

COMMEMORATION OF THE BEHEADING OF THE HOLY FORERUNNER AND BAPTIST JOHN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, August 29/ September 11, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner and Baptist.

On this day the Church, and especially the Church of Jerusalem where the Holy Forerunner lived, commemorates the Gospel narrative according to Saint Matthew 14: 1, 12, Mark 6: 16-17, and Luke 9:9, saying that Herod the tetrarch was scorned by John because he had a relationship with his brother Philip's wife Herodias...he imprisoned John...in order to kill him; and when Herod celebrated his birthday, Herodias' daughter danced for him, Herod liked this and promised to give her whatever she might ask of him, even the half of his kingdom. Following her mother's advice, she asked John's head on a plate; Herod was very sad but for his promise granted her wish, sent a guard, and beheaded John and offered her his head on a plate.

For this reason, the mourning hymns of the Church read among other words; "O loathsome banquet, full of desecration and abominable murder!"(Vespers troparion1).

The Patriarchate honoured this event at ancient Sabastia, the area of St. John's prison, where there are the ruins of Churches from the time of Byzantium and of the Crusades.

There, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos participated in the prayer, and delivered the following Sermon:

“For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee”(Matt. 11:10). “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he”(Matt. 11:11) the Lord says.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

The grace of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John has gathered us today by the ruins of this Holy Byzantine Church with his Tomb, in order to glorify in Eucharist the Sacred commemoration of his Beheading in Sebastia, the great city of old.

According to the witness of historian Josephus, the place of the imprisonment and beheading of John the Baptist by Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, is Machairus (Jud. Anc. 18,52), a mountain fortress east of the Dead Sea in present-day Jordan. And the body of John, according to the testimony of the Evangelist, was transported and placed by his disciples in a monument in Sebastia. “And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb”(Mark 6:29).

The Holy Forerunner holds a prominent place in the biblical history of human salvation. This is made evident by the fact that Jesus Christ Himself stresses the character and the preaching of repentance of St. John on the one hand, and on the other, He calls him to baptize Him by the river Jordan. “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him”(Matt. 3:13).

Moreover, John was called a prophet by the Messiah Jesus Christ. “But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet”(Luke 7:26). This is also the testimony of our Church which sings: “The memory

of the just is celebrated with hymns of praise, but he Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner; for thou hast proved to be truly even more venerable than the Prophets since thou wast granted to baptize in the running waters Him Whom they proclaimed. Wherefore, having contested for the truth, thou didst rejoice to announce the good tidings even to those in Hades: that God hath appeared in the flesh, taking away the sin of the world and granting us great mercy"(Aplytikion).

The Holy Forerunner did not only baptize "God [Who] hath appeared in the flesh", our Lord Jesus Christ, but also preached the good news about Him, as St. John the Evangelist testifies: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me"(John 1:29-30).

Saint John the Baptist is recognized as the last person of the Law, and of the Prophets, and also as the inaugurator of the New Testament era, as St. Luke the Evangelist says: "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it"(Luke 16:16). Interpreting these words, St. Cyril of Alexandria says: "He calls Kingdom of Heaven, in this case, the justification of faith, the washing away of sin...the sanctification of the Holy Spirit...the gift of adoption, the hope of glory which is to be given to the saints". As for the question, "how is the Kingdom of God being preached?" St. Cyril replies by saying: "When (the Lord) had passed by, the Baptist among the people said "prepare the way of the Lord" and pointed at the already present Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world".

Having been proclaimed to be the preacher of repentance, of the washing away of sin, of the righteousness in faith and of the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, since the time he was in his mother's womb, John could simply not ignore the illegal

relationship of Herod Antipas with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, who was still alive. "For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not"(Mark 6:18-19). Herodias' murderous hatred convinced Herod to kill righteous John by beheading.

And St. Gregory Palamas, explaining the reason for John's beheading says: "[The Forerunner] was beheaded while striving for virtue, so that we also may be ready to oppose sin to the point of death, knowing that the one who defeats the passions with virtue, will receive the crown of martyrdom."

Moreover, our Holy Father Gregory recognizes the foretelling of Christ's death in the martyr's death John suffered, and says: "...even in the manner of his death, should [John] be the forerunner of Christ's death, so that according to his father's prophesy "for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, , to give knowledge of salvation to His people...to give light to those who sit in the darkness and in the shadow of death"(Luke 1:76, 79) so that they may also follow Him and receive the blessed and eternal life in Christ".

As for us, my dear Brethren, let us say along with the hymn writer, "As Martyr, Prophet, and Baptist, as the voice and lamp of the messenger, and as the greatest of Prophets according to the very testimony of God, O Forerunner, beseech the Lord that they who keep thy light-bearing memorial with longing be delivered from all temptations and the harm of the adversary"(Matins, ode 9, second canon, Troparion 3). Amen."

At the deserted Basilica, above the underground chapel, the Divine Liturgy was held by the Hegoumen of Jacob's well Archimandrite Ioustinos with a few other Priests, Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos, Priest Touma from Zababde, Archimandrite Leontios, who also chanted along with the members of Rafidia choir. Quite a few faithful Christians

attended the Service despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

From Secretariat-General

THE APODOSIS OF THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION – PROCESSION OF THE ICON OF THEOTOKOS BACK TO THE METOCHION

On Saturday, August 23/ September 5, 2020, the Apodosis of the Feast of the Dormition was held at the Patriarchate, with the completion of one week of chanting with the Hymns of the Dormition of Theotokos. On this day there is also the Procession of the Icon of the Dormition back to the Metochion of Gethsemane, opposite the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Procession marched in the morning, after the Divine Liturgy at the Tomb of Theotokos in Gethsemane.

From there, the Hegoumen Most Reverend Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela carried the icon before his chest, surrounded by the Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew, and other clergy, with the Nuns leading the procession. They all marched through Via Dolorossa, making stops for prayer at the Monasteries of St. Stephen, The Holy Ancestors of God, Praetorion, and then at the Monasteries of St. Charalambos, Sayda Naya, and reached the crossing of the Patriarchate and the Christian Way, while the people of the Old City were cheering and singing traditional songs to the Theotokos, spreading flowers on the way of the Icon's march.

At this crossing, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and the Hagiotaphite Entourage with Him venerated the Icon, along with a lot of people, Orthodox and Non-Orthodox Christians who were asking the intercession of the Mother of God.

From the Christian way, the Procession concluded at the court yard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where the Hegoumen Most Reverend Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela returned the Sacred Icon back to its place at the Metochion of Gethsemane, in much reverence and in a contrite prayer. The Icon will remain there until next year, protecting the people in Jerusalem and all over the world from the plague of the COVID-19 virus.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, August 15/28, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God. This Feast was celebrated at the Shrine of the Dormition in Gethsemane where the Tomb of Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary lies, which was built by St. Helen in 326 A.D. and from the Sovereigns Markianos and Poulcheria in 417 A.D.

Vespers was held at 5.00 o'clock in the afternoon, led by His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Arab-speaking Priests, Hierodeacon Sophronios and the participation of faithful who venerate the Most Holy Theotokos who was buried there and was

translated into heavens by Her Son and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

On the morning of the Feast Day the Divine Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants their Eminences Archbishops Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Philoumenos of Pella, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Arab-speaking Priests and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon in Greek and the members of St. James Cathedral in Arabic, as the Service was attended by many local faithful Christians, despite the restrictive measures. However, pilgrims are still unable to travel.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“The bounds of nature are overcome in thee, O immaculate Virgin; for thy childbirth is virginal, and thy death is the espousal of life. O thou who after childbirth art virgin, and who after death art living, do thou, O Theotokos, ever save thine inheritance” the hymnographer of the Church proclaims (Minaion, August 15, Ode 9, heirmos).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

Indeed, the Only One who contained beyond logic and nature the Word of God, our Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, has gathered us in this sacred place of Her Tomb, to honour Her Dormition along with the Holy Apostles who are gathered here in spirit.

“Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God”(Psalm 87:3), Prophet David chants. For which are we going to consider the city of the invisible and indescribable God, Who has everything under His own power, St. John Damascene wonders, but the Only One who indescribably contained the Word

of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. What is more glorious than accepting "the ancient true will of God", Prophet Isaiah says (Isaiah 25:1).

In Theotokos Mary all the bounds of nature were overcome, as St. Kosmas the hymnographer says: "The bounds of nature are overcome in thee O immaculate Virgin; for thy childbirth is virginal, and thy death is the espousal of life"(Ode nine, heirmos). Both the conception by the Holy Spirit and the incarnation of Christ, the Word of God, from the pure flesh of the Virgin Mary are an excess of the bounds of nature. "The Virgin [Mary] who bore [God the Word] beyond any human logic did not lose any of the signs of virginity" St. Maximus the Confessor says.

The same is said by St. Kosmas the hymnographer regarding the overcoming of the bounds of nature at the Dormition of Theotokos:

"The King, the God of all, granteth thee things beyond nature. For even as He preserved thee a virgin in childbearing, so also in the grave He kept thy body incorrupt; and He glorified thee by a divine translation, giving thee honour as a Son to His Mother"(Ode six, troparion 2).

Being in awe before the mystery of the death of the fountain of life, of the Mother of God, St. John Damascene says: "What are we going to call this mystery of you? Death? But even if naturally your most sacred and blessed soul is separated from your most holy body and the body is given to the lawful burial, however it does not remain in the state of death, nor is it decomposed by corruption; for Her whose the virginity remained untouched through labour, Her body is also preserved incorrupt and is translated into a better and more divine tabernacle, which is not broken by death, but lives eternally throughout the ages".

For this reason, according to St. John Damascene, the blessed

Virgin is “the acropolis of the Churches” and also “the Mother of all the Churches of the world”. St. John also preaches that She “did not reach up to heaven like Prophet Elisha, She wasn’t taken up to the third heaven, like St. Paul, but reached and sat upon the very royal throne of Her Son, seeing Him face to face, and rejoicing along with the great boldness She has in Him”.

This reality, my dear brethren, that the Most Holy Theotokos is standing next to Her Son and God beholding Him face to face and having great boldness in Him, is what has made Her a refuge for all those who venerate and honour Her, as the hymnographer says: “Preserve and save, O Theotokos, thy servants from every danger; after God do all of us for refuge flee unto thee; a firm rampart art thou and our protection” (Horologion from the Canon of Theotokos).

As we stand today in this sacred Tomb of Theotokos in Gethsemane, celebrating Her Feast, let us hear our God-bearer Holy Father John Damascene in the salutation he wrote for the Mother of God and say along with him: “Let us rejoice in spirit along with David, for the tabernacle of the Lord finds rest today. With Gabriel, the chief of the Angels let us exclaim: “Rejoice the ineffable ocean of joy, Rejoice thou who alone drives away all sorrow. Rejoice, thou who art the medicine that heals all the pains of the heart. Rejoice, thou through whom death has passed away, while life is brought back”. In Christ the Son of God and our God, to Whom belongs all glory and the might, along with the Father without beginning and the All-holy and Life-giving Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen. Many happy returns”.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen, Most Reverend Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela hosted a reception for the Patriarchal entourage at the Hegoumeneion.

From Secretariat-General

THE LAMENTATIONS OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM

On Thursday morning, August 14/27, 2020, Fore-feast of the Dormition, the Service of the Lamentations was held at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

This ceremony in honour of Theotokos is a part of the Status Quo of the Church of Jerusalem.

For this ceremony, the Hagiotaphite entourage, led by its Hegoumen His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, marched from the Patriarchate Headquarters down Via Dolorosa with short stops at the Holy Monasteries of St. Charalambos, Panagia Sayda Naya, Praetorion, The Ancestors of God Joachim and Anna and St. Stephen and arrived at the Hegoumeneion of Gethsemane.

Going down the stairs to the courtyard of the Church of the Dormition of Theotokos Mary, His Beatitude was received by the Hegoumen His Eminence Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela and the Priests in their liturgical vestments with the co-celebrants their Eminences the Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Isidoros of Hierapolis and Philoumenos of Pella, at the chanting of Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos, He entered the Church and having given the blessing, He venerated the Tomb of Theotokos and put on His Patriarchal liturgical vestments. The Archbishops put on omoforion and epitrahilion and the Priests felonion.

Once everybody was ready the Priests took the Icon of the Body of the Dormition of Theotokos on the Epitaph and placed it in

the centre of the Church.

The three stasis of the Lamentations were chanted. After the Lamentations the Sermon by His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina followed as per below;

“Your Beatitude Father and Master,

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece,

Most Reverend Chorea of Hierarchs,

Reverend Fathers and noble pilgrims,

During the Fifteen days of the Dormition fast the attention of the memory, the life and all activity of the Church are centred primarily and especially to the Most Holy Theotokos, the Mother of our God.

From the first day of August, there is a gradual increase of the supplications and all kinds of prayers dedicated to Her, who was chosen by God and became the vessel that held the Creator, contained the uncontainable, conceived by the Holy Spirit and bore as man our Lord Jesus Christ.

All events of honour, respect and reverence for the Most Holy Theotokos reach their climax on 15th of August, which has been set by the Church as the day of the commemoration of Her Dormition.

Celebrating the Fore-feast of the Dormition today, and the main feast tomorrow, we commemorate and recall the whole mission of the Most Holy Theotokos to us men. We commemorate that She accepted to lend flesh from Her flesh to the Word of God Who is without flesh. She conceived the Son of God through the Holy Spirit, became pregnant, went through labour and bore Him in the flesh, swaddled Him, breastfed Him, saw the Wise Men and the Shepherds offering gifts and worshipping Him at the humble Cave in Bethlehem, heard the hymns of the Angels in the heavens chanting “Glory to God in the Highest”, “kept all

these words in her heart”(Luke 2:19) and handed all these over to the Evangelists and Apostles and they to the Church in turn. Theotokos led our Lord to circumcision and His naming on the eight-day since His Nativity in the flesh, and to His Entrance and the fortieth-day prayers at the Temple of Solomon, where Simeon the God-receiver held Him in his arms, and she heard in surprise the words “ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace”(Luke 2:29) and “a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also”(Luke 2:35). Moreover, She held Him in her arms fleeing from Herod’s fury to Egypt and brought Him back to Nazareth again, where they dwelled and from which He was called Nazarene. She followed and watched Him and as a Mother gave Him all He needed in His childhood and youth, when “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man”(Luke 2:52).

Having witnessed all these, and the thing that was beyond any human logic, His conception and bearing without the consummation of conception with a man’s participation, it was natural to say to the servants of the wedding in Cana “Do whatever He tells you to do”(John 2:5). She followed and served Him along with the women who were following Him from Galilee, and “ministered unto him of their substance” (Luke 8:3). She was a witness of the signs and miracles of comfort and healing of the sick, felt the joy for these and the sorrow of the ungrateful condemnation and of the vision of Her beloved Son pierced with the nails of the Cross. She was the first among the Myrrh-bearing Women at the Deposition and the burial, but also at the joy of the Resurrection and at His other appearances after the Resurrection. She experienced the sorrowful-joy of the Ascension and the joy of the sending down of the Holy Spirit the Comforter to Her and to the Apostles by Her Son.

For this mission of Hers, which is beyond any human logic and marvellous, for the unique event which happened once and for all, the faith, the devotion, the love, the complete

consistency to Her promise to the Angel at the Annunciation "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word"(Luke 1:38), the Church throughout the centuries, honours and magnifies Her, as She foretold at her meeting with her relative Elizabeth "behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed"(Luke 1:48), accepts Her natural death, and burial in this village of Gethsemane, but also Her translation (metastasis) by Her Son in both soul and body into heaven before the common Resurrection, and Her presence as a Queen at His Right Hand, "arrayed in a vesture of inwoven gold, adorned in varied colours"(Psalm 44: 8), being the first among the members of the triumphant Church, ready to hear the supplications of those who revered Her, to help, support, heal the illnesses, overcome difficulties and temptations, and most of all to set an example with Her Most Holy life for us.

For Her excessive goodness and love, the Church of Jerusalem, the land where She lived and which She sanctified, honours Her, as it should today, with this Service of the Lamentations around Her Tomb, under the lead of His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilus, and prays to Her to intercede for the unity in Christ of the Orthodox Churches, for the peace and good state of the whole world and of the Middle East, for the cessation of the brutal crimes of violence against innocent people and of the existing wars around the globe, for the rescue and treatment of shipwrecked refugees, for the help of the addicted to drugs youth, for the unity of the divided families and for the help of all of us who honour Her today at Her Most Sacred and Life-giving Tomb, so that by Her help we may continually convey a message of reconciliation and love to the world, and a witness of the Christian Orthodox life, to strengthen, comfort, sustain and guide to salvation the fulness of the Church and give Glory to our Trinitarian God. So be it."

This was followed by Eulogitaria, Praises, Doxology, the

procession of the Epitaph to the top of the staircase of the Church and the prayer.

Finally, the icon was placed behind the Tomb of Theotokos under the chanting of the Dormition hymns and a large crowd of faithful approached to venerate it, despite the COVID-19.

After the Service, the Hegoumen His Eminence Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela offered a reception at the Hegoumeneion.

From Secretariat-General

THE PROCESSION OF THE DORMITION ICON OF THEOTOKOS TO GETHSEMANE

Early on Tuesday morning, August, 12/25, 2020, the Procession of the Dormition Icon of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos headed down to Gethsemane.

This ceremony followed a Holy All-night Vigil which was officiated by Archimandrite Demetrios Kavathas, according to the long-term established Status Quo, at the Metochion of Gethsemane opposite the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Icon is kept there and was taken to the Tomb of Theotokos in Gethsemane.

The Icon was carried by the Hegoumen of Gethsemane His Eminence Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela, who led the Procession, surrounded by Hagiotaphite Fathers, Nuns, laity, local faithful Christians, but not pilgrims, as the latter are unable to visit the country since the beginning of the

COVID-19 pandemic.

The Procession marched down Via Dolorosa, under the chanting of the hymns of the Dormition, with stops for prayers at the Russian Church and at the Holy Monasteries of Praetorion, St. Anna and St. Stephen.

Once in Gethsemane, there was a prayer and the Icon was placed in the Epitaph behind the Tomb at the Platytera area, and then there was the Paraklesis and the Divine Liturgy, officiated by the Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew, with the participation of faithful Christians, praying in Doxology and reverence to the Most Holy Theotokos.

The commemoration of the Annunciation of the Dormition of Theotokos was also celebrated at the Holy Monastery of Men of Galilee, according to the custom, at the chapel of the Monastery dedicated to this day. The Divine Liturgy was led by Archimandrite Ignatios with the participation in prayer of the Hegoumen Archimandrite Anthimos.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, August 6/19, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On this day the Church following the Gospel narratives (Matt. 17: 1-3, Luke 9: 28-36, Mark 9: 2-13) commemorates the event

when a little while before His Passion on the Cross, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared in His divine glory and light, when His raiment became white and brighter than the light and the voice of God the Father was heard saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him", before the chosen Disciples, Peter, James, and John, in order to show them and to us the former beauty that man lost, which those who believe in Him are able to restore being transfigured in Him and by Him.

This event was celebrated:

1. At Mount Tabor, in the Holy Church of the Holy Transfiguration of the Lord, where His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos officiated the All-night Vigil, with co-celebrants their Eminences; Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, and Deacons, with the participation of only a few faithful Christians due to COVID-19. The chanting was delivered by Archimandrite Demetrios Kavathas on the right in Greek and by Archimandrite Philotheos on the left in Arabic.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"Christ took Peter, James, and John into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And there appeared Moses and Elias talking with Him. And a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said: This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him" (Matins, end, glory) the hymnographer of the Church proclaims, using the wording of the narrative according to St. Matthew (Matt. 17:1-5).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

Today the Saviour of our souls, "Who wast transfigured making the nature that was darkened in Adam to shine like lightning again" (Vespers aposticha Troparion 2) has gathered us in this Holy Mount of Tabor in order to mystically see through the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, Christ, shining with the divine rays and hear the voice of God the Father proclaiming Him His Beloved Son, Who has redeemed us from our human illness.

In this Holy high mountain, where Christ was transfigured before His disciples, and His face shone like the sun, and His raiment became white as light (Matt. 17:2), the irreproachable light of the glory of God the Father was foreshadowed. For this, the hymnographer says: "The darkness of the Law hath been superseded by the luminous cloud of the Transfiguration. Moses and Elias, being found therein and deemed worthy of the glory that transcendeth light, said unto God: Thou art our God, the King of ages"(Small Vespers glory, both now).

The only and absolute purpose of the mystery of the Divine Providence, namely of our faith to the incarnate Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, is for us to be deemed worthy of the glory of the transcendeth light of God. And what is this glory of God? It is written: "And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire"(Exodus 24:17). And elsewhere, the Lord said to Elisha the Thesbite: "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by... but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire, a still small voice" and the Lord was there (3 Kings 19:11-12).

And according to the witness of St. John the Evangelist, the Lord is the light of the world: "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, 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). And this light is no other than the glory of

God, as St. Luke the Evangelist says, referring to the shepherds who kept watch at night: "And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them"(Luke 2:9), and at Stephen's stoning to death: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God"(Acts 7:55-56).

The event of the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ is the foreshadowing of His Resurrection, the preparation of the Disciples for it, who were going to be the eye-and-ear witnesses of the Passion, the death on the Cross, the three-day burial, and of course of the luminous Resurrection of Christ, as St. Matthew narrates: "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day"(Matt. 16:21). This is also witnessed by the hymn-writer of the Church by saying: "Before Thy Cross, O Lord, a mountain became like unto Heaven, and a cloud spread out like a tabernacle. When Thou wast transfigured and the Father bare witness to Thee, Peter with James and John were present, for they also were to be with Thee at the time of Thy betrayal; so that having seen Thy wonders, they might not be afraid at Thy sufferings"... "to show them the splendour of the Resurrection"(Great Vespers troparia 1&2).

The theological depth, height, and width of the miracle of Christ's Transfiguration is centered in two things: Firstly that Christ: "was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:2) and secondly: "a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"(Matt. 17:5).

And we say this because the experience of both the vision of the glow of the light of the Transfiguration and the hearing of the voice in the cloud is not solely directed towards the present Disciples, but also to every single faithful Christian who loves God with all his clean mind and heart. Let us therefore hear the words of the established Church Father Gregory Palamas in his approved teaching by the great God-bearing and Theologian Fathers before him: "The chosen ones among the Disciples, as you hear the Church chanting, ..., saw the meaningful and eternal beauty of God in Tabor... the luminous brightness of the initial beauty, this divine beauty that has never been seen,, through which man becomes deified and deemed worthy of conversing with the Divine, this eternal and heirless Kingdom of God, this irreproachable light beyond comprehension, a boundless, timeless, eternal light, shining incorruptibility, God's light to the deified...for the grace of the Father and of the Son and of the Spirit was one, which was not visible to the human eyes, but it pierced through them as if opening the eyes of blind men, and made them able to see, according to St. John Damascene, this uncreated light, which in the age to come will only be visible to the saints, as Saints Dionysios and Maximus say".

This uncreated light of the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ shone upon this Holy Mount of Tabor, and for this reason, it is also called the light of Tabor. The Saints and the Righteous of |God are worthy of this light as it is written: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"(Matt. 5:8). "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light"(Psalm 36:9) David chants.

As for us, my dear Brethren, let us entreat God the Word and God the Father of lights that by the intercessions of the Most Blessed Theotokos we also may praise Him and say along with the Psalmist: "In the light of the glory of Thy face shall we walk unto the ages"(Psalm 88:15). Amen."

After the Divine Liturgy, the renovator of the Monastery and

Hegoumen Archimandrite Ilarion offered a fish meal.

2. At Gethsemane and the Tomb of Theotokos, the Divine Liturgy was led by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Fathers. After the Divine Liturgy, the Hegoumen Archbishop Dorotheos of Avela offered a reception.
3. In Ramallah, at the Holy Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Lord, the Divine Liturgy was led by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Galaktion, with co-celebrant the Steward and Priest Yacub, with the participation of a few faithful only due to the virus pandemic.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ST. IOANNIS THE NEW HOZEVITE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday, July 28/August 10, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of St. Ioannis the New Hozevite at the Holy Monastery of Hozeva, at the desert of brook Chorath, not far away from Jericho.

On this day the Church, and especially the Church of Jerusalem honours St. Ioannis from Romania, who came to the Holy Land and lived in strict fasting, silence and every virtue, becoming worthy of the gifts of clairvoyance and the working of miracles, as well as the incorrupt relics of his which is kept in this Holy Monastery.

He was canonized a Saint by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 2016.

An All-night Vigil was held to his honour, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with co-celebrants, His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Hegoumen of the Monastery Archimandrite Constantine, Archimandrite Isidoros, other Priests and Archdeacon Mark. The chanting was delivered by the Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod Hierodeacon Simeon and the Monastery Monks.

His Beatitude was welcomed by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Constantine. Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon;

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls”(Matt. 11:28-29) the Lord says.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Our Holy Father Ioannis the New Hozevite, who became a vessel of the Holy Spirit and received by Him the working of miracles, has gathered us in the place of his asceticism to honour his sacred commemoration.

Our Holy Father Ioannis, toiling and burdened, retreated in the Holy Land and specifically in the river Jordan area, where our Lord Jesus Christ was baptized by St. John the Baptist “and the Holy Spirit confirmed the word” seeking his rest in Christ according to the Lord’s words: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”(Matt. 11:28).

Interpreting these words of the Lord the God-bearing Fathers of the Church say; St. Chrysostom: “ But the righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High

takes care of them. Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will shield them”(Wisdom of Solomon 5:15-16).

In other words the rest of the righteous in Christ is no other than their entrance in the Kingdom of Heaven where “they reign along with the Lord...and Christ will crown those who believe in Him with unshakable Glory” St. Cyril of Alexandria says, commenting on Prophet Isaiah’s words: “In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people” (Isaiah 28:5). This is also said by St. Paul in his 2nd letter to Timothy: “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”(2 Tim. 4:8). And Apostle Peter too: “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away”(1 Peter 5:4).

Our Holy Father Ioannis received this crown of righteousness and of glory of God becoming a citizen of the heavenly city, the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). And the crown of glory that fadeth not away and can be seen in St. Ioannis is his incorrupt fragrant relic, as St. Cyril of Alexandria says: “The good crown that fadeth not away is bestowed to the one who lives as he should; this blossom could not be contained by the earth.”

Indeed, my brethren, the land of Hozeva could not contain this fragrant flower that fadeth not away, the corpse of our Holy Father Ioannis, because it has been clad with the incorrupt rest in the Holy Spirit , the Spirit of God the Word and our Saviour Christ. Behold therefore, the glory of our holy Church, behold the wealth of the Kingdom of God.

St. Ioannis accomplished his completeness because he was taught by Christ Himself the meekness and humility of the

heart. “learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart”(Matt.11:29) the Lord says.

This very meekness and humility of the heart we are also called to acquire, my dear Brethren, imitating our Holy Father Ioannis, as he became an imitator of Christ and managed his deification, becoming like the Holy great monastics George and Ioannis the Hozevites.

Along with the hymnographer let us say: “Thou, in taking the Lord’s Cross upon thyself, and in following after Him to the end, didst never return in mind to the world or the things thereof; and thou slowest the passions with labours and abstinence, so preparing thyself as a temple for Christ our Lord. Hence thou wast rewarded, O divinely-wise with grace to heal all ills and to drive unclean spirits out, O God-bearer divinely blest. Intercede with Christ our God that forgiveness of all their transgressions be granted to them that with longing keep thy holy memory”. Amen.

After the All-night Vigil a meal was offered.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR PANTELEIMON AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, July 27/ August 9, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy Glorious Great Martyr

Paneteleimon at his chapel opposite the old hospital of the Patriarchate and current hotel Gloria, near Jaffa Gate.

On this feast the Church commemorates St. Panteleimon, the son of an idolatrous father and a Christian mother named Euvouli, from whom he learned the holy scriptures and having studied medicine he practiced it philanthropically and without receiving money for it. By the work of the Holy Spirit he healed a blind man, for which reason he was called to defend himself; instead, he confessed Christ and suffered a martyr's death during the reign of Maximian in 305. The Church honours him and venerates his holy relics, drawing power and healing from it.

In this chapel, Vespers was held in the afternoon by Archimandrite Isidoros and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning by Archimandrite Meletios, with the co-celebration of Hagiotaphite Fathers, under the chanting of Nuns, and with the participation of nuns and faithful who honour the Saint.

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

After the Divine Liturgy the renovator and good keeper of the Monastery Abbess Charitini offered a reception to the Patriarchal entourage and the Fathers.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF PROPHET ELIJAH AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, July 20/August 2, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy Prophet Elijah the Thesbite at his old holy Monastery which is located midway on the central road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

On this feast Prophet Elijah is alive in the memory of the Church as referred to his apolytikion : “the incarnate Angel and the Prophets’ summit and boast, the second forerunner of the coming of Christ our God, Elijah the glorious...he doth cast out sickness and doth also cleanse lepers; and unto all that honour him he poureth forth streams of cures”. He was born in Thesbes that’s why he is called Thesbite, he lived an ascetic simple life, dressed in a fleece, full of Godly zeal and was a fervent defender of the Name and rights of the only true God, “ he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit”(James 5:17-18).

With his prayer, Prophet Elijah made fire from heaven come down on mount Carmel and burnt down the wood of the altar and confounded the priests of shame whom he later slaughtered at brook Kishon (3 Kings ch. 18).

It is believed that the Prophet slept under a juniper tree at the place of this Monastery, and an angel left food for him and told him “Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.” Persecuted by Jezebel he retreated to brook Chorath where God sent a crow to bring him bread in the morning and meat in the evening (3 Kings 17-19:).

In this monastery Vespers was held in the afternoon by His Eminence Archbishop Theophylaktos of Jordan and Patriarchal Representative in Bethlehem. The Divine Liturgy in the morning was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with co-celebrants their Eminences the Archbishops: Aristarchos of Constantine, Methodios of Tabor, and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, only twelve Priests inside the Church with first in rank Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, and around twenty faithful outside according to the Police instructions due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Some more came in the end to honour the "second forerunner of the coming of Christ, Elijah the glorious", under the chanting of His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba in Greek on the right and St. James Cathedral choir in Arabic on the left under the lead of Mr. Rimon Kamar.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude read the following Sermon:

"As a seer of God, the Thesbite with Moses beholdeth upon Tabor that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and which the heart of earthborn men hath not considered, even the Almighty Lord incarnate" the hymnographer of the Church proclaims (Minaion July 20, Matins, ode 9, troparion 3).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians,

The holy and reverend commemoration of the Holy glorious Prophet Elijah the Thesbite has gathered us today at his sacred Church, in order to honour his feast in Eucharist. The presence of Prophet Elijah and his active prophetic preaching take place at a crucial time, during which the people of God who follow the Law of Moses, which was given to them on Mount Sinai, have distanced themselves from the healthy faith and worship of the revealed "religion" of the moral monotheism, and have joined the fallacy of idolatry and syncretism. The

gloomy picture of the deviation of the Old Testament people from the path of the knowledge of God and the pure worship is described by St. Chrysostom by saying: "For it was night, which had covered the whole Universe; a thick cloud had covered the whole world. Everybody advanced in the works of evil; it was a universal wreck, not because of waters but because of lewdness (P.G. Minge 50, 729).

The Holy Prophet Elijah righteously received the name "zealot" as St. Chrysostom also says: "he was getting drunk by the zeal". Elijah acquired this excessive zeal for God paying heed to God's commandments: "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might"(Deuteronomy 6:5), and by David's words: "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour"(Psalm 15:1-3).

The self-willed and unconditional obedience of God-minded Elijah to God's will made him "a man of God" and that is why he was appointed with the divine mission of the awakening and the repentance of both the people and their religious-political leaders.

And this mission through the prophetic actions of zealot Elijah aimed at the preservation of the promises of God to Abraham and of the Covenant which God made available to their Fathers (Acts 3:25). In other words, the mission of Elijah the Thesbite aimed at the reminding "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath"(Hebrews 6:17) according to St. Paul. And we must consider as "heirs of the promise" both the peoples of the Old and the New Testament, according to St. Paul's words: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"(Galatians 3:29). And according to Zigavinos the

interpreter; "heirs of the promise are the old people by nature, and the new by spirit; because those who are close by nation are the natural seed of Abraham, but those who become similar to him according to faith are close to him through spirit."

It is made clear that the prominent character and the prophetic action of Elijah are owed to his words and actions as witnessed in both the Old and the New Testament.

And in the New Testament Elijah the Thesbite appears along with Prophet Moses next to Christ on His Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, becoming His witness and conversing with Him: "And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him"(Matthew 17:3). Moreover, St. James the Brother of God while praising the prayer of the righteous says about Elijah: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months"(James 5:17).

While in the Old Testament, glorious Elijah is shown as a chosen vessel of God, equal to the Apostle of the Nations Paul. The action of the power of faith of his godly zeal and wondrous works are precisely described by the holy writer of wisdom of Sirach as follows;

"Then the prophet Elijah arose like a fire, and his word burned like a torch. He brought a famine upon them, and by his zeal he made them few in number. By the word of the Lord he shut up the heavens, and also three times brought down fire. How glorious you were, O Elijah, in your wondrous deeds! And who has the right to boast which you have? You who raised a corpse from death and from Hades, by the word of the Most High; who brought kings down to destruction, and famous men from their beds; who heard rebuke at Sinai and judgments of vengeance at Horeb; who anointed kings to inflict retribution, and prophets to succeed you. You who were taken

up by a whirlwind of fire, in a chariot with horses of fire; you who are ready[b] at the appointed time, it is written, to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury, to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob. Blessed are those who saw you, and those who have been adorned[c] in love; for we also shall surely live”(Wisdom Sirach 48:1-11).

To this indeed befitting praise of prophet Elijah the Thesbite by the God-inspired Sirach, Father Joel Gianakopoulos says regarding the last sentence “for we also shall surely live”: “Here we should think about the righteous who will die during the last days of the world. Prepared by Elijah’s preaching, they will die peacefully and will be resurrected during the Judgment of the World which will take place at that time, and will live eternally”.

Today’s honoured God-seer Prophet Elijah the Thesbite had a peaceful death, he had the death of the righteous as the psalmist says: “God shall redeem my soul out of the hand of hades when he receiveth me”(Psalm 48:16) and “But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them”(Wisdom of Solomon 3:1).

My brethren, let us entreat Elijah who has great boldness to the Trinitarian God and along with the hymnographer say: “O Elijah, thou Prophet and herald of Christ, at no time art thou ever separated from the throne of majesty, yet thou art ever present at the side of every one in sickness; while ministering in the highest, thou dost bless the whole world and art every-where glorified. Ask thou forgiveness of our souls” (Vespers aposticha glory). Amen.”

After dismissal a simple reception was offered by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Paissios.

From Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM OFFICIATES THE DIVINE LITURGY AT THE HOLY MONASTERY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST BY THE RIVER JORDAN

On Sunday, July 13/26, 2020, Sunday of the Holy Fathers and of the Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel, as well as of the commemoration of St. Stephen of St. Savvas Lavra, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Monastery of St. John the Baptist at the West Bank of the River Jordan, conforming to the protective guidelines against COVID-19. This Monastery was half-destroyed during the six-day war in 1967, but it has been preserved, renovated and projected again as a marvellous shrine by the Patriarchate, with the funding of the memorable Hegoumen of Sarantaron Mount Archimandrite Gerasimos, under the supervision and intensive care of the Hegoumen and Master of Ceremonies Archimandrite Bartholomew.

In this first Patriarchal Liturgy at the Monastery, co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences; Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias and Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Archimandrite Meletios, Hieromonk Onuphrios, Hierodeacon Eulogios, while the Hegoumen of the H. Monastery of St. Gerasimos of the Jordan, Archimandrite Chrysostom also participated in the prayer. His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim

of Helenoupolis delivered the chanting and the service was attended by some nuns of the desert and the Architect Mr. Theodosios Mitropoulos.

Before the Holy Communion there was a Memorial Service for the repose of the soul of the memorable Archimandrite Gerasimos and His Beatitude read the following Sermon;

The Lord said to His disciples: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" (Matt. 5:14-15).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

Today the Holy Church of Christ honours and venerates the commemoration of the Holy six hundred and thirty Fathers of the Ecumenical Synod in Chalcedon. Therefore, we too, have gathered in this holy shrine, the Holy historic Monastery of St. John the Baptist of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the river Jordan, in order to celebrate the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and glorify the great Name of the Holy Trinity.

Addressing His Disciples, the Lord calls them "the light of the world". "Ye are the light of the world"(Matt. 5:14). This designation does not apply only to the Twelve Disciples, but also to their descendants, who are the Holy Hierarchs and God-bearing Fathers of the Church, those who strengthened the one unblemished faith of the Gospel as the hymnographer says: "The preaching of the Apostles and the doctrines of the Fathers confirmed the one Faith in the Church. And wearing the garment of truth, woven from the theology on high, she rightly divideth and glorifieth the great mystery of piety" (Minaion July 13 Kontakion of the Fathers).

The "great mystery of piety" is no other than the mystery of

the Divine Providence, of the Incarnation of God the Word, our Saviour Christ, from the pure flesh of the Ever-Virgin Theotokos Mary, as it was foretold by the prophets: "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth"(Isaiah 49:6). Apostle Paul refers to these prophetic words of Isaiah in order to confirm his mission to the nations (Acts 13:47). And according to the witness of St. John the Evangelist, "Jesus again unto them, saying, 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).

Again, according to the witness of St. John the Evangelist, Christ "was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"(John 1:9). And according to St. Paul, through him, Jesus Christ became for the faithful, wisdom stemming from God with His teaching, and justification with His death and resurrection and sanctification with His ascension and with the sending down of the Holy Spirit, as well as a complete liberation with His glorious return in His Second Coming. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"(1 Cor. 1:30).

Being the God-human body of Jesus Christ and he "dwelling place of the Lord in Spirit"(Eph. 2:22), the Church is in itself the living torch, whose light, which is the light of Christ, shines upon all Christ's friends. According to Zigavinos, Christ is the light which leads people from the darkness of fallacy to the truth, from sin to virtue, which illumines the mind of men. As it is written, "In him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men"(John 1:4).

God the Word, Christ, as the fountain of life "was life"(John 1:4) and is the One who creates and sustains every living thing. This truth was proclaimed by the Holy and God-bearing Fathers of the Church at the Ecumenical Synods, especially at

the 4th Ecumenical Synod in Chalcedon which we honour today, in which the blasphemous teaching of the Heretic Monk Eutyches was condemned. Moreover, this Synod condemned Monophysitism and Nestorianism and formulated the eminent dogmatic term of Chalcedon, through which it established the Christological doctrine of the Orthodox Faith, accepting the two natures – divine and human – (two working powers and two wills) united unmistakably and indivisibly in the One Person, or the One Hypostasis of the Divine Word.

The great and undeniable significance of the holy Ecumenical Synods according to the established Professor Ioannis Karmiris is owed to the fact that they became the instrument that formulated the doctrines of the Church and permanently established around the world its common and uniform Tradition about the Faith and the manner of living, along with the combat of the various heresies and the guarding of the Ecclesiastical unity, which is mainly based on the dogmatic unity, of which the Ecumenical Synods were precisely both bearers and guarantors.

My dear Brethren, following unwaveringly the Apostolic Traditions and the Divine Doctrines that have been established at the Ecumenical Synods by the God-inspired Fathers and Teachers, we pay heed to St. Paul saying: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:10-11). And let us say along with the hymnographer; "While celebrating on this day the holy Fathers' memory, O all compassionate Saviour, we ask that by their entreaties Thou rescue us, Thy flock, O Lord, from all the harm of heresies, vouchsafing unto all of us to glorify God the Father, the Word, and All-holy Spirit" (Matins Exapostilarion). Amen.

After the Divine Liturgy Dismissal the Hegoumen Archimandrite Bartholomew hosted a reception.

From Secretariat-General