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered a sermon.

After the Divine Liturgy, there was a litany around the Church thrice. Then, His Beatitude awarded Mr Elias Gantous with the medal of the Cross-bearer of the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, as a reward for his quite important educational, ecclesiastical and social work.

At noon there was a meal honouring the Patriarchal entourage and many others.

2. Likewise, the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos was celebrated at the Holy Shrine of the Tomb of the Theotokos in Gethsemane with vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning, presided over by His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa. The service was attended by pious pilgrims and local faithful Christians. After the Liturgy the Hegoumen, His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis hosted a reception at the rectory.

From Secretariat-General

THE FORTIETH DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE BLESSED MONK PANTELEIMON

On the morning of Saturday, September 3/16, 2023, after the Divine Liturgy on the Horrendous Golgotha, which was officiated by His Eminence Archbishop. Theodosios of Sebasteia, the fortieth-day memorial service was held for the repose of the soul of the blessed Holy Sepulchre monk Panteleimon, who served at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The memorial service was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the Holy Sepulchre High Priests, Hieromonks and Deacons and the participation in prayer of monks, nuns and pilgrims.

After the Memorial Service, under the blessing of His Beatitude, there was a reception at the hall of the Patriarchate

May his memory be eternal!

From Secretariat-General

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE BEHEADING OF THE HOLY FORERUNNER JOHN THE BAPTIST

On Monday, August 29/September 11, 2023, the commemoration of the beheading of the Holy Forerunner and Baptist John was held by the Patriarchate.

On this day, the Church, drawing from the Gospels, remembers that John the Forerunner was “the greatest among those born of women”, in accordance with the word of the Lord (Luke 7:28), preaching a baptism of repentance in the wilderness of Judea and also baptized the Lord into the Jordan River, (Mark 1, 2-11).

This one scolded Herod because he lived with Herodias, his brother’s wife. Herod imprisoned him, but he was afraid to kill him because the crowd revered John. However, on one of the days, “he made a dinner for his birthday”, to which dinner

he invited a magnate and a thousand princes. At this dinner, Salome, the daughter of Herodias, danced and Herod liked her so much that he promised to give her up to half of his kingdom.

Salome took advice from her mother and asked for John's head on a platter. Herod was sorry, but he did not want to deny her "because of his oaths and co-conspirators". For this reason, he sent a speculator to the prison, who cut off the head of the Holy Forerunner, and brought it to the girl as a reward for her dance and the girl gave it to his mother (Mark 6, 17-26).

On this mourning holiday, the Patriarchate celebrated in the Holy Church of the Holy Forerunner in the Old City of Jerusalem, recently renovated by the Hegoumen and Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew with Great Vespers on Sunday evening and the Divine Liturgy in the morning. The Liturgy was presided over by His Eminence Metropolitan Benedictos of the Diocesarea, with the co-celebration of the assistant Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem Archimandrite Polycarpos, the Archimandrites Claudius and Amfilochios, Meletios and other Priests. The chanting was delivered by the left Byzantine singer of the Church of the Resurrection Mr Angelos Giannopoulos as the service was attended by many faithful Orthodox Christians, locals and pilgrims.

As for the Liturgy, Archimandrite Bartholomew offered a fasting treat to the Episcopal entourage and the congregation, as the memory of Saint John is honoured through a strict fast.

On the commemoration of the beheading of Saint John the Baptist the Divine Liturgy was also celebrated at the place where this horrendous event took place, in Sebasteia of Samaria. The Liturgy was officiated by the Hegoumen of Jacob's well, Archimandrite Ioustinos with the co-celebration of the Hegoumen of Rafeidia Archimandrite Leontios.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINT MOSES THE ETHIOPIAN IN RAFEIDIA

On Sunday, August 28 / September 10, 2023, on the commemoration of Saint Moses the Ethiopian, an Episcopal Divine Liturgy was held in the Church dedicated to the Saint in Rafeidia of Samaria, presided over by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba with the co-celebration of the Hegoumen of Rafeidia Archimandrite Leontios, the Hegoumen of Jacob's Well Archimandrite Ioustinos and the Dean Priest Athanasios Geramanis, Pilgrim from the Holy Metropolis of Thebes.□

Before the Holy Communion, His Eminence delivered a Sermon, praising the humble attitude of Saint Moses, for which he became an example to be imitated by the other fathers of the desert. Bringing the example of the humility of Saint Moses to today's society, he urged the faithful to always bear in mind this and his humble Holy Temple, when they are occupied by thoughts of pride. □

After the end of the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen Archimandrite Leontios and the stewards of the parish of Rafeidia offered a meal to the Fathers and the congregation.□

From Secretariat-General

THE APODOSIS OF THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION & THE RETURN OF THE ICON OF THE THEOTOKOS AT THE GETHSEMANE DEPENDENCY

On the morning of Tuesday, August 23/September 5, 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the Apodosis Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, i.e. the completion of eight days from the day of the feast, and the return of this icon, which was placed in Gethsemane before the feast.

Therefore, on the morning of that day, a Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Tomb of the Theotokos, presided over by the Master of Ceremonies, Archimandrite Bartholomew.

The Procession of the return of the icon of the Dormition began after the Liturgy, as the icon was carried in great reverence by His Eminence the Hegoumen, Metropolitan Joachim of Hellenoupolis, surrounded by priests and followed by many pilgrims, chanting the hymns of the Dormition

The procession went up passing through the Monasteries of Saint Stephen, Saint Anna, Praetorio, Via Dolorosa, the Monastery of Saint Charalambos and the Monastery of Sayda Naya, where local believers stood on the right and left of the decorated way and venerated in reverence, asking for the help of Theotokos.

When the Procession reached the intersection of the streets of the Patriarchate and the streets of the Christian Quarter, there was a short prayer and H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, the Holy Sepulchre Fathers and local

believers venerated the icon. The Procession continued through the Christian Way, stopped in the Court Yard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and there was a prayer.

Finally, the procession concluded at the chapel of the Dependency of Gethsemane, a prayer was offered, the Polychronion of His Beatitude was chanted and the icon was placed for safekeeping and veneration in its place until the end of the next year, by the intercessions of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

On this occasion, His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis offered a refreshment.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, August 15/28, 2023, the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos was celebrated by the Patriarchate in the Holy Shrine of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Gethsemane, where her Tomb is also located.

During this feast, the Church remembers that the Theotokos, the mother of Life, died and was buried by the Holy Apostles “in the village of Gethsemane” where the “tomb did not endure death”. Her body, which embodied the Lord of glory, was transferred to the heavens by the Lord, who inhabited her immaculate womb and she remained the “unchangeable hope and protection for all ages”.

This feast was solemnly celebrated and presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Metropolitans Isychios of Capitolias and Timotheos of Bostra, the Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Makarios of Qatar, with the co-prayer of the Hegoumen of the Shrine Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Fr Dometian from the Moscow Patriarchate, Fr Ioannis from the Patriarchate of Romania, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Dositheos. The service was attended by hundreds of pilgrims, at the changing of Hierodeacon Simeon in Greek and Mr Nabil from Saint James the Brother of God parish in Arabic. The Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and the Greek Consulate staff also attended the service.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“In giving birth Thou didst preserve thy virginity, in thy dormition thou didst not forsake the world O Theotokos. Thou wast translated unto life since thou art the Mother of Life; and by thine, intercessions dost thou redeem our souls from death” (Apolytikion of the feast).

Beloved brothers in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

The Grace of the Holy Spirit brought us all together from the ends of the earth, in this Tomb of the Theotokos to honour and praise the Dormition of the most praised and most glorious Blessed Lady of ours the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, as the choir of the holy Apostles of old.

“The greatly honoured choir of the Lord’s wise Apostles,” the hymnographer says, “hath wondrously assembled to gloriously bury thine undefiled body, O Theotokos, thou all-hymned Maid. Joining them, the multitudes of Angels have gathered, singing

holy hymns to praise thy blessed translation, which we celebrate in faith" (Matins, Kathisma 2).

The Translation, that is, the Dormition of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is none other than her transition from earth to heaven. The Mother of Life, that is, of God the Word and Son of God the Father, and her Son, moved to Life, the cause of Life, to God the Father. Just as the Theotokos preserved her virginity during His birth, so also during her Dormition she preserved the incorruption of her body.

Let's listen to our holy father Saint John of Damascus saying: Oh, how the source of life is transferred to life passing through death. How does she, who when giving labour overcame the limits of nature, now bends to its laws and submits her immortal body to death. Why must this put off mortality and put on incorruption, since the Master, the Sovereign of nature, did not refuse to submit to death. He dies in the flesh and by death He abolishes death; and by corruption, He grants us incorruption and makes His death the source of Resurrection.

The moral and spiritual but also saving magnitude of the contribution of the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary to the mystery of the Divine Providence is infinite, a miracle incomprehensible to the human mind. That is why Saint John of Damascus calls the Mother of God "the embodiment of the human race, the pride of all creation".

Graceful and blessed among women (Cf. Luk. 1:28), the Theotokos Mary became the Mother of God, of the Son and Word of God made flesh from her pure blood, and righteously just after her Dormition, appears at the right hand of her Son and God, now dwelling in the city of God in the heavens, as David says to her: "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God" (Ps. 87,2).

We, my beloved brothers, "do not have here a continuing city,

but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13,14), the city of "the living God" (Heb. 12,22), the city of the Son and God of the Immaculate Theotokos our Most Blessed Lady and Ever-Virgin Mary.

And now, standing in front of the holy Tomb of the Theotokos, we beseech her and after the hymnographer, we say: "When thou gavest up thy soul into His hands who once from thee had become man for our sakes, He, as thy Maker and thy God, removed thee unto the joy free of all defilement. With reverence therefore, we piously call thee blest, who alone art pure, untouched by any stain; and as is right, we all confess thee as Theotokos and cry to thee; Pray Christ, to Whom thou hast been translated, to grant our souls His salvation". Amen. Many happy returns".

After the Dismissal, His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, who maintains the order and dignity of the Holy Shrine, offered a treat of refreshment at the rectory.

From Secretariat-General

THE SERVICE OF THE LAMENTATIONS OF THE THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, 14/27 August 2023, the service of the Lamentations of the Theotokos was held at the Patriarchate.

The service began with the departure of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood under their Hegoumen, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos in procession from the

Patriarchate Gate through Via Dolorosa and concluded at the rectory of Gethsemane. The procession was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and many pilgrims who were chanting the hymns of the Dormition.

After a reception at the rectory, the service of the Lamentations began before the Theotokos Tomb and around the sacred icon of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos.

At the end of the Lamentations, His Eminence Metropolitan Theologos of Serres from the Church of Greece delivered a Sermon.

This was followed by the rest of the Matins and the Doxology, concluding with the procession of the epitaph of the Theotokos at the entrance of the Church for a supplication and then the sacred icon of the Dormition was placed behind the Tomb for veneration until the apodosis of the feast.

After the service, the Hegoumen, His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis hosted a reception at the rectory.

From Secretariat-General

THE PROCESSION OF THE ICON OF THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS TO GETHSEMANE

At 5.00 a.m. summer time on Friday, August 12/25, 2023, the Procession of the icon of the Dormition took place after the Divine Liturgy, which was celebrated at the Dependency Chapel of Gethsemane, opposite the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,

where the icon is kept throughout the year.

Starting from this chapel, the holy icon was carried by the Hegoumen of Gethsemane His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis surrounded by Holy Sepulchre Archbishops and priests and other clergy and monks of other Orthodox Churches, followed by thousands of pilgrims, chanting the Apolytikion and other hymns of the feast of Dormition of the Theotokos. The procession took place along the Via Dolorosa, passing through the Hall of the Church of the Resurrection, the Holy Shrines of Saint Alexander Nevsky, Praetorium, Saints Joachim and Anne and Saint Stephen.

Upon arrival in the Church of the Dormition, a prayer was offered, the icon was placed for worship until the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos behind the Theotokos' Tomb and in front of the icon of Platytera of Jerusalem and a Divine Liturgy was celebrated.

This Liturgy was attended by thousands of pilgrims from various countries actively asking for help and comfort in their needs.

After the Liturgy, the Hegoumen Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis offered a refreshing reception.

Solemn Episcopal Divine Liturgy was also celebrated at the Holy Monastery of the Men of Galilee in the chapel of the Annunciation of the Dormition of the Theotokos, presided over by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebasteia, along with Archimandrite Claudius, has been celebrating the D. Liturgy with the Supplication to the Theotokos daily this month, Fr Georgios Baramki, Priests of other Orthodox countries and Hierodeacon Simeon, under the chanting of the Byzantine singer from Greece Mr Eustathios Tsoumanis.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Caretaker of the Monastery, nun Danielia offered refreshments to the Episcopal Entourage.

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, August 6/19, 2023, the feast of the Transfiguration was celebrated by the Patriarchate on Mount Tabor where the event of the Transfiguration took place.

During this feast, the whole Church, especially that of Jerusalem, to which Mount Tabor belongs as a place of pilgrimage, remembers singing and glorifying the event of the Transfiguration of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Gospel accounts (Matthew 17:2 – 8 and Mark. 9, 2-8), because, a short time before His passion, the Lord took the three distinguished disciples and went up with them to Mount Tabor, and He was transfigured before them.

As the Fathers of the Church explain, He hid His human nature and revealed, as far as they could see, the glory of His divine nature.

His face shone brighter than the sun and His clothes became white as light and Moses as the representative of the sleeping and Elijah as the representative of the living appeared conversing with Him, while a bright cloud descended upon them and a voice was heard from the Father "This is My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him".

The Lord revealed this mystery to His disciples, so that, having seen His glory, they would be strengthened at the time

of the cross and to show them what glory the righteous will enjoy in the resurrection of the dead.

In honour of this exquisite mystery, there was an all-night Vigil from midnight to 3 a.m., which was presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Theodosios of Tomis from the Patriarchate of Romania, Metropolitan Nikolaos from the Patriarchate of Georgia, and Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archdeacon Mark and many Priests from Orthodox Churches and Arabic-speaking Priests from the Galilee district. The chanting was delivered by Mr Angelos Gianopoulos in Greek on the right and Priest George from the Metropolis of Elia in Arabic on the left from the Byzantine choir of the blessed Archimandrite Philotheos. The vigil was attended by tens of thousands of pilgrims from various Orthodox countries who went up the mountain on foot due to the unacceptable restrictive measures by the Israeli police.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude blessed the grapes and delivered the following Sermon in Greek and Arabic:

“Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, showing to Thy disciples Thy glory as each one could endure. Shine forth Thou on us who are sinners all, Thy light ever-unending, through the prayers of the Theotokos. Light-bestower, glory to Thee”.

Beloved brothers in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

The divine Grace of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, brought us all to this Holy Mount Tabor, so that we may thankfully celebrate His Transfiguration, listening to the call of the hymnographer saying: “Behold, we ascend to the mountain of the Lord, and in the house of our God, that we may behold the

glory of His Transfiguration, glory as the only begotten of the Father, so that we may receive light, and being born together in the spirit, let us praise the Trinity forever and ever”.

The Transfiguration of our Saviour Christ is an event, during which the greatness of the Mystery of the divine Providence, the mystery of the salvation of man, the “mystery hidden from the ages in God” was revealed in all its depth and breadth (Eph. 3.9).

The second great mystery of godliness, (1 Tim. 3:16) is Christ manifested in the flesh, “who in the form of God is not raptured, he is equal to God, but he emptied himself in the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and being found in the form of a man, he humbled himself by becoming subject to death, death on the cross”, as Saint Paul preaches.

This confession of the Apostle Paul expresses with precipitation and interprets the words of the hymnographer for the reason of the transfiguration of Christ: “On the mount Thou wast transfigured, and Thy disciples, as much as they could bear, beheld Thy glory, O Christ our God; that when they should see Thee crucified, they would know Thy Passion to be willing, and would preach to the world that Thou art in truth the Effulgence of the Father” (Kontakion).

In other words, during the Transfiguration of the Lord on this high place, the revelation of His theanthropic hypostasis, the mixing of the two natures in the person of Christ, but also the revelation of the glory of God, that is, the dawning of God, was born. The ‘Effulgence of the Father’ means the radiance or the shine as the hymnographer says: “The changeless nature, having been mingled with mortal nature, **shone forth past all telling**, and in part revealed unto the Apostles the Light of Its own Immaterial Godhead” (Ode 5, Troparion 3). And again, “being perfect God, Thou becamest perfect mortal, mingling manhood with the entire Godhead in

Thine own Hypostasis, which Moses and Elias saw in his two natures on Mount Tabor" (Ode 3, Canon 2, Troparion 3).

Saint Gregory of Nyssa, interpreting the words of Paul "Christ as the effulgence of the glory of God" (Cf. Heb. 1,3) says "Just like the ray of light is related to the sun and to the lamp, likewise the effulgence of light is related to the Father". This example is used by the Holy Father Gregory of Nyssa, to make it clear that the Son and Word of God is the same as the Father and the Holy Spirit, therefore the "Father's dawned light" is the inaccessible and uncreated light of the Holy Trinity.

Saint John of Damascus, dazzled by the mystery of the Transfiguration, says: because the Word 'became flesh' and the flesh the Word, even though it had not come out of His divine nature. A miracle that surpasses all understanding. The body did not acquire the glory from without, but it went from within itself from the inexplicably united with Him during the existence of the transcendental divinity of God the Word.

It is worth noting that during the Transfiguration of Jesus in this holy place, "the face of Jesus shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light" (Matthew 17,2). On the other hand, "Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice from the cloud said: This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Matthew 17:5).

According to Saint John of Damascus, the bright cloud that overshadowed Jesus symbolizes the light of the Holy Spirit. "Clouds and light overshadowed the aurora of the Spirit." Regarding the voice from the cloud, Saint John of Damascus says: "Voice of the Father from the cloud of the Spirit was heard"; "This is my beloved Son". "This is the man we see, the man born yesterday, the humble one we associate with, whose face now shines." As for the divine command "Hear ye him," he says: "The one receiving Him, receives me, the one who sent me, not in a despotic way but in a paternal way. As a man is

sent away, as God abides in me, I am in him. He who does not honour my only begotten and beloved Son does not honour the Father, who sent Him." "Hear ye him", has eternal life words. This is the conclusion of the completion, this is the power of the mystery." [And in more detail: Whoever accepts Him, Jesus Christ, accepts Me who sent Him not as Lord (authority) but as Father. He is sent as a man, in whom as God he dwells in me and I in Him. Whoever does not honour my only begotten and beloved Son, does not honour the Father, I who sent him. "He is the one you should listen to" because he has the words of eternal life. This is the conclusion of what is happening, this is the power of the mystery of the Transfiguration].

It is precisely this power, that is the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we too, my dear brothers, are called to see, not with physical eyes, but with the mental eyes of a pure mind and a pure heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they see God" (Matthew 5:8), says the Lord. To this end we are again called to imitate Christ's disciples, who "were heavy with sleep", they were overcome by heavy sleepiness, but in a little while they woke up and saw His glory. " and when they were awake, they saw his glory" (Luke 9:32).

So let us also, my beloved brothers, shake off from ourselves the sleep of ignorance; standing up after the hymnographer, let us say: " Shine forth Thou on us who are sinners all, Thy light ever-unending, through the prayers of the Theotokos. Light-bestower, glory to Thee". Many peaceful returns!"

In the morning, a Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Central Church of the Transfiguration, presided over by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, with the co-celebration of Holy Sepulchre Hieromonks and Arabic-speaking Presbyters and the participation of local Orthodox pilgrims.

At midday, the renovator of the Monastery and of the icons of the Holy Church, Hegoumen Archimandrite Hilarion, offered a meal to the Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages and many

others.

The Feast of the Transfiguration of the Saviour was celebrated in the Holy Shrine of Gethsemane with a Divine Liturgy presided over by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolas, along with the Priests of the Holy Shrine and the Hierodeacon Eulogios at the attendance of faithful pilgrims, and of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

After the Divine Liturgy, a reception was hosted by His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Hellenoupolis at the rectory.

It was also celebrated with Vespers in the evening and Divine Liturgy in the morning in the Holy Church of the Transfiguration in Ramalah, presided over by the Most Reverend Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakoupolis, along with the priests of the Church under the chanting by the Community Choir and the participation in prayer of the local believers.

From Secretariat-General

THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE MONK PANTELEIMON

The Funeral Service of the Holy Sepulchre Monk Panteleimon Andronikos was held on the morning of Wednesday, August 3/16, 2023. He slept in the Lord on Thursday, July 28/August 10, 2023, due to a heart attack in his hometown Kythera. The Funeral Service was held in the holy Church of Saint Theodore in Kythera under the fraternal care of the Holy Metropolis of

Kythera and Antikythera in consultation with H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The night before that, the complete Monastic Funeral Service was sung to the deceased.

The funeral service was presided over by His Eminence the Metropolitan of Kythera and Antikythera, Seraphim, in the concelebration on behalf of the Patriarchate of the Elder Sacristan of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, the Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Athens Archimandrite Raphael and priests of the Metropolis of Kythera, as the service was attended by many faithful, fellow citizens of the deceased, honouring his memory.

The obituary was delivered by the Elder Sacristan as follows:

“Your Eminence Metropolitan of Kythera and Antikythera Seraphim,

Reverend Pastor of this Holy Metropolis,

Respected fathers and beloved brothers

The venerable Primate of the Church of Jerusalem, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III commissioned us to represent Him together with the Archbishop of Hierapolis during the funeral service of the blessed monk Panteleimon and to place before Your venerable face, Metropolitan of Kythera, His thanks and gratitude, but also the sympathy of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood for all you did for the blessed one, and to all those who honour his memory with their presence in this funeral service. We also convey to the relatives and friends His sincere participation in their mourning and His wholehearted Patriarchal wishes for the repose of the soul of the blessed one, in the land of the living and in the tents of the righteous.

A sacred duty, but at the same time a sad one, led our steps to this holy Monastery of Saint Theodore in Kythera, in order to send to eternity the now-blessed Holy Sepulchre Monk Panteleimon, who "through death passed into life" and was transplanted from the earthly army to the triumphant Church in the heavens, from the earthly to the heavenly, from the perishable to the imperishable, from the temporal to the eternal to the bosoms of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, where "there is no pain, no sorrow, not sighing, but eternal life".

And where the soul of the departed dances in heavenly chambers, we, some sensibly and others intellectually, stand at this sacred moment in the circle of his honourable tent, to honour him for the last time, to give him our thanks for his many years of ministry in the Holy Land and to send him forward with faith and expectation of the Resurrection of those who sleep in the Lord and the "life of the age to come".

Humanly, we are saddened by the separation and the deprivation of his physical presence. We are comforted, however, by the exhortation of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, "Brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant of those who are asleep so that you do not grieve like the rest who have no hope. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so may God raise up with him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus" (Thessal. 4, 13-14). And the late Panteleimon lived in Christ Jesus and in Christ Jesus he fell asleep.

The late Panagiotis Andronikos of Nikolaos and Maria was born in Kythera on March 24, 1944. The first encyclical lessons were taught in Kythera. He went to the Holy City of Jerusalem on September 21, 1979, and lived in the Holy Lavra of Saint Savva the Sanctified. He was ordained a monk on August 15, 1981, by his Elder and Spiritual Father of the Lavra Archimandrite Seraphim, taking the name Panteleimon. From July 23, 1984, until his last day, he served with dedication and patience as a minister of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and a watchful guardian of the Holy and Life-giving Tomb of the

Lord. Throughout his ministry, he showed hard work, consistency and commendable responsibility. In him, the pilgrims saw a man of God. Because he was friendly, welcoming, cheerful, eloquent, rough and at the same time sweet, steadfast and honest. He embraced them all with love and simplicity, communicating Christ to them and writing His divine messages in their souls.

In particular, he relayed to them his experiences from his ministry at the Holy Sepulchre, the infinite miracles he experienced and his struggles for the preservation of the Holy Places. He distributed to everyone blessed oil and candle wax from the Holy Sepulchre, to have them as a blessing in their homes. That is why he was loved and appreciated by all. And here now the blessed one has left for endless eternity in the middle of summer, and is being buried today, one day after the Theotokos feast of the Dormition, and "he hastens to the grave, without taking care of the things of futility and hard-working flesh".

Therefore, all of us, let us address a fervent request to the All-Good and Omniscient God, with the supplication of the hymn:

"May Christ, grant you rest in the land of the living, and the gates of Paradise will be opened for you, and the kingdom will be shown to you, and you will be spared the sins of your earthly life friend of Christ."

May his memory be eternal."

The local Metropolitan also spoke, praising the monastic and Holy Sepulchre zeal of the deceased and his offering to the Holy Places and his hometown.

As soon as the Funeral Service was dismissed, the ascetic and fighting monk Panteleimon, who turned to the Lord, was buried in the Cemetery of the Monastery of Saint Theodore in Kythera.

May his memory be eternal!

From Secretariat-General