

THE FEAST OF SAINT EUTHYMIOS THE GREAT AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, January 20/February 2, 2024, the commemoration of our holy Father Euthymius the Great was celebrated by the Patriarchate in the Holy Monastery named after him in the Old City of Jerusalem in the Christian Quarter near the Patriarchate.

On this feast, the Church remembers that Saint Euthymios was descended from Melitina of Armenia, born in AD 376 from pious parents Paul and Dionysia, taught the sacred scriptures by his uncle Eudoxios and by the Bishop of Melitina Otreios. Because of his virtue, he was ordained a Presbyter and secluded himself in the Monastery of his homeland. Not accepting to lead others, he left his homeland and came to the Holy Land in 406. He initially secluded himself in the Lavra of Saint Chariton in Faran. He was connected through spiritual friendship, fellowship and cooperation with Saint Theoktistos. From the Feast of Theophany to the Feast of Palms, he withdrew to the desert for prayer and other asceticism. In the desert of Kutila, shepherds of Bethania made him known to Christians and monks, who begged him to found a monastery for them. Saint Theoktistos founded a Koinobion for the novice monks and Saint Euthymios a Lavra for those advanced, in the Judean desert between Jerusalem and Jericho. Saint Savvas also joined this group, who came to the Holy Land in the year 456. Saint Euthymios and Saint Theoktistos became pillars and luminaries of the monastic spiritual life and directed thousands of Christians and monks and were teachers of Saint Savvas. Saint Euthymios asked the Patriarch of Jerusalem Juvenalios in the year 427 to baptize a tribe of Persian nomads, who came to his Monastery and he introduced the ordination of their guardian Aspevetos as Bishop of Paremvolon. He was known for his miraculous and prophetic gift and brought back thousands of

Christians and monks from the fallacy of Monophysitism to Orthodoxy, among whom the Empress Eudoxia. In 429, Patriarch Juvenalius inaugurated the Lavra of Saint Euthymius and the Saint was extremely happy about this. Seven months later he slept in the Lord and left Archimandrite Elpidios as his successor in the leadership of Lavra. The Lavra, destroyed by raids, is preserved today as a visitable archaeological site.

In his honour, Vespers was held in the evening and Divine Liturgy in the morning, presided over by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, with the concelebration of the Archimandrites, Philoumenos and Makarios, the Priests Farah Bandour and Nectarios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and the students of the Patriarchal School of Zion with the participation of monks, nuns and Christians from Jerusalem.

During the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Holy Sepulchre Fathers came for veneration.

The Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages and the congregation were offered a treat by the good carer and Abbess of the Monastery, reverend nun Sarrah.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINT ANTHONY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, January 17/30, 2024, the commemoration of Saint Anthony the Great was celebrated by the Patriarchate in his

chapel, located in the Southern section of the Holy Altar of the Church of Saint Nicholas near the Patriarchate.

On this day, the Church remembers that Anthony the Great was born in Egypt in 251. After his parents died, he distributed his belongings and left for the desert. In it, he lived for forty years in extreme asceticism, prayer, fasting and silence, as the troparia of the day of his memory say, "imitating the manners of the zealous Elias" and "following the footsteps of John the Baptist".

Through his manner of living, thousands of monks came to him, of whom he became a rule of solitary life, a legislator and a statesman. He reached extreme apathy and saw the souls of people when they departed from this world through heaven. He recognized and made known to the Church the great ascetic Paul of Thebes, but he also comforted the Christians who came to Alexandria, when persecution was declared against them by Maximinus in 312. He also helped the Christians against the attacks of the Arians in 335. He proclaimed the Orthodox faith, in which he brought back many from those who had fallen into fallacy and slept in the Lord on the 17th of January 356 at the age of 105. His biography was written by Athanasios the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria, who was connected to him through a close spiritual friendship.

In the above-mentioned chapel, Vespers was celebrated on Monday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Tuesday morning by Archimandrite Claudius with the co-celebration of Archdeacon Mark, under the chanting of Fr Ioannis Aouad. The services were attended by monks, nuns, members of the Greek Consulate in Jerusalem and faithful Christians from Jerusalem, who received the warm hospitality of the responsible for the Monastery and its renovator, Archdeacon Mark.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CHAIN OF THE APOSTLE PETER

On Monday, January 16/29, 2024, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the veneration of the Holy chain of the Apostle Peter.

On this day, the Church venerates the chaining of the Apostle Peter, that is, the event of the release of the Apostle Peter by an angel from his chain and prison as narrated in the book of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 12, 1-19), when "Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. (Acts 12,1-2), " And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also" (Acts 12,3); " And when Herod would have brought him forth, that night Peter was sleeping... And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands" (Acts 12,6-7). Peter followed the angel until he brought him to the Iron Gate that led to the city, when it was automatically opened to them and Peter realised that an angel of the Lord had come to him from the hand of Herod (c.f. Acts 12, 8-11).

This wonderful event, described in the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, was celebrated in the place of the imprisonment of the Apostle Peter, in which for centuries there was a Holy Monastery and pilgrimage under the name of Saint Nicodemus, the hidden disciple of the Lord, or "the place of Lentils" because it is believed that the conversation

between Nicodemus of the Pharisees and the Lord took place there (Jn. 3) and because in times of pestilence they distributed small portions of lentils and other foodstuffs. This Monastery is located between the Monastery of Praetorium and the Monastery of the Holy Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna.

There, Vespers was held on Sunday afternoon and the Episcopal Divine Liturgy on Monday morning, which was presided over by His Eminence Archbishop Thephanes of Gerassa, with the co-celebration of Archimandrite Philoumenos, Priest Nectarios and Hierodeacon Alexander.

During the Liturgy, His Beatitude and Holy Sepulchre Fathers came for veneration.

The Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages as well as the congregation received a treat from the good carer of the Monastery, Hegoumen Archimandrite Makarios.

From Secretariat-General

**PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS: FROM
THE BAPTISM SITE THE LAND OF
PEACE AND EVANGELISM HE
RAISES PRAYERS AND
SUPPLICATIONS FOR OUR PEOPLE**

IN GAZA AND DEMANDS AN IMMEDIATE END TO THE BLOODY CONFLICT AND THE RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE

Baptism Site, Friday, January 26, 2024

On the morning of Friday, January 26, 2024, the Greek Orthodox Church of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem performed the annual pilgrimage ceremony to the place of baptism of Jesus Christ – Al-Maghtas in the presence of all the parishes of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the East Bank.

The prayer was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and all of Palestine and Jordan, with the participation of the Patriarchal Representative of Amman His Eminence Archbishop Christophoros of Kyriakopolis, the Patriarchal Representative in Bethlehem and Hegoumen of the Theophany Monastery His Eminence Metropolitan Benedictos, and many distinguished Bishops coming from Greece with a group of Priests and Deacons, in the presence of ministers, diplomats, officials and public figures, amid the active participation of Orthodox Scout Groups and members of the Orthodox youth and believers from various regions of Jordan and abroad.

At the end of the prayer, His Beatitude delivered a spiritual and patriotic speech to the faithful, in which He said: *From this holy place the Christian faith began and was transferred to all parts of the world, from the holy land we are called children of God, to walk in His name, we are called to remove from us the eternal darkness and pass into the light and become children of the Kingdom of heaven. From the waters of the Jordan, all nature is sanctified, because our holy land*

accepted God and became a paradise in Him, was blessed by Him and blessed the whole world. His Beatitude invited our children from all over the world to come to the Holy Land for pilgrimages to receive the blessings of the Holy Land.

His Beatitude called for peace in Palestine, especially for our people in the Gaza Strip, appealing from the Holy Land to stop the war and for a just solution to the Palestinian issue with the establishment of its state with East Jerusalem as its capital. His Holiness together with the faithful also prayed for the country's leader, His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein, for whom Jordan is celebrating this year the twenty-fifth anniversary of his accession to the throne of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the assumption of his constitutional powers.

His Beatitude first thanked Prince Ghazi bin Mohammed, the King's personal envoy and adviser on religious and cultural affairs, for his great efforts with the Baptistry Authority, which he chairs, as this year they celebrate the silver jubilee of restoration and establishment of this Place, and the Tourism Promotion Authority, the Jordanian Arab Army, the security services, and all local and international news stations and websites and the clergy, youth and scouting bodies participating in the organization of this blessed day.

In the end, white doves were released into the sky as a symbol of the Holy Spirit Who appeared above Christ's head in the form of a dove during His baptism in the waters of the Jordan River, and then His Beatitude came with the Bishops and Priests to the river bank, blessing, as usual, the waters of the Jordan River with the Holy Cross.

THE FEAST OF SAINT THEODOSIUS THE COENOBIArch AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday, January 11th/24th, 2024, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our holy Father Theodosius the Coenobiarch in the Holy Monastery founded by him and bears his name in the desert of Judea a few kilometres from Bethlehem and the Monastery of Saint Savvas.

During this feast, the whole Church, especially that of Jerusalem, remembers that the Holy Theodosius came from his native Mogarissa in Cappadocia to the Holy Land in the year 451.

Also, initially, he practised in the vicinity of Jerusalem's Holy Monastery of Ikelia and later he practised in extreme solitude in the desert, in the cave where the Magi spent the night, "returning by another way to their homeland". Then, through prayer and humility, he received the enlightenment from the Holy Spirit, so that he guided a multitude of monks to the life in Christ, who begged him to found this Monastery as a Coenobion, that is, as a Monastery, in which novice monks dwell in patience and common life and obedience until they prove themselves worthy for a solitary life in Lavra.

In this Monastery, the monks practised manual labour through which they met the needs of the poor and needy. The condition of entry into the Monastery is "no one lazy shall enter". There were about 400 monks in this monastery and Saint Sophronios and Saint Modestos, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, also practiced there. Saint Theodosius was appointed as exarch of the Coenobitic life, while Saint Savvas was appointed as the head of the Laureotic life.

With Saint Savvas, his compatriot, they emerged as supporters

of the decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of 451, that Christ God is of one essence and two natures.

In this monastery, where the tomb of the Saint lies, an All-night Vigil was held by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with concelebrants their Eminences, the Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina and Theodosios of Sebasteia, Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the Spiritual Father of Saint Sabba's Monastery Archimandrite Eudokimos, the Archimandrites, Ignatios, Nectarios and Christodoulos, Archimandrite Chrysostom from the Metropolis of Megara of the Church of Greece, Priests from Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon in Greek and Mr Elias from the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem in Arabic. The Vigil was attended by only a few faithful Christians due to the ongoing war.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

"Lifting high to God thy most divine hands, thou wast shown to be a radiant pillar made to shine with the rays of thine earnest prayers. For since thy mind soared to Heaven, O righteous one, and thou partookest of things whereof none may speak, thou didst wholly flash like lightning and now dost pray Christ God that his great mercy may be granted unto us" (Matins, Kathisma 3), the hymnographer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians

Christ, Who appeared to us in the Jordan has gathered us all in this holy place, where Saint Theodosius founded this marvellous Monastery and lived in this cave, to celebrate his holy commemoration in Eucharist.

Abba Theodosius founded a great Coenobion, inhabited by many people which excelled above all in Palestine, a work that was done by the good pleasing of God the Father with Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, according to the biographer of the Saint, Elder Cyril of Skythopolis.

Coming from the town Mogarissa of Cappadocia, Saint Theodosius came to the Holy Land and became the great beauty of Palestine and the boast of the desert and the monastic schema, the support of right doctrines, the general and defender, and guide and protector of the coenobitic rule, according to his biographer.

The above are confirmed by his hymnographer too, who writes: "Ministering unto the Virgin and Mother of Christ God, thou didst receive the invincible grace of the Spirit, O Father Theodosius, and didst cast down invisible enemies" (Matins, Ode 4, Troparion 2).

Indeed, Saint Theodosius "reached a steadfast tower of virtues" and "received the invincible grace of the Spirit" because he knew that "our conversation is in heaven" (c.f. Hebrews 10,34). The way and the manner of our Father Theodosius to reach "our conversation in heaven" was his humility and obedience according to the prototype of the Only Begotten Son and Word of God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, who "being the Son" learned obedience through His sufferings, and having completed His mission, became the cause of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (Hebrews, 5,8-9), Saint Paul preaches. A characteristic of Christ's obedience is His willingness to obey. "Our inclination is not sufficient unless we apply the works; for the work is the proof of the inclination" Saint Gregory the Theologian says.

The actions of obedience are indeed the proof of the inclination, because obedience is distinguished into slavery of the sin leading to death and righteousness in Christ, which leads to the Kingdom of God, Saint Fotios says, interpreting

the words of Saint Paul: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6,16).

Our Holy Father Theodosius became a genuine worker and servant of Christ's righteousness through the introduction of the coenobitic manner of monastics. And this was so because our Holy Father did not seek only his own deification, but also of those who retreated into the monastery he founded. "God made us in this manner, to become communicants of the divine nature and partakers of His eternity and thus we may be similar to Him through deification by grace" Saint Maximus the Confessor says.

And the "deification by grace" is no other than the gift or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as Saint Cyril of Alexandria says, regarding Christ's words, "Come; for all things are now ready" (Luke 14,17). "The God and Father of Christ prepared for those on earth the goods given to the world by Him, the forgiveness of sins, the intoxication of the Holy Spirit, the splendour of adoption, the kingdom of heaven". These spiritual goods, which God prepared for those on earth, i.e. for us humans, were achieved by Saint Theodosius. These goods are asked and can be acquired by every person who loves God with all his heart and with all his mind.

It is noteworthy that the one who truly loves God is the one who has reached the highest degree of spiritual perfection, as Saint Paul preaches, saying: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him (I Cor. 2, 7-9). That is why the psalmist also begs God saying: "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me;

let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles” (Ps. 43,3).

This light, that is, the Holy Spirit, did God the Father send to His Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the form of a dove in the Jordan River during His baptism by Saint John the Baptist, for the salvation of our souls. “The redeeming grace of God for all people was revealed”, Saint Paul says. And the hymnographer: “Today Christ is come to be baptized in the Jordan; today John toucheth the head of the Master” (Matins, Praises, Both now).

This marvellous and paradoxical mystery was also preached and confessed by Saint Theodosius, as his hymnographer writes: “He Who cleanseth the world, is baptized, even God, Who is become a mortal as I am for my sake. Him didst thou proclaim in two natures, O blessed Theodosius” (Matins, Ode 6, Troparion 2). Also, “Calling thy teachings to remembrance, 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).

As for us, my beloved brothers, let us beseech our Holy Father Theodosius with the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, that they may intercede with our Lord for our souls and peace in the Holy Land and a cessation of fire in the Gaza Strip. After Saint Paul let us say: ” For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2, 11-13). Amen! Many and peaceful returns”.

After the Divine Liturgy, the active and diligent, benevolent renovator of the Monastery Archimandrite Ierotheos hosted a reception for the Patriarchal Entourage.

His Beatitude blessed him, wishing him a long life, to continue his heroic ministry in the Monastery, in which he has been ministering for over forty years.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINTS GEORGE AND JOHN THE HOZEVITES

On Sunday, January 8/21, 2024, the feast of the Holy Monastery of Hozeva in Wadi Qelt was celebrated. The Monastery is located in the desert of Brook Chorath, which leads to Jericho and the Dead Sea.

On this feast the Church honours the distinguished in this Monastery as its founders, John Metropolitan of Caesarea of Palestine, who left the pastoral care of his Metropolis and came to live in monastic striving in this Monastery. It also honours Bishop George, who came from Cyprus and renovated the Monastery after its destruction by the Persian raid in AD 614.

The Church of Jerusalem also commemorates on this day John the New Hozevite, who came from Romania and lived in monastic striving in the Monastery and was canonized as a Saint by the Patriarchate in 2015, to be celebrated separately on July 28. Along with them, we also commemorate the former Hegoumen Antonios, who slept in the Lord while renovating the Narthex of the Monastery in 1993. We also remember the Hegoumen Germanos who was unjustly murdered in 2001.

For this feast, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos came, and was welcomed by the Hegoumen

Archimandrite Constantine with the following address:

“Your Beatitude Father and Master with Your Holy Entourage,

We gathered together for another time, as we celebrate the annual memory of the Founders of the historic Hoseva Lavra, Saints John and George.

We gathered in the midst of wars and turmoil, amid uncertainty, sorrow and pain. Pain, which even Saint George the Hosevite experienced to the maximum degree during the invasion of the Persians in the Holy Land in 614 AD.

As far as we know during his lifetime, having envisioned and foreseen the invasion and the massacre that followed, the Saint mourned, lamented and wept eloquently “for the vulgarity of the people or rather the ignorance and disrespect”. Coming out of his cell, he sat on a stone under the sun (due to the great weakness of his flesh) and begged God, saying: “Lord God of compassion and Lord of mercy, Who wants all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, pick up your rod and teach this people, for they walk in ignorance”...

Your Beatitude Father and Master,

As all of us are praying in fervent prayer of life-giving hope to the Messiah and Redeemer Lord Jesus and invoke the strong intercession of the Holy Hosevites, let us commence the feast...”

His Beatitude officiated the All-Night Vigil with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, the Archimandrites, Constantine, Chrysogonos and Christodoulos, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacons Simeon and Dositheos. The chanting was delivered by the lead Byzantine singer of the Holy Church of Saint Paraskevi Mr Stavros Christou, the lead Byzantine singer of the Holy Church of Saint Dimitrios of Tripolis Mr Stavros Petrou, the left Byzantine singer of the

Holy Church of the Meeting of the Lord in Kalamata, Mr Nikolaos Theotokatos, the left Byzantine singer of the Holy Church of the Holy Church of the Prophet Elijah in the Municipality of Saint Paraskevi, and the lead Byzantine singer of the Chapel of the Holy Apostles in the parish of Saint Paraskevi. The Vigil was attended by only a few monks and laity due to the ongoing hostilities in the State.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon before the Holy Communion:

“My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psalm 42,2) the psalmist proclaims.

Beloved Fathers and Brethren,

Reverend Christians

The divine grace of the One surrounded by the clouds in the heavens and by the waters of the Jordan River, of the One who took upon Himself the sin of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ, has gathered us all in this neighbouring to the Jordan River Holy Monastery of Hozeva, to honour the sacred commemoration of our Holy Father among the Saints George, the so-called Hozevite.

Our blessed Father George left his hometown, Leukara of Cyprus and came to venerate the Holy Tomb of our Lord at the beginning of the 7th century, before he retreated to this Lavra of Hozeva, which was founded by the blessed John of Egypt.

Like another deer, the blessed George ran towards the springs of water (c.f. Psalm 42,2), that is the spring of life which is Christ, to see the face of God the Father, Who is the unapproachable light, as the psalmist says: “For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light” (Psalm 36,9). This is also confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ with the words, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever

believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (John 12,46).

Interpreting these words of the Lord, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says, “By confessing that He is the Light, Christ proves that He is God by nature since it is befitting only to the God by nature to be called thus”. And Saint Chrysostom says, “Because God is called by that name in the Old and the New Testament, He uses this name [light]. For this reason, Paul calls Christ ‘refulgence’, radiance, as he preaches “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power” (Hebrews 1,1-3).

This divine light, that is our salvation in Christ, did the soul of George seek, so that the word of the Gospel would be imprinted on it, according to the advice of Saint James the Brother of God: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1,21). The way of salvation is achieved through the knowledge of the scriptures, and that knowledge is the food of faith as Saint Paul tells his disciple Timothy: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3,15). Moreover, faith should be fruitful with good deeds, as Saint James says, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” (James 2,14).

Again, Saint Paul urges us: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2,12-13). Thus Saint

George chooses the place of the desert on the one hand, and the monastic life on the other, which predisposes the unceasing asceticism of the virtues of salvation. "Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. 5,8), Saint Paul preaches. This is also phrased by the hymnographer of the Church, "The Monastery of Hozeva hath found in thee a rule and most exact example for the pursuit of every form of virtuous works, O wise George, boast of the righteous. Therefore, those who have passed their lives in godliness leap for joy with thee unto the ages" (Menaion, Jan. 8, Matins, Ode 8, Troparion 3).

Indeed, Saint George was a rule and exact example for the pursuit of the virtues – according to Saint Theodore of Edessa – "to the extreme state of deification", the ascend to the unwaning light as George's hymnographer says, "Delivered from darkness, thou hast been taken up to the unwaning light, O glorious Father, and thou standest before the Almighty and Three-Sun Light with the orders on high, O blessed man, and thou delightest in the splendour that issueth thence and shinest like a fiery beacon upon us who hymn thee" (Matins, Ode 9, Troparion 3). It is noteworthy that according to the psalmist, God is covered in magnificent garments of light; "Thou, Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Psalm 104,2), while according to Saint Paul, God is the only one "Who hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6,16). That is why the hymnographer of our Holy Father George says, "and thou delightest in the splendour that issueth thence".

In his synaxarist, Saint Nicodemus of Mount Athos says: "Having reached the utmost apathy, the thrice-blessed George appeared full of the grace of the Most Holy Spirit. He departed to God Whom he desired, to enjoy along with the Angels more clearly and precisely the radiance and blessedness

that is projected from the Holy Trinity. This radiance is no other than the energy of the uncreated light, which anyone who has been baptized can enjoy, the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit, Who appeared in the form of a dove in the Jordan River. "Now there is brought to pass a great and awful mystery: to purify us mortals, the Master of creation is baptized by a servant's hand" (Matins, Aposticha of Praises, Troparion 1).

The glorious George became a preacher, an Evangelist and an Apostle of this great and awful mystery of reverence. Therefore, along with the hymnographer let us say: "In His ineffable mercy, He that is simple in His divine nature truly became twofold from thee, O Mother of God, uniting to His Divinity the flesh which He received from thy blood. Therefore, knowing thee to be the Theotokos, we praise thee with hymns unto all the ages" (Matins, Ode 8, Theotokion), entreating your intercessions, along with the prayers of our Holy Father George. Amen. Many happy and peaceful returns!"

After the service, the renovator of the Monastery Archimandrite Constantine Peramatzis hosted a meal.

From Secretariat-General

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

PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, 7th/20th of January 2024, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Forerunner and Baptist John.

This feast means the gathering of the faithful in the Church, to honour the Holy Forerunner, as the one who preeminently officiated at the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Jordan River.

This feast was celebrated:

1. At the Holy Monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Jerusalem, the one near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Christian quarter. The Divine Liturgy there was led by Archimandrite Amphilochios with the co-celebration of Archimandrite Christodoulos, Fr Stephen and Hierodeacon Simeon. The chanting was delivered by Nuns of the Patriarchate and Hierodeacon Dositheos, as the service was attended by monks, nuns and members of the Greek community of Jerusalem.
2. At the Holy Monastery of Saint John the Baptist, located on the West Bank of the Jordan River, where our Lord was baptized.

The Divine Liturgy there was celebrated by Archimandrite Chrysostom of the Holy Metropolis of Megara of the Church of Greece and the Priest Anastasios of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with the joint prayer and chanting by the Spiritual Father of the Monastery of Saint Savvas Archimandrite Eudokimos and Monk Theoktistos. The service was attended by some monastics and believers from Jericho.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

The Despotic feast of Theophany was celebrated at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

At the Catholicon of the Church, His Beatitude held the service of the Great Blessing of the Water with the contrite hymns of Theophany and the prayers of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Saint Sophrony. The faithful Christians who attended the service were blessed with the sanctified water.

Then the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Holy Sepulchre, presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias and the Archbishops, Aristarchos of Constantina and Dimitrios of Lydda. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and Fr Ioannis, as the service was attended by faithful Christians from Jerusalem and a few pilgrims due to the ongoing war, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos and the Consul Mrs Anna Mandika.

His Beatitude blessed everybody with the Holy Cross that contains part of the Sacred Wood and the blessed water from the Service of the sanctification of Theophany.

After the Liturgy, the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Hall, where His Beatitude wished everybody the enlightenment of the Father of Lights.

From Secretariat-General

THE FOREFEAST OF THEOPHANY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, January 5/18, 2024, the Great Royal Hours of Epiphany were read in the monastic and Patriarchal Holy Church of Saints Constantine and Helen of the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, presided over by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, followed by the Divine Liturgy of the Great Basil and the Service of the Sanctification of the waters of the Eve of Epiphany. The Church and the faithful were sanctified and then the Patriarchal entourage went up to the Patriarchate Hall, under the chanting of the "When Thou wast baptized in the Jordan...". His Beatitude concluded the service and received the Episcopal entourage of His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios of Sebasteia, who brought the sanctified water from Saint James Cathedral.

Then, at 9:00 a.m. His Beatitude departed to Jericho, where he visited the Holy Monastery of the Prophet Elijah and Sycamore tree of Zacchaeus, and the Prefect of Jericho Mrs Yousra Sweti, before he reached the Holy Monastery of Saint John the Baptist. The Royal Hours with Vespers and the Divine Liturgy had been held at the Holy Monastery by Archimandrite Meletios before the Patriarchal Entourage arrived. The Master of Ceremonies of the Patriarchate and Hegoumen of the Monastery Archimandrite Bartholomew has renovated the whole structure and the complete service of the Forefeast of Theophany has been held there in the last few years.

Upon His Beatitude's arrival, a supplication was held, and then the Procession towards the west bank of the river Jordan began, under the chanting of the "When Thou wast baptized in the Jordan...". At the bank of the river, His Beatitude held the

service of the Sanctification of the waters and went down to the river where He boarded a small boat and blessed its waters. The river Jordan was sanctified by the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which we were redeemed from the sin of our forefathers and set free from the power of the devil.

As the waters were blessed, the apolytikion was sung again, in joy and rejoicing by the participating limited number of pilgrims, due to the war situation, in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos and the Ambassador of Georgia Mr Lasha.

After the service, the Hegoumen and renovator of the Monastery, Archimandrite Bartholomew hosted a fasting meal. Later on, the Patriarchal Entourage visited the Holy Monastery of Abba Gerasimos of the Jordan and returned to Jerusalem to prepare for the great Despotic and universal Orthodox Feast of Theophany.

From Secretariat-General

<https://www.facebook.com/JerusalemPatriarchate/posts/pfbid022XK9w7m1zSbBxwqGLYzf74Fh4Pvqv5rWkr6WtQ3QbniR1vssi6GrdaAtJD3N8TN2l>

<https://fb.watch/pG3D9AWhE3/>

THE FEAST OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT AT HIS HOLY MONASTERY

IN THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

On the morning of Sunday, January 1, 2024, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of Saint Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea of Cappadocia at his chapel located between the Holy Monastery of Saint Theodore and the New Gate.

On the commemoration of Saint Basil and in his honour, a Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Archimandrite Amphilochios under the preparation and care of the Hegoumen, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios. The service was attended by pious pilgrims, monks, nuns and members of the Greek community.

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

His Beatitude and the congregation were offered a treat by the good keeper of the Monastery and its maintainer, the Elder Kamarasis, Hegoumen Archimandrite Nektarios.

From Secretariat-General