

CELEBRATION OF THE DORMITION OF THE ALL HOLY MOTHER OF GOD IN JERUSALEM

The Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God in Gethsemane remained open continuously after the ceremony of the 'Epitaphios' for the thousands of pilgrims that descended its scales, lighting candles and venerating the all holy tomb of the All Holy Mother of God and her holy icon of Dormition.

The Great Vesper, initiated at 3 p.m., was presided over by His Eminence Christodoulos Metropolitan of Eleftheroupoleos and Elder Dragouman, with participating Hieromonks and Fathers of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre. Also present were sojourned priests from other Orthodox Churches.

On the morning of the feast day, around 7.30 a.m., His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III descended to Gethsemane and presided at the festive Holy Liturgy at the Tomb of the Mother of God concelebrating with members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre; His Eminence Isychios Metropolitan of Capitolias, His Eminence Christodoulos Metropolitan of Eleftheroupoleos and Elder Dragouman, His Eminence Dorotheos Archbishop of Avila, His Eminence Methodios Archbishop of Mt. Tabor, along with many priests. The sojourned Bishop from Greece, His Eminence Eugenios Bishop of Knossos of the Church of Crete also concelebrated with the Brotherhood members. A large number of pilgrims arrived and participated in the Holy Liturgy, lighting candles, filling and brightening the scales of the church.

Numerous devout believers received the Holy Communion from His Beatitude at the Tomb's gate while others received the Holy Communion from the priest serving at the First Martyr St. Stephen chapel and from the priest serving at the chapel of

the righteous Forefathers of God St. Ioakim and St. Anna.

After the Holy Liturgy and the sharing of the Holy Bread – ‘Antidoron’, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, escorted by concelebrates, ascended to the Superior’s house – ‘hegoumenio’ where the Superior Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Filoumenos profusely offered grapes, sweets and refreshments.

His Beatitude bestowed His Patriarchal blessings upon the concelebrating Archbishops and priests, the Superior Rev. Arch. Fr. Filoumenos and the devout celebrating believers and implored the help and protection of the All Holy Mother of God, for her intercession to the Lord for our sanctification and salvation.

His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III thanked the Superior Rev. Archimandrite Filoumenos for the orderly performance of the holy Feast of the Dormition of the All Holy Mother of God and said that the Mother of God ‘Theotokos’ is the cause of the salvation of humankind, since she responded to the call of God and gave her flesh to the incarnate Son and Logos of God, Her Son who became man, our Saviour Jesus Christ. She then served Him throughout His earthly life until His crucifixion and she was the first to receive the message of the Resurrection. The Virgin Mary died as a human and was buried at the all holy Tomb in Gethsemane, but was taken by her son Jesus Christ in soul and body for her All Holiness to the heavens, ever vigilant in intercession and protection of humanity.

This grand Theotokos feast completed the cycle of the devout festive celebrations in honouring the person of the All Holy Theotokos – during the period up to the Fifteenth of August – by the Zion Mother-of-Churches. After eight days, on the 23rd/5th of August, the leave-taking ‘Apodosis’ of this feast took place and the holy icon of the Dormition, placed for veneration in the area of the ‘Platytera’ – behind the Tomb of the Theotokos, was brought to its chapel opposite the

Church of Resurrection.

The feast of the Dormition of the 'Theotokos' was also celebrated with devoutness and generous participation of believers at the town of Abud near Ramallah, where the church is named in honour of the Dormition of the All Holy Mother of God. In Abud, escorted by Fathers from Jerusalem, His Eminence Theodosios Archbishop of Sevasteia, presided at the festive Holy Liturgy preaching the divine word to the believers.

Chief Secretary's Office

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THE FEAST OF ST. CONSTANTINE AND ST. HELEN CELEBRATED IN THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM

In the person of Emperor Constantine the Great and his Mother Empress St. Helen, the Church acknowledges the divinely crowned royals and equal-to-the-apostles.

It is so because they embraced Christianity, they gave an end to the three century long Christian persecution and allowed the free practice of Christianity by believers through the royal decree of Mediolanum of 312A.D.

The Church of Jerusalem, the Church of the Holy Places, has special reason to honour St. Constantine and St. Helen since they distinguished the Holy Places that were, up until then, in darkness due to heathenism. It was they that founded the Church of Resurrection in Jerusalem and the Basilica of the

Nativity in Bethlehem and others in the Holy Places.

The Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre as guardian and protector of the Holy Places, is proud that the Church of the Brotherhood is named after these Saints, equal-to-the-apostles and illustrious royals.

The feast was celebrated at this Church, contiguous to the Holy Sepulchre, with particular splendour, grace and order by the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.

In the early evening Great Vesper was performed along with the ceremony of the Blessing of the Bread, presided over by the Superior of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III.

According to the custom following the Vesper, His Beatitude and the Fathers shared 'kollyva', bread and wine at the duly prepared forecourt of the Church.

On the morning of the feast day His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III presided at the Matins and the Holy Liturgy concelebrating with priests, members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.

After a resplendent and devout Holy Liturgy, His Beatitude in full vestment together with participating priests and Archbishops of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, headed in chanting procession to the Patriarchate.

During his address at the Throne Hall, His Beatitude particularly emphasized the fact that the Church is rejoicing this day in memory of Constantine the Great, for he, like the Apostle of the Nations, Paul, received the divine call to support the Evangelical message. The Great Apostle spread the message of the Gospel to the world and St. Constantine granted freedom to Christianity through the Mediolanum Edict of 312A.D and established Christianity as the official religion of the Roman-Byzantine State. Constantine the Great founded

Constantinople, the New Rome, and convoked the first Ecumenical Synod in Nicaea in 325A.D over which he presided.

In addition, His Beatitude stressed the fact that the Church of Jerusalem and the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre are proudly rejoicing at this feast of the divinely crowned royals and equal to the apostles 'isapostles', Constantine and Helen, particularly since they are recognized as the founders of the Church of Resurrection, the Basilica of the Nativity of Bethlehem and the monastic Order of 'Spoudaei'. The city of Jerusalem owes its Christian character to St. Constantine and St. Helen, as revering the Holy Pilgrim Places and in debt they are honoured.

His Beatitude invoked the intercession of these great Saints to be a mainstay of the Church of Jerusalem, for the safeguarding of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, for the stability of the Holy Community 'Ierou Kinou' of the Holy Sepulchre, and for peace in Jerusalem and around the world.

A monastic lunch then followed the reception at the Patriarchate.

The Chief Secretary's Office

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CEREMONIES PROGRAM DURING THE

5.30a.m 6.30a.m

at the Cathedral of St.James

Holy Thursday: The washing of the feet

8p.m 9p.m

Ceremony

Holy Thursday: Service of the Passions

5.15p.m 6.15p.m

Holy Friday:

Hours

9a.m

Great
10a.m

at the Holy Calvary

Holy Friday:

Vesper

3p.m

2p.m

The

Holy Friday:

Burial

8p.m

Service of the
9p.m

Holy Saturday:

12midday

1p.m

Ceremony of the Holy Fire

Holy Saturday:

11p.m

Resurrection Ceremony
12midnight

Easter Sunday:

12midday

1p.m

Second Resurrection

The Superintendent of the Ceremonies

Archimandrite Demetrios