

THE FEAST OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE AND OF SAINT SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER IN KATAMON

On Thursday, 3/16 February 2023, the feast of Saint Simeon the God-receiver was celebrated at the Holy Monastery dedicated to him, called Katamon, in west Jerusalem near the Holy Monastery of the Cross and the Jewish Knesset on Katamon hill.

The feast of the Meeting of the Lord was celebrated also in this Monastery, to especially honour Saint Simeon the God-receiver who was the main person serving the Lord in this event, and said when he received the Lord in his arms, "now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke: 2:29-32).

In honour of Saint Simeon, the Divine Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archbishops, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor and Aristovoulos of Madaba, the Archimandrites, Mattheos, Ieronymos, Priests and Hieromonks from various Orthodox countries, among whom, the Head of the Russian MISSIA in Jerusalem, Archimandrite Alexander, Archdeacon Mark and the Hierodeacons, Eulogios, Simeon and Dositheos. The chanting was delivered by Mr Gotsopoulos and the Patriarchal school students, as the service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the Consul Mrs Zaharioudaki, members of the Consulate, the Ambassador of Georgia to Tel Aviv Mr Lasha Zhavania and many faithful Christians from

Greece, Russia, Romania and Palestine.

His Beatitude delivered the following sermon in Greek, Arabic and Russian:

“And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon... Then took he him [Christ] up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke: 2:25-32).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all in this holy place, where the tomb of Saint Simeon the God-receiver is preserved, to celebrate his holy commemoration and synaxis along with that of Saint Anne the Prophetess.

The Evangelist Luke precisely narrates the entrance of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple of Solomon, forty days after His Nativity, according to the custom of the Law of Moses.

The presentation of Jesus in the Temple by His mother, the Virgin Mary and Joseph the Betrothed, as well as the meeting, namely the welcoming by the righteous Simeon and Anne the Prophetess are the content of today's feast. The righteous Simeon, being a Priest under the Law of Moses, became a true witness of the mystery of the Divine Providence, namely of the Incarnation of God the Word, which refers to the salvation of man. “For mine eyes have seen thy salvation” (Luke 2:30-31) the Elder Simeon exclaims.

Interpreting these words of Simeon, Saint Basil the Great says: “He calls salvation the Christ of God in the

Scriptures”; while Athanasius the Great says, “by salvation he means His presence in the flesh”. “He calls salvation the incarnation of the Only-begotten Son and Word of God”, Saint Theophylaktos remarks.

God had prepared this “salvation of God” which the Elder Simeon’s eyes beheld, since the foundation of the world for the whole human race. “He prepared [the salvation of] Christ since the foundation of the world, and revealed it in the end of times”, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says.

God, my dear ones, is the God of love, light and peace, as witnessed by the holy Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists and in general by the Holy Scriptures. “God is love” (John 4:8). “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace” (1 Cor. 14:33), Saint Paul preaches. And Saint Cosmas, Bishop of Maiouma composes a hymn referring to Prophet Isaiah: “When Isaiah beheld God symbolically on an exalted throne attended by Angels of glory, he cried: o wretched man that I am! For I have seen beforehand the incarnate God, the Lord of peace and unwaning light” (Katavasia, Ode 5).

In other words, the prophet Isaiah was deemed worthy to see the exalted throne of God, which was a symbol of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, who became a living throne of God by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, as the God-man Lord and our God and Saviour received flesh from her pure flesh. Therefore, the hymnographer adds the words: “the incarnate God” is the “Lord of unwaning light and peace”.

Saint Simeon the God-receiver became a communicant of this unwaning light and peace, not only through his bodily eyes but also through the eyes of his soul and pure heart. “Then took he [Simeon] him up in his arms, and blessed God” (Luke 2:28), the Evangelist Luke says. He blessed, namely he glorified God the Elder Simeon because his eyes saw the salvation of God (cf. Luke 2:30). “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to

him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God" (Psalm 50:23), the Lord says.

And the salvation of God is no other than His spiritual light, which will reveal to the nations the true God and the true path of salvation, namely of Christ, Who is the revealed light, "a light to lighten the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32). The established Father of the Church, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says, "Christ became the light to those who were led astray in the darkness and had been fallen by devil's hand".

Our Holy Church, being the body of Christ, and Christ is its head (cf. Col. 1:18), is the only source of the true light, which sheds light upon every man in this world (cf. John 1:9). Therefore, the hymnographer says, "Thou foundation of them that hope in Thee, O Lord, make steadfast the Church, which Thou hast purchased with Thy precious blood" (Katavasia, Ode 3). Saint Paul is also referring to this when he says, "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). And that "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it" (Eph. 5:25-26).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, my dear brethren, calls all those "who believe in Him" through the righteous and God-receiver Simeon, to remain steadfast and firm in our faith in our life in Christ because the only true way of light and salvation lies in true reverence.

And the hymnographer of the Church urges us by saying: "Let us hasten to the Theotokos, we who wish to see her Son brought unto Simeon. When the incorporeal powers looked on Him out of Heaven, they were astonished, saying: Now do we see strange and wondrous things, incomprehensible and inexpressible. He that made Adam is carried as a babe; the Uncontainable is held in the arms of the Elder; he that abideth uncircumscribed in the bosom of His Father is willingly circumscribed in the flesh, but not in His Godhead, even the only Friend of man"

(Matins, Oikos). Amen! Many happy returns and blessed the forthcoming Great lent period!”

The Patriarchal entourage and the congregation were offered a reception by the Hegoumen and renovator of the Monastery Archimandrite Theodoritos.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, 2nd/15th February 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Meeting of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple at the Holy Monastery of Sayda Naya at the Christian Quarter, northeast of the Patriarchate.

On this feast the Church commemorates and honours and celebrates the Meeting of our Lord in the Temple when he was forty days old, still breastfeeding. He was brought by his parents to the Temple of Solomon with the offering of “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons”. There, Saint Simeon the God-receiver having been informed by the Holy Spirit, received the Lord in his arms and recognized Him and exclaimed, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32).

For the celebration of this Despotic Feast, Vespers was held

on Tuesday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Wednesday morning, presided over by His Eminence, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, with the co-celebration of the Archimandrites, Ieronymos and Makarios, the Arab-speaking Priests Charalambos and Nectarios, Archimandrite Melchizedek from the H. Monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Essex, and other Priests from the Orthodox countries of Romania, Russia and Georgia and Hierodeacon Simeon. The chanting was delivered by Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos in Greek and Mr Rimon Kamar in Arabic. The services were attended by many pilgrims and members of the parish of Saint James Cathedral, as well as the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

Before the Holy Communion, His Eminence delivered a Sermon in Greek and Arabic (see video).

During the Divine Liturgy, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem visited the Monastery for veneration, accompanied by Hagiotaphite Fathers.

The Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages, along with the entire congregation were offered a decadent reception by the renovator of the Church, Reverend Abbess Seraphima, at the hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Church.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE THREE HIERARCHS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, January 29/February 11, 2023, the commemoration of the three Hierarchs, Basil the Great, Gregory the

Theologian and John Chrysostom, was celebrated at the Patriarchate with a transfer, normally celebrated on January 30 of each year.

On this day, the Church jointly honours the three Hierarchs according to the arrangement since the 11th century. Then some of the faithful appointed especially honourable as superior Basil the Great, called Basileitai, others Gregory the Theologian, called Grigoreitai, and others John the Chrysostom called Ioannitai.

In order to resolve the division, the Church established a common celebration and Bishop John Mavropous composed a common Canon in honour of the Three Hierarchs. On this day, the Three Hierarchs are especially honoured by educational institutions, because they were patrons of Education and they established the relationship of Christianity to the ancient Greek classical philosophy.

On this occasion, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the above day in the Holy Church of the Holy Trinity of the Patriarchal School of Zion, presided over by the Chairman of the School Board, His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, with co-celebrants the Managing Director of the School, Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, the Arab-speaking Priests Sylla and George Baramki and Hierodeacon Simeon, at the chanting of Mr Vassilios Gotsopoulos and the students, in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Managing Director of the School Archimandrite Mattheos offered a reception for the Episcopal Entourage and the congregation.

On the same day, Vespers was celebrated by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Hellenoupolis, and the next day the Divine Liturgy, in honour of the Three Hierarchs at the Holy Church of Saint Basil the Great near the New Gate.

THE FEAST OF SAINT EUTHYMIOS THE GREAT AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, January 20/February 2, 2023, the feast of our holy Father Euthymios the Great was celebrated by the Patriarchate in the Holy Monastery dedicated to him, which is located in the Christian quarter and adjacent to the Holy Monastery of Panagia Seidanaya southeast of the Patriarchate.

On this feast, the Church remembers that Saint Euthymios came from Melitina in Armenia and, having previously secluded himself in the Monastery of his homeland, he came to the Holy Land around the year 406 AD.

At first he prayed in the Lavra of Saint Chariton after Saint Theoktistos in Faran. At the request of the monks of the desert, Saint Theoktistos founded the Koinobion monastery for the novice monks, and Euthymios the Great the Lavra monastery for the advanced monks. Both were teachers of Saint Savva the Sanctified first in the Koinobion of Saint Theoktistos, when he came to the Holy Land in the year 456 AD.

In his Lavra, the Great Euthymios received and guided thousands of monks and even laymen, who came and asked for his help. He also performed a missionary work, from which he indoctrinated and baptized a tribe of Arab Saracens, expelled from Persia and arrived at the Lavra, and he asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem Juvenalius to ordain their guardian and Paralegal Peter Aspebeton as Bishop and gave him the title of Bishop of Paremvoles.

He became an advocate of the doctrine of the 4th Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in the year 451, that is, of the two natures of will and energy in Christ our God. He was gifted by God with the clairvoyant and miraculous gift and returned the empress Eudocia from Monophysitism to the Orthodoxy.

In his honour, Vespers was celebrated on Wednesday afternoon and Divine Liturgy on the morning of the feast, presided over by the Most Reverend Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, with the co-celebration of Archimandrite Makarios, the Arabic-speaking Presbyters Charalambos and Nectarios and Hierodeacon Simeon. The chanting was delivered by Mr Vassilios Gotsopoulos and the students of the Patriarchal School of Zion as the service was attended by monks, nuns and other believers.

After the Divine Liturgy, the hospitable Abbess, nun Sarah, hosted a reception for the Episcopal entourage and the congregation.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE VENERATION OF APOSTLE PETER'S SACRED CHAIN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, January 16th/29th, 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the veneration of the Holy chain of the Apostle Peter in the holy Monastery of Saint Nicodemus – commonly known as “the Lentil’s”, adjacent to the Praetorium complex, that is, the prisons of the Roman Administration of time of the Lord.

During this feast, the Church commemorates the imprisonment of the Apostle Peter by Herod and his miraculous release by God through His angel, as the Acts of the Apostles declare this (12, 1-11).

On this occasion, Vespers was celebrated on Saturday afternoon and Divine Liturgy in the morning, presided over by the Most Reverend Archbishop of Theophanes of Gerassa, with the co-celebration of the Hegoumen Archimandrite Makarios, the Hegoumen of Praetorium Archimandrite Dionysios and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by Mr Vassilios Gotsopoulos and monks, as the service was attended by believers from Jerusalem and elsewhere.

Before the Holy Communion, His Eminence spoke about the Apostle Peter, who was called "blessed" by Jesus Christ, when he confessed Him as the Son of the living God, and his confession was called the building stone of the Church. He also spoke about the celebrated event of the release of the Apostle Peter under God, with the help of the angel and the Holy Spirit, and more generally about all the achievements of the Saints of the Church, which are achieved through the help of the Holy Spirit.

After the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen Archimandrite Makarios offered a reception for the Episcopal entourage and the congregation.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINT THEODOSIUS THE CENOBIARCH AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, January 11th / 24th 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of our Holy Father Theodosius the Cenobiarch in the Holy Monastery, located in the area between the Village of the Shepherds and the Holy Lavra of Saint Savva the sanctified and the adjacent so-called village of Abediye.

On this day, the Church remembers that Saint Theodosius came from Mogarissa in Cappadocia, he came to the Holy Land in the year 451, when he was 27 years old, he joined the Order of the Studios of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Then he lived as a monk in the Monastery formerly called "Seat of Ikelia" near Jerusalem and in the area where the cave was, where the Magi spent the night "returning by another way to their homeland" (Matthew 2:12).

In this area he founded the Coenobitic Monastery for the training of novice monks, trained in common life, obedience and humility, without being deemed suitable for entering the Monastery – Lavra for an ascetic life. Due to his extreme virtue, he was appointed Cenobiarch, i.e. Leader of the entire Coenobitic life in Palestine and he cooperated after his compatriot Saint Savva for the protection of the doctrine of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in the year 451 AD. That is, that Christ our God, has one hypostasis in two natures, the divine and the human.

In his Holy Monastery, he received monks of various nationalities. The monks worked as manual labourers and from this income maintained charitable institutions such as a nursing home and an orphanage. Due to the Monastery's location near the Shepherds Village village, it maintained a coenobitic

character for the help of the needy asking for help. The Monastery had four churches and about seven hundred monks.

In this famous Monastery, the centre of monastic life and doctrinal correctness of the 5th and 6th centuries, a Divine Liturgy was held in honour of its founder, Saint Theodosius, during a vigil on the night of January 11/24, 2023, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina and Theodosios of Sebasteia, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom the Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Gotsopoulos and by a choir made up of members of the flock from the neighbouring areas, with the participation of monks, nuns and pilgrims.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Thou didst secretly enter into the noetic darkness of the Divine Light, O all-blessed Theodosius; and having the doctrines of piety written on the tablets of thy heart by the finger of God, thou gavest them to thy disciples as a book of life” (Minaion, Ode 8, Troparion 4).

Beloved brothers in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

Christ, the Son and Word of God, who was baptized in the Jordan, and who renewed and regenerated the aged man by sin, brought us all together in this Holy Monastery of Abba Theodosius the Cenobiarch, to celebrate his venerable memory.

Our holy Father Theodosius, who loved Christ from a young age, left his native country, the town of Mogarrisa in Cappadocia, and retreated to the Holy Land, where he lived the monastic life, during the reign of Markianus.

According to his biographer, Cyril Scythopolitis, our holy Father Theodosius was shown to be a citizen of heaven, the great beauty of Palestine and the boast of the desert, and the General and support of the monastic figure and the right doctrines and defender, guide and protector of the Coenobitic Canon.

It is noteworthy that the God-bearing Theodosius became not only "the support of the monastic schema", but also the general and champion of the correct doctrines. And this because when he entered the holy city of Jerusalem and was lodged in the Tower of David, by the elder Longinus of Cappadocia, of the monastic order, "of the Studios of the Holy Resurrection of our God Christ", namely of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, he was not allowed to departure to the monasteries of the desert of Palestine, "due to the schism of the monks in the desert who did not partake of the Catholic Church, but were subject to the strife and ill-will" of Eutychus and Dioscorus

In other words, the Church of Jerusalem and the monasticism in the desert, a numerous place of anchorites, was tested by the malice, the heresy of monophysitism, monoenergeticism and Monothelism. Our holy Father Theodosius was "a general and champion of the Orthodox doctrines, that is, of the Orthodox teaching and faith, as his hymnographer also eloquently states: "Calling thy teaching to remembrance, O Theodosius, we proclaim Christ in two essences, acknowledging the two natural wills and energies and authorities in God who was baptized in the flesh" (Matins, Ode 9, Troparion 3).

The dedication of the God-bearer Theodosius to the healthy Orthodox faith made him a Temple of the Holy Spirit. Clothed with power from on high according to the proclamation of our Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high", (Luke 24,49), he worked many miracles.

It is said of him, Saint Theodosius, as his biographer mentions, that he did three outstandingly meritorious deeds, firstly, the most exacting exercise of true and orthodox faith from youth to old age, secondly, his kindness to strangers and the poor, and his impersonal philanthropy, the third and the unceasing celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

This is why the hymnographer exclaims, saying: "Thou didst secretly enter into the noetic darkness of the Divine Light, O all-blessed Theodosius; and having the doctrines of piety written on the tablets of thy heart by the finger of God, thou gavest them to thy disciples as a book of life" (Minaion, Ode 8, Troparion 4).

In other words, the blessed Theodosius, like another Moses, entered the place where God was (Exodus 20,21). According to Saint Dionysios of Areopagite, this divine "gnophos" (noetic darkness) is the unattainable light". According to Saint John the Theologian: "God is light, and in Him, there is no darkness" (1 John 1, 5). And according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa, the "slates written by the finger of God" are the voice of God. "The letters in the slates, the voice of God." Through whom the revelation of the mysteries took place." According to the celestial Paul, the Lord God is " Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6,16).

From the above, it is demonstrated, my beloved brothers, that the faithful and genuine members of the Church, of the Body of Christ, belong to the communion of saints. " God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord", (1 Cor. 1,9) preaches Saint Paul, who prays for us, " That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1, 17-18).

This wealth of the glory of God was inherited by our holy Father Theodosius, who is being honoured today. This wealth, says Saint Chrysostom, is “the ineffable glory of God”, so he wonders: “what word is able to describe that glory?” [of God]?”

This wealth of God’s glory is provided by Christ as an inheritance in His Church and through His saints, as the psalmist says: “God is wonderful in His saints” (Psalm 67:36).

We beseech God’s Saint Theodosius the Great, my beloved brothers, to be ambassador, after the blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, to the noetic Sun of Righteousness, who came to Jordan to be baptized by John, to enlighten us and the whole world. Amen. Many happy returns”.

After the Divine Liturgy, the renovator of the Monastery, elderly Archimandrite Hierotheos, offered a treat to the Patriarchal entourage.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINTS GEORGE AND JOHN THE HOZEVITES

On Saturday, January 8th/21st, 2023, the memory of Saints George and John the Hozevites was celebrated by the Patriarchate in the Holy Monastery of Hozeva, located on the left bank of the Brook Horrath in its Jericho flow.

On this day, the Church remembers that Saint John came to the

Holy Monastery of Hozeva, having resigned his Bishopric in Caesarea, and became a pole of spiritual attraction, and Saint George came from Lefkara of Cyprus and renovated the Monastery after the Persian invasion of 614 AD.

The memory of these holy men was honoured with an all-night vigil after the preface by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Constantine of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the following address:

“Rejoice, rules of extreme humility,”

“Rejoice, images of clear wisdom”,

Your Beatitude, Father and Master,

And Your honourable Entourage,

We have gathered once more to celebrate the annual memory of the two Holy Founders of the historical HozozHoHeva Lavra, George and John, and the three thousand Hozevite martyrs the day after tomorrow.

Their virtues are many! Based on the most meaningful, excellent spiritual teaching of our Holy Father George, a virtue above all:

Holy humility!

In the teaching of the Saint to the Hozevite Monks, “About pride”, we read:

“Humility, humility, exaltation (that is, boasting) has the Only Begotten Son of God, who humbled Himself to death, death on the Cross... I tell you, brothers, that there was no Greek or Jew or Samaritan who had true humility and he is not loved and much loved by God and men... so let us acquire these virtues: humility and reverence. Struggle, brothers, supporting each other in humility.”

This is what our Holy Father George taught the Hozevites. Not only did he teach, but also practiced!

Both Saints John and George were possessed, not only by humility but above all, by extreme and genuine humility. The distinct, indeed, difference between the two concepts is clarified by our Holy Father Nikitas Stithatos in the second hundred of his chapters:

“Humility is achieved by all suffering and by the external efforts of virtue... Humility, however, is what is divine and heavenly and is born... through the influx of the Holy Spirit”. (Philokalia, volume 4 p.86,87, 1st edition 1987, “The Orchard of the Virgin Mary”).

The sublime precisely humility, which is completely lacking in our days, please pray, Your Beatitude Father and Master, that we may all acquire it. And indeed, we may walk in life with moderation, in the bond of the Lord’s love, Amen”.

Consequently, the all-night vigil followed, officiated by His Beatitude, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Archbishops, Aristarchos of Constantina, Isidoros of Hierapolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, among whom the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, the Hozevite Hieromonk Chrysogonos, at the changing of Mr Stavros Christos, cantor in the Church of Saint Paraskevi of Attica, Mr Papadimitriou Nikolaos, choir leader of the Holy Church of Saint Kyriaki in Pyrgos Elia, Mr Stavros Ioannou choir leader in the Holy Church of Saint Dimitrios of Tripoli, Mr Theotokatos Nikolaos left choir singer in the H. Church of Prophet Elias of the Municipality of Saint Paraskevi Attica, Mr Kamtsios Elias and Panagiotis, right and left choir singers respectively of the chapel of the Holy Apostles of the Municipality of Saint Paraskevi Attica, after the monks of the Monastery, with the participation of many people for the first time after the last

covid-19 pandemic.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude delivered the solemn sermon as follows:

“And I said: this change hath been wrought by the right hand of the Most High”, (Ps. 76,11) exclaims the psalmist,

Beloved Holy Fathers and Brothers in Christ,

The redeeming Grace of God and our Saviour Christ, who appeared in the Jordan, brought us all together in this Holy place of Hozeva, so that we may solemnly honour the sacred memory of our Holy Father George the Hozevite.

Burning from childhood with the desire for a solitary and ascetic life, to which he was drawn, and after remaining in the service of his elderly parents until their death, he left his native island of Cyprus for the Holy Land. Then his brother the monk Heraklides receives him and leads him to the famous for its austerity and its holy monks, the coenobitic monastery of Hozeva.

Let's listen to his hymnographer saying: “Neither lengthiness of the road nor severity of the place could avail to weaken thy strong and fiery zeal to make thy journey to God; and when thou joyously hadst arrive da the places that were trod by the feet of our Lord and God, thou, O righteous George, leftest nothing undone till through thy labours and ascetic deeds thou camest unto the Sion in Heaven's heights” (Vespers, sticheron 2).

Indeed, “the fire of our Saint George's education to God” is strengthened by the Davidic words “I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord, and Thy law is my meditation” (Psalms 118, 174) from one; and the strict (hard) his practice on the other hand, in Lavra. “The insults of the warrior devil did not settle the citadel of his soul,” says the hymn. And this, because the blessed George had as a model of imitation our

Lord Jesus Christ, according to the commandment of Saint Paul: "Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph. 5, 1-2).

Interpreting these words of Paul, Saint Chrysostom says: "See that the suffering because of the enemy, is a smell of fragrance and also a welcome sacrifice; if you die, then it a sacrifice; this is to imitate God."

The imitation of God, that is, of our Saviour Christ, is nothing other than the alteration of the right hand of the Most High, Who "became like us and was greatly altered himself", as Saint Cyril of Alexandria says, adding: "and everyone, out of malice returning, or remaining in virtue and prosper, let him say: -Now I start; this change, which the right hand of the Most High has bestowed, may it be the greatest advance through the striving of reverence. The precept of virtue does not exist when he does not change. It is also said that the Only Begotten (Son and Word of God) is changed, as the descent of the divine nature to the human form and a kind of change, not by expulsion (=rejection) but by adoption.

Our holy Father George also achieved this exact change according to Christ, "having been trained in virtue through the gymnasiums (=practice) of piety, of the right professed faith. Also worth noting is the fact that the Holy George, like another Paul, dwelt on earth as a disembodied angel, unceasingly glorifying the Holy Triune God and receiving his divine radiance.

Saint George, born as a vessel of the enlightening Grace of the Holy Spirit and following in the footsteps of Saint John the Forerunner and Baptist preaching repentance in the desert of Jordan, echoed and evangelized through the mouth of the psalmist, the greatness and saving truth of Christ, saying: "I

have proclaimed the good tidings of Thy righteousness in the great congregation; lo, my lips I shall not restrain; Lord, Thou knowest it. Thy righteousness have I not hid in my heart; Thy truth and Thy salvation have I declared (Ps. 39, 11-12).

True witnesses of this event have been the multitude of monks, the ascetics in this holy Monastery of Hozeva, in which John the bishop-to-be of Caesarea of Palestine and John our New Father from Romania, who is before our eyes and his incorruptible and fragrant relic proclaims the Resurrection of God and our Saviour, but also our resurrection in Christ. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5), preaches the wise Paul.

We, my beloved brothers and venerable monks, who are practising in this sanctified Lavra, beseech the all-wise George standing before God, to grant to those who honour him the illumination of the Holy Spirit who appeared in the form of a dove in the Jordan and the divine communion.

And after the hymnographer let us say: "with one accord, let us faithful laud with hymns God the Word, Who came forth from God, and Who ineffably took on flesh from a pure Virgin for us and in wisdom past telling descended to make Adam new again, who by eating fell grievously down into corruption's pits" (Ode 9, Heirmos).

Amen. Many, peaceful and blessed years".

After the Dismissal of the vigil, the renovator of the Monastery and its reorganizer, Hegoumen Archimandrite Constantine, offered a solemn feast.

Blessing everyone, His Beatitude ascended the uphill road with the help of the monastery vehicle and boarded the Patriarchate's car to return to Jerusalem.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, January 7/21, 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Forerunner and Baptist John.

By the word “Synaxis”, the Church means the gathering of its members, in order to honour Saint John, the Forerunner, because of his special ministerial work in the Baptism of the Lord.

This feast was celebrated in the Holy Monastery named after him, which is located to the west of the Jordan River in the place where the Lord was baptized. The Monastery was fully and decently restored, as befits it, under its Hegoumen Archimandrite Bartholomew, after the damages suffered from the six-day war of 1967.

The solemn Divine Liturgy in the midst of many faithful Orthodox Christians was presided over by the Most Reverend Archbishop Filoumenos of Pells, with the co-celebration of the Hagiotaphite Archimandrites Onoufrios (Hegoumen of the Monastery of Sarantarion Mount) and Meletios (Hegoumen of the Monastery of Joachim and Anna) Priests from the Orthodox Churches of Russia and Romania, Archdeacon Markos and Deacon Stavros. The chanting was delivered by Mr Vassilios Gotsopoulos and monk Joseph from Mount Athos, with the

participation in prayer of the Hegoumen of the Monastery of Abba Gerasimos of the Jordan Archimandrite Chrysostom.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen Archimandrite Bartholomew offered a reception to all.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, January 6/19, 2023, the solemn ceremony of the Feast of the Epiphany took place in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The service began with the veneration of the Deposition slate and the Holy Sepulchre by the Head of the feast, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, the High Priests and the Priests.

Afterwards, while the floats were struck, the Fathers-members of the Holy Synod venerated the Horrendous Golgotha, the Priests received His Beatitude's blessing to participate in the Liturgy and His Beatitude and the High Priests were dressed in their vestments.

After these had been completed, the service of the Great Sanctification of the Water began in the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection under His Beatitude, at the chanting of Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos, as the service was attended by a large crowd of faithful Christians.

This service was followed by the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom at the Holy Sepulchre, which was officiated by His Beatitude with the co-celebration of their Eminences, the Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the visiting from the Church of Greece, Metropolitans Antonios of Glyfada and Timotheos of Thessaliotida and Fanariofersala, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and the Consul Ms Zacharioudaki along with a multitude of pilgrims.

After the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude sanctified the people with the Holy Cross which contains the Holy Wood, and with the Sanctified water.

After the dismissal, the Patriarchal Entourage ascended to the Patriarchate, where His Beatitude prayed for the grace of the Christ who appeared in the Jordan and again sanctified the people who had come.

From Secretariat-General

THE FOREFEAST OF THEOPHANY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, the 5th/18th of January 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the Eve of the Feast of the Epiphany, in accordance with the ecclesiastical and institutional (Status Quo) formality.

On the morning of this day, after the Service of Matins in the monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, the Royal

Hours of Epiphany I, III, VI and IX were read, with the participation of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

After the reading of the Hours, the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great was celebrated, and after its Dismissal, the service of the Sanctification of the Water was held by His Beatitude, with the co-prayer of the High Priests and other Hagiotaphite Fathers and pilgrims, who drank from the holy water and were sprinkled with it.

Then, after the chanting of "When Thou was baptized in the Jordan", the ascension to the Patriarchate took place and prayers were offered. Then, after a little while, the Episcopal entourage arrived under the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, after the service of the Sanctification of the Water at the Cathedral of Saint James the Brother of God.

Then at about 9.00 a.m., H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos departed to the Jordan River, passing through the Holy Monastery of the Holy Prophet Elisha and through the Prefecture of Jericho.

His Beatitude arrived at the Holy Monastery of Saint John the Forerunner, was dressed in a red cloak and in the presence of Scouts and accompanied by High Priests and many Priests and some thousands of pilgrims marched to the Jordan River and on a platform performed the service of the Sanctification of the water.

Then His Beatitude went down to the bank of the Jordan and while floating on a boat, he immersed the holy Cross into the waters, in which everyone chanted "when Thou wast baptized in the Jordan" in joy and rejoicing and from the other side of the East Bank of the Jordan River.

Finally, His Beatitude returned to the nearby Monastery of the Holy Forerunner, where its restorer, Hegoumen Archimandrite

Bartholomew hosted a fasting meal.

After this, His Beatitude departed for Jerusalem, passing from the Holy Monastery of Abba Gerasimos of the Jordan for veneration.

From Secretariat-General