

# THE FEAST OF THE THREE HIERARCHS AT THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL OF ZION

On Friday 30 January / 12 February 2021 the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Three Hierarchs, Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint John Chrysostom, at the Patriarchal School on the hill of Holy Zion.

The common Feast of these Three great Hierarchs was established by the Church in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, in order to solve the dispute among the members of the congregation regarding who among the three Saints is greater than the others and bring back the peace.

This arrangement was proposed by the Metropolitan Ioannis Mavropous of Euhaita, who composed a common canon for the Saints.

This Feast was celebrated at the Patriarchal School as the Three Hierarchs are also the patron Saints of education since they introduced the golden rule between the ancient classic education and Christian teaching.

For this Feast, the Divine Liturgy was officiated by the Chairman of the School Board, His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, with the co-celebration of the Managing Director of the School, Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, the Presbyters Athanasios and Nektarios and the Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod and Manager of the Boarding School, Hierodeacon Simeon. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, the School teachers and students.

The Sermon of the day was delivered by the Managing Director of the School Archimandrite Mattheos.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Managing Director of the School hosted a reception for the Episcopal Entourage and the congregation at the reception hall of the School.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS CELEBRATES THE D. LITURGY ON SARANTARION MOUNT**

On Sunday 25 January / 7 February 2021, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the Divine Liturgy on the commemoration of our Holy Father Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople, at the Holy Monastery of Sarantarion Mount.

This Mount is dominant over the city of Jericho, with its foot at the waters of Prophet Elisha. According to the faith of our Church, the Lord was guided by the Spirit on this Mount after His baptism in the River Jordan, where He accepted to be tempted by the demon according to the Holy Evangelists (Matthew Ch. 4, Mark Ch. 1, Luke Ch. 4), and He conquered every temptation after forty-day fasting, setting an example for us to fight and conquer our temptations.

This Divine Liturgy was also celebrated on the commemoration of the fact that many Fathers, great ascetics and other monks followed the Lord's example, and used to retreat to the desert after the Feast of Theophany, living in asceticism until Palm

Sunday, when they returned to their Monasteries, chanting: "today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us..."

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences; Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, and Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The chanting was delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, and only a few monks attended the Service.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of the Holy Spirit, which came down in the form of a dove and stood above Jesus Christ when He was baptized in the Jordan, has gathered us in his holy place, where Jesus was guided by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil, in order to celebrate the bloodless sacrifice and glorify His Holy Name.

According to the true witness of the Evangelists, after His baptism and the temptations, Jesus "departed into Galilee... he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:12-17).

These words: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17) are still being preached by the Holy Church of Christ, addressing every man who seeks the light of truth, namely of Christ, Who said: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have

the light of life" (John 8:12).

Interpreting these words, Saint Chrysostom says: "He talks about light and darkness in a noetic manner; meaning that one does not remain in fallacy and in sin". And Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "The one who follows Christ does not remain in the darkness at all, but will gain the light of life". The one that hears my teaching, the Lord says, will not walk in darkness, but will be led to the light of life, namely to the revelation of the mysteries regarding Me, which will lead to the eternal life.

The approaching of the Kingdom of Heaven is no other than the revelation of the divine providence to the world, "and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:9-10).

In other words, Christ, according to Origen, is the "Self-Kingdom". "For He [Christ] is the King of heavens, and just as He is the self-wisdom, self-righteousness, and self-truth, likewise, He is the self-kingdom". This means that the Kingdom of Christ, who is the head of the Church body, is present, and therefore at hand, near us in the Church; and through both the earthly and the heavenly Church, or better say, "the militant and triumphant". "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off" (Jeremiah 23:23)? And according to the psalmist: "Thou art near, O Lord; and all thy commandments are truth" (Ps. 119:151).

Our entrance and participation in the body of the Church [of Christ] through the holy baptism, denotes our familiarity to the Kingdom of God according to the testimony of Luke the Evangelist; "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they

say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21).

Interpreting these words of the Lord, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: "it is in our self-will and in our power to take it [the kingdom]; it is, therefore, imperative for every man to have the justification in Christ through faith, namely to enrich and adorn himself with every virtue in order to gain the kingdom of heaven". And in more detail; it is up to your own will and power to gain the kingdom. Because every man who achieves the righteousness through faith in Christ, and is adorned with all virtues, is therefore deemed worthy of the kingdom of heaven. And Saint Theophylaktos says: "It is only then that God reigns within us when no worldly thing possesses our souls, but we live in a manner beyond this world for all things".

Moreover, Saint Mark, the ascetic says on this matter: "it is necessary to have the grace of the Holy Spirit acting in the heart, and according to this analogy one may enter the kingdom of heaven". Commenting on these words, Metropolitan Joel of Edessa says: "this means that the one who has the grace of the Holy Spirit working in his heart, has entered the Kingdom of God according to the degree of cultivating this. In other words, the one who does the will of God cleanses his mind and heart, distances himself from sin, lives in God, while he still is on earth".

And we have this example from the Saints of our Church. And we say this because the worldly life of the Saints is the life that reveals Christ Himself, His Kingdom. Filled with divine love, the Saints of the Church of Christ are those who paid heed to Saint Paul's voice: "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23). "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

As for us, my dear brethren, let us entreat God the Word and

our Saviour, who was made incarnate through the Virgin Mary and appeared to us, to deem us worthy of His Kingdom, saying: "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven". Amen."

After the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen Archimandrite Onuphrios hosted a reception for the Patriarchal Entourage.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE FEAST OF SAINT EUTHYMIUS AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Wednesday 20 January/ 2 February 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of our Holy Father Euthymius the Great, at the Holy Monastery dedicated to him, which is adjacent to the Holy Monastery of Panagia Sayda Naya in the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, near the Patriarchate.

On this feast the Church commemorates Saint Euthymius according to Cyril of Skythopolis who wrote his biography. Saint Euthymius was born in Melitini of Armenia, joined a Monastery in his country and arrived in the Holy Land at the age of 30, in AD 406, where he lived in the Judea desert along with Saint Theoktistos, his fellow in asceticism. At their agreement, Saint Theoktistos founded a Coenobitic Monastery for the beginner Monks, while Saint Euthymius founded a Lavra for the advanced in asceticism Monks. These two Fathers became illumined by the Holy Spirit, teachers of thousands of Coenobitic and Lavraeotic Monks and of thousands of Christians.

They were the teachers of our Holy Father Savvas the Sanctified, when he came in the Holy Land in 456. Saint Euthymius did not accept him in his Lavra because he was still a boy, but sent him to Saint Theoktistos' Coenobion, where Saint Savvas remained for fifteen years before he received the blessing to retreat for a hesychastic life in the deeper desert.

Saint Euthymius also worked as a missionary, because he received near his monastery a tribe from Persia with their leader Aspevetos, he catechized and baptized them and asked Archbishop Iouvenalios of Jerusalem to ordain Aspevetos Bishop of Paremvolon.

Saint Euthymius fought for the decisions of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon in 451, defending the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, the divine and the human in one hypostasis. Many people, among whom the Empress Eudoxia returned to the Orthodox Faith by the teachings of Saint Euthymius.

The Saint was given by God the gifts of clairvoyance and of healing the sick, as witnessed in his synaxarion. The Lavra of Saint Euthymius has been destroyed by the various raids and the passing of time, and is currently kept as an archaeological site, after excavations that were held in 1929 and again 30 years ago.

In honour of this great beacon and luminary of the monastic life of the Orthodox Doctrine, Vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning were held at the Monastery bearing his name in the Old City of Jerusalem. The Services were officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, with the co-celebration of Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, Archimandrite Makarios, Priest Nectarios and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by the Byzantine choir leader of the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen Archimandrite Eusevios and Mr Vasilios Gostopoulos. The services were attended by Monks, Nuns and faithful

Christians from Jerusalem.

During the Divine Liturgy H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos came to the Monastery for veneration.

The Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages along with all the congregation were offered a reception at the hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Monastery by the new Abbess Nun Sarah.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR TRYPHON IN NEOCHORION OF BOSPORUS**

On Monday, 19 January/ 1 February 2021, the commemoration of the Holy Martyr Tryphon the Unmercenary was celebrated in Neochorion of Bosporus.

On this occasion the Representative of the Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople His Eminence Archbishop Nectarios of Anthedona has sent to the Patriarchate Website the following announcement from Neochorion Community:

“Today, 1 February 2021, an old tradition of Neochorion has been revived after several decades, as the Dependency of the Holy Sepulchre in Neochorion of Bosporus honoured the commemoration of the Holy Martyr Tryphon the Unmercenary. An icon and sacred relics of the Saint are kept at the H. Church of Saint George.

The Feast was officiated by the Representative of the Holy



Sepulchre in our town, His Eminence Archbishop Nectarios of Anthedona. After the Divine Liturgy there was the blessing of bread, a trisagion was read for the repose of the souls of the old gardeners of the Community, along with prayers for the boiled wheat of the Saint, the fruits of the vine, and finally the blessing of the water for the vanishing of the insects that harm the vines.

Present at the festivities were the Sariger Mayor, Mr Soukrou Gents with his colleagues the Manageress of the Environment of our Municipality, Mrs Gioultzan Maltzi, the President of the Sariger Agricultural Chamber Mr Biglin Tsakiroglou, gardeners of the Sariger Municipality and of our Community, as well as a large crowd of parish members who honoured the Saint.

The tradition in the City of Cities is here to stay. Many Happy returns! From Neochorion Community”.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE FEAST OF SAINT ANTHONY THE GREAT AT THE PATRIARCHATE**

On Saturday, 17/30 January 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of Saint Anthony the Great at the chapel dedicated to him inside the Holy Monastery of Saint Nikolaos, near the Patriarchate.

On this feast the Church commemorates that Saint Anthony, Egyptian in descent, was born in AD 251 and following the

Gospel narrative, he sold his belongings and retreated in the desert. There, he lived in strict poverty, austerity and without any material possessions, and became a prototype of utmost virtue. Saint Anthony was the first person who met Paul from Thebes a few days before the latter's death and made him known to the Church, as he was also a citizen and leader of the monastic life of the desert, guiding thousands of monks. He often went to the city of Alexandria to help the persecuted by Maximin Christians, in AD 312, and likewise, he helped the Christians who had been led astray by Arianism in AD 333. Having lived a long life, until the reign of Constantine the Great, he departed this life at the age of 112 years old around AD 356. He received by God the gift of clairvoyance and could see the departure of the souls from this world and their course to heaven. His biography has been written by Saint Athanasius the Great, who knew him personally. Saint Anthony told his monks to give his fleece and his garment to Saint Athanasius from Alexandria after his death (P.G. 26, 972B).

This great luminary of the Holy Spirit was honoured by the Church of Jerusalem in the aforementioned chapel with Vespers in the afternoon, led by Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios and with the Divine Liturgy in the morning, which was officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, with the co-celebration of Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and Nun Kyriaki, as the service was attended by monks, nuns and laity, members of the Church and inhabitants of the Monastery of Saint Nikolaos.

All present were offered a reception after the Divine Liturgy at the Hegoumeneion by the excellent Caretaker of the Monastery and renovator of the Church and the Hegoumeneion, Archdeacon Mark.

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# THE FEAST OF THE VENERATION OF ST PETER'S CHAIN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, 16/29 January 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the veneration of the Sacred Chain of the glorious chief of the Apostles Peter.

On this feast, the Church and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates the event of Apostle Peter's imprisonment, according to the Book of Acts (Acts 12:1-19).

The Church recalls that Herod Antipas, who had killed James the brother of Saint John the Evangelist, had also imprisoned Apostle Peter and kept him chained in order to kill him and pay this tribute to the Jews. However, God is wondrous in His Saints, because at night, while Saint Peter was asleep, an Angel of the Lord woke him up, led him outside the prison, and left him there alone, and vanished from his sight. The Apostle realized it was the Lord who freed him and headed towards the house of Mary, the mother of Mark, where prayers were being said for his sake. He knocked on the door and a girl named Rodi recognized him and announced his presence to the faithful who were praying. The event was announced to James the Lord's brother and Saint Peter departed to a different place to escape Herod's fury.

This event was celebrated at the Holy Monastery of Saint Nicodemus, the secret disciple of the Lord, which is also

known with the name “of the Lentils”, the place of Apostle Peter’s imprisonment.

The feast was celebrated with Vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning, led by Archimandrite Meletios, along with the Arab-speaking Priests Nectarios and Hader and Hierodeacon Simeon, at the chanting of Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos and the Patriarchal School Students. Present at the Service were the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and Members of the Consulate. The Hegoumen Archimandrite Makarios hosted the celebration and welcomed H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos who came for veneration.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE FEAST OF SAINTS JOHN AND GEORGE THE HOZEVITES**

On Thursday, 8/21 January 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of Saints John and George the Hozevites.

On this Feast, the Church, and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates Saint John. He abandoned the general pastoral care and retreated in the valley of Chorath, at the hermitages of the first ascetic fathers, Zenon, Elias, Eandas, Ganneos and Promos. Saint John made the former hermitage a Monastic centre and a famous Monastery due to his holiness and guided thousands of Monks in ascesis. Saint George came from Cyprus and reconstructed the Monastery after the 614 AD Persian raid.

The two Saints are considered to be the founders of the Monastery due to their mission there.

Their commemoration was celebrated with an All-night Vigil, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

Welcoming His Beatitude, the Hegoumen and renovator of the Monastery, Archimandrite Constantine said the following:

“Your Beatitude, Father and Master,  
with Your Reverend Entourage

The Holy Founders of this Holy Lavra, John and George the Hozevites, came in the desert of Judea, a desert, arid and harsh land, having first renounced the world. Through their asceticism and cleansing from the passions, they strove the devil very hard, right here, at the centre of his kingdom, the desert!

It is with great emotion that I always remember the inspired words of our father, Hieromonk Anthony, the memorable predecessor of my mediocrity, who told to a pilgrim in 1991 about the monastic, ascetic life and of the Hozevite Saints.

Among other things, Fr Anthony had said: “...we are never alone. You feel the presence of the Saints here. And you feel much security...There is a different kind of grace in the Desert, and we are very peaceful! And we are always optimistic!

God is with us, when, of course, we are on God's path, and when we strive...

We have to be ready at first, and then God comes. We invoke Him. And the Fathers here, of course, have much to tell us. The Saints set an example with their lives, they showed us ways and paths, so that we may easily gain the life ever after, the eternal one, the life that “endures forever” and exchange the temporary things with the eternal ones...

Christ is the Truth, the Way, the Life, Everything!

Surely for many people the monastic life is strange, a challenge, how can one live by himself, without comforts, without a homeland, without relatives, without all these things that seem to be the meaning of life in our days...Nevertheless, where Christ is, there is no need whatsoever for anything...

We have the Mother of God here, the Protector. And the prayers of the Saints, of the Holy Fathers!

Because they showed us the way, they unmasked the devil with their lives, with their manner of living, they renounced the world completely, not out of hatred for the world, but out of love for the world...And out of love for God...Here the Fathers exist. The Fathers' books exist, we open, read them and choose...

It's either Christ or chaos!!"

Such words, Your Beatitude, came from our Father Anthony then, and bringing his words to the present day, amidst the horrible pandemic, which is a plague for the world, we draw hope, patience, serenity and optimism from our faith in Jesus Christ, His Most Holy Mother, the Holy Founders of this Monastery, John and George the Hozevites, and from all the Saints.

As Your Sons, we welcome Your Beatitude, wishing: Happy Feast!"

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences; Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, as the chanting was delivered by the Monastery Monks and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious”(Psalm 66:1-2), the psalmist proclaims.

Beloved Fathers and Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of our Holy Father George has gathered us all in this sacred place of the Jordan desert, of Hozeva, in order to rend glory to the Holy Trinitarian God, on the sacred commemoration of His Saint, the one that Lord sanctified; the Lord, who sanctifies those who love Him.

Today, Christ is born in Bethlehem of Judea and is baptized in the Jordan, the Church of the nations is mystically purified and puts on clothing of divine light. The truth has come, God hath appeared to those who sit in the shadow, He who was born from the Virgin has come to save our nation; Saint Andrew of Crete says.

Our Holy Father George longed to be dressed in this garment of the divine light, hearkening to Saint Paul's words: “For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked” (2 Cor. 5:2-3).

These clothes of the New Testament's grace, namely of Christ's light, did Saint George find in this deserted place of Hozeva, the Jordan district, where “our Lord God, having seen us naked, hath appeared to clothe us in the first robe again. Christ hath appeared, for He truly willeth to renew all creation” (Minaion January 2, apolytikion).

Saint John the Baptist's preaching for repentance turned the Jordan desert into the New Adam's Paradise, namely, a garden of repentance and spiritual progress and development, where numerous ascetics retreated “Seeing [that they] have purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit” (1 Peter



1:22). The Lavra of Monks that was founded by our Holy Father George became a dwelling place, in which those who longed and still long for “the salvation of the Lord and the studying of his law” (Psalm 119:174), come to know the dynasty and the glory of the majesty of His Kingdom (Psalm 145:12). And this is because, according to the psalmist, “The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth” (Psalm 145:18). And according to our Lord Jesus Christ, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).

Interpreting these words of the Lord, Zigavinos says: “the birth is not carnal, but spiritual...the carnal birth is felt by the senses; while the spiritual one is noetic, and there is no need to examine the noetic with the senses, nor in a human manner that which is divine”. And Saint Theophylaktos says: “the baptized does not become a divine spirit, but he is deemed worthy to receive the adoption and the grace and the honour in Spirit”.

This very adoption in the Spirit and the grace and the honour did Saint George and all those who followed him in his ascetic striving receive, such as Saint John, Bishop of Caesarea of Palestine, and our contemporary Saint John the New Hozevite from Romania, whose fragrant relics rest before our eyes. These Holy Hozevite Fathers, who illumined the whole world with their miracles, say along with Saint Paul: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph. 1:3-5).

The Holy Church of Jerusalem rejoices and is glad because God is miraculous in the protection of His Saints. “God is wondrous in his saints” (Ps. 67:36), King-Prophet David

chants. Indeed, God makes his Saints victors over death and corruption, as the hymnographer of Saint George says: "Thou didst utterly despise every delight of this life, O marvellous Father, for the sake of heavenly delight and glory; for thou wast diligent to quench the furnace of the passions with a hard way of life and with thy many tears, O George, august adornment of monks" (Minaion January 8, Ode nine, Troparion 1).

Yes, my dear Brethren, Saint George scorned every delight, arrogance and luxury of this world for the heavenly glory. Therefore, along with Saint Paul and the other Holy Fathers, he says: "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:20-21). This great truth is being witnessed by the incorrupt relics of all the Saints, Fathers and Ascetics who illumined this Holy Lavra of Hozeva.

This redeeming message of Saint Paul, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21), is what our Holy Father George along with all his Hozevite co-ascetics saying to all of us. And with the hymnographer, let us say: "To the Lord God Who did descend to the Hebrew Children in the fiery furnace and did transform the flames and the burning heat into dew, chant praises and hymns, O all ye works of His, and exalt Him greatly to ages and all ages" (Minaion, January 8, Ode nine, Heirmos). Amen. Many happy returns!"

The Vigil was followed by a Monastic meal.

**From Secretariat-General**

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

On Wednesday, 7/20 January 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the synaxis of Saint John the Forerunner and Baptist.

On this feast, the Church has the synaxis (gathering) of the faithful to honour Saint John the Forerunner, as the primary person in the Lord's baptism, in the river Jordan. As the troparion says, "his hand touched the immaculate head of the Master". The Church prays for this hand of Saint John to be extended in supplication to the Lord so that we may find mercy.

On this feast, the Patriarchate celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the historic Holy Monastery of Saint John the Baptist which is located near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Service was officiated by Archimandrite Makarios with the co-celebration of Archdeacon Mark, at the chanting of Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos. Quite a few Nuns were present, but only a few faithful due to covid-19 restrictions.

During the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem visited the Monastery for veneration, accompanied by Hagiotaphite Fathers. The Hegoumen of the Monastery Archimandrite Bartholomew offered a reception to the Patriarchal entourage and the congregation.

**From Secretariat-General**

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# THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY AT THE PATRIARCHATE (2021)

On Tuesday, 6/19 January 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of Theophany.

On this Feast, His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, surrounded by Hagiotaphite Archbishops, officiated the Service of the Great Sanctification of the Waters at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and sanctified the Church, the Archbishops, the Priests and the few, due to covid-19 restrictions, faithful who were present.

After the Great Sanctification of the Waters, the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom was celebrated at the Holy Sepulchre, by His Beatitude, with the co-celebration of their Eminences; Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, and the Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia, and Philoumenos of Pella, the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks; Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, and the Archimandrites; Porphyrios, Makarios, Dionysios, Fr Alexander from Beer-Sheva community, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras.

After Dismissal, His Beatitude sanctified the faithful with the Sacred Cross and the Patriarchal entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters. There, His Beatitude gave a short speech on the great feast of Theophany.

With the sprinkling of the Blessed Water, the senses of all present were sanctified, they were enlightened through the

brightness of our Lord Jesus Christ who was baptized in the Jordan. Moreover, the Patriarchate was sanctified, so that it may remain free from the covid-19 virus and any other opposing insult.

This is a prayer and a wish that the Church of Jerusalem holds for the whole of humanity so that it will soon be delivered from this plague.

**From Secretariat-General**

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## **THE FOREFEAST OF THEOPHANY**

On Monday, 5/18 January the Patriarchate celebrated the Forefeast of Epiphany, the commemoration of the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ by Saint John in the River Jordan.

Matins began early in the morning at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen. At the end of Matins, the Royal Hours of Epiphany were read, at the presence of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Then, Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil followed, at the chanting of the Byzantine choir leader of the Church, Archimandrite Eusevios.

Before dismissal, His Beatitude held the Service of the Small Blessing of the Water for the feast of Epiphany. With the blessed water, His Beatitude sanctified the Archbishops, Priests and Monks who attended the service, at the absence of pilgrims, due to covid-19 restrictions. Then, with His cloak on, His Beatitude and all the Fathers headed to the Patriarchate Hall, under the chanting of the hymn "When Thou wast baptized in the Jordan...". His Beatitude sanctified the

Hall before dismissing the Divine Liturgy, and waited for the Episcopal entourage from Saint James Cathedral with His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba. The Archbishop also sanctified the Hall and the choir chanted the Polychronion for His Beatitude.

A short while later, His Beatitude and His entourage went to the Holy Monastery of Saint John the Baptist by the river Jordan, though not via Jericho, due to covid-19 restrictions.

After the welcoming and the reading of the 9<sup>th</sup> Royal Hour at the Monastery, the procession towards the river began, with only 50 people present, some clergy and a few faithful, and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras. At the river, they held the Vespers of Theophany and the service of the sanctification of the water on the platform above the river.

Afterwards, His Beatitude went down to the river bank and He threw the holy cross in the water, under the chanting of the "when Thou wast baptized in the Jordan".

Finally, there was a fasting reception at the Holy Monastery of Saint John the Baptist, hosted by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Bartholomew.

**From Secretariat-General**