

THE FEAST OF ST. SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, February 3/16, 2019, the commemoration of St. Simeon the God-receiver was celebrated, who received the Lord in his arms when He was brought in the Temple of Solomon by His parents on the 40th day after His birth in the flesh. This Feast took place at the Holy Monastery dedicated to St. Simeon, which is located in West Jerusalem, and where there is the tomb of the Saint and a part of his holy relics, which was donated by the Roman-Catholic Church of Croatia.

For the commemoration of St. Simeon who officiated the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning of the feast, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, and the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Fathers and Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos with the help of Archimandrite Eusevios. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and a large congregation of local faithful and pilgrims from Russia, Romania, Greece and Cyprus.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation:

“Let the gate of Heaven be opened today; for the beginningless Word of the Father, having received a beginning in time without forsaking His Divinity, is of His own will offered by

a Virgin Mother in the Temple of the Law as a babe forty days old. The Elder recieveth Him in his arms, and the servant crieth to the Master: Let me depart; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation. O Thou Who art come into the world to save the race of man, Lord, glory be to Thee."

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The indeterminable and superfluous word of God, who was born in the cave of Bethlehem and placed in a manger, has gathered us today in this holy place, where the house of Elder Simeon used to be, in order to celebrate the Meeting of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple, where the Righteous Simeon received Him in his arms.

This great event of the entrance of the child Jesus in the Temple of Solomon, brought by His parents, on th 40th day after his birth, according to the Law of Moses, is narrated in detail by St. Luke the Evangelist saying; "And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:27-32).

Elder Simeon holds a prominent position among the people of the sacred history, namely of the Holy Bible. And this is so, because he was deemed worthy to receive in his arms the child Jesus, our God, from the hands of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

In other words, Simeon is proven to be an irrefutable witness of the incarnation of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. This

Simeon, moved by the Grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, not only received in his arms the Son of God, the Christ, but also recognized Him as "the salvation of God", saying "mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people" (Luke 2:30-31).

This experience of Elder Simeon is also co-witnessed by the psalmist by saying "light has risen upon the righteous". The law of God is not only hatred against sin, but also light for the righteous. He uses the word "has risen instead of rising. For every one who is benign and righteous has this divine light risen in his mind and heart" St. Cyril of Alexandria says.

"The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen" (Psalm 98:2) the psalmist says again. The Lord manifested this salvation in a very clear manner before all the nations, He made His righteousness visible to all the people without any discrimination. "[God] offered to all people the spring water of salvation and showed to all nations His righteous Kingdom", St. Theodoritos Kyrou interprets.

Indeed, Elder Simeon came to the altar of the Temple with the power and energy, namely with the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, as Luke the Evangelist witnesses by saying: "and the Holy Ghost was upon him (Simeon)" (Luke 2:25). The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die before having seeing the One Whom the Lord God had anointed as the King and Saviour of the world; "And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:26).

This means that without the Holy Spirit, no one is able to understand the mystery of the divine providence, and even more, the salvific mission of the mystical body of Christ, our Holy Orthodox Church. However, the Holy Spirit does not reveal/disclose the indescribable mysteries of God to men who

are not pure at heart nor to those who are lukewarm in faith (Revelation, 3:16). "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" St. James the Brother of God teaches (James 4:8).

"And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against" (Luke 2:34). These prophetic words of Righteous Simeon were fulfilled during the earthly mission of Christ, especially during the peak of His Passion on the Cross and His Resurrection from the dead.

The perfect God and perfect Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the fall of the unfaithful and those in doubt on the one hand, and on the other, He is the Rising of the faithful and those who cast no doubt.

The teaching of the Holy and established theologians as well as great Fathers of our Holy Church has boldly proclaimed that while Christ has two natures, the Divine and the human, He nevertheless is One in hypostasis and in person, "the Father and I are one" (John 10:30), the Lord says.

And according to St. Cyril of Alexandria, "the sign that shall be spoken against, is the sacred Cross" this is what St. Simeon speaks of. This is also preached by St. Paul, referring to the Sacred Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23-24).

Our Holy Church calls us through the mouth of Athanasius the Great to imitate the Righteous Simeon and Prophetess Anna, who were distinguished for their purity, guilelessness, forgiveness, and chastity.

Let us entreat St. Simeon, my dear ones, along with the hymn writer and say: "Illuminate my soul and my sense of sight O Lord, so that I may clearly see and proclaim Thee as my God".

After the Divine Liturgy the Elder and hospitable renovator of the Monastery Hegoumen Archimandrite Theodoritos offered a reception to the Patriarchal entourage and the congregation at the Hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Monastery.

From Secretariat-General

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

On Friday, February 2/15, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple at the Holy Monastery of Panagia Sayda Naya, which is located near the Patriarchate at the Christian Quarter.

On this Feast the Church celebrates the entrance of the Lord in the Temple of Solomon when He was a forty-day old infant, brought by His parents who offered a pair of turtles and a pair of chick pigeons. Then the Righteous Simeon received Him in his arms and having received the inspiration from the Holy Spirit, recognized Him and cried out: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32).

For this Feast Vespers was held in the aforementioned Monastery in the evening and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the morning of the Feast, officiated by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, with co-celebrants Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Resurrection Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the Patriarchal School students, with the attendance of a large congregation of local faithful and pilgrims.

His Eminence delivered a Sermon to this congregation (see video).

During the Divine Liturgy H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos came for veneration with Hagiotaphite Fathers.

The renovator of the Monastery Reverend Nun Seraphima offered a reception to the Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages as well as to the congregation at the Hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Monastery.

For this Feast of the Lord also, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos participated in the Divine Liturgy at the Patriarchal and Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE THREE

HIERARCHS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, January 30/ February 12, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the common commemoration of the Three Hierarchs, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom.

Their common commemoration has been celebrated by the Church since the 11th century, in order to solve the conflict among its members on the question; who of the three Hierarchs is the greatest and most important.

Their common commemoration has also been celebrated by the Church due to their designation as the protectors of Education, as they had taught the early Christians how to use the ancient Greek Philosophy.

For this feast the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning at the Holy Church of the Holy Trinity at the Patriarchal School of Sion, officiated by the Chairman of the School Board Most Reverend Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, with co-celebrants the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios and the Managing Director of the School Archimandrite Mattheos. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the Patriarchal School students, and the service was attended by a congregation of the teachers, nuns and members of the Greek Community of Jerusalem.

The Episcopal entourage and the congregation were offered a reception by the Managing Director of the School Archimandrite Mattheos at the School Reception Hall.

Likewise, the Divine Liturgy for the commemoration of the Three Hierarchs was celebrated at the Holy Chapel of St. Basil near the New Gate, by Priest Nikitas, under the care and hospitality of the Care taker of the Chapel, Reverend Nun

Thecla.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ST. EUTHYMIOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday January 20/ February 2, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our Righteous Father Euthymios the Great at the Holy Church and Monastery dedicated to him, which is adjacent to the Monastery of Panagia Sayda Naya, at the Christian Quarter near the Patriarchate.

St. Euthymios came from Melitini of Armenia and followed the monastic life since his early youth. He came to the Holy Land around 420 A.D. and lived with Saint Theoktistos at a monastery. Consequently, St. Theoktistos founded a Cenobitic Monastery for the monastic training of the monks, while St. Euthymios founded a Lavra for the monastic asceticism of the advanced monks.

He received thousands of monks in this Lavra and guided them, and St. Savvas the Sanctified was one among them, who came to the Saint in the year 456. Also a group from Persia came to the Lavra, members of which Saint Euthymios baptized, and one of them with the name Peter he ordained as Bishop of Paremvolon.

St. Euthymios fought from his Lavra against the heresy of

Monofycitism and the prevailing of the teaching of the two natures of Christ, the divine and the human, according to the doctrine of the 4th Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.

St. Euthymios was established a Great Saint by God and was deemed worthy of the gifts of clairvoyance and the working of miracles, and slept in the Lord in the year 473 A.D.

In honour of St. Euthymios and at his Monastery in Jerusalem, and not in the one in the desert, Vespers was held in the evening and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on the morning of the feast, led by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, with co-celebrants Archimandrite Makarios and Archimandrite Ieronymos. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the Patriarchal School of Zion students, while the services were attended by many local faithful and pilgrims who honoured the Saint.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers came to venerate during the Divine Liturgy.

His Beatitude and the congregation were offered a reception by the Abbess of the Monastery Nun Christonymphi and the recently undertaking the duty of the Caretaker of the Monastery Priest Nikitas.

From Secretariat-General

H.H.B. CELEBRATES THE DIVINE LITURGY AT BURKIN OF SAMARIA

On Friday, January 19/ February 1, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the healing of the ten lepers by the Lord (Luke 17:12-19), at the place of their healing north of Nablus of Samaria, where there is a chapel built on the carved rocks, in the natural cave of which the ten lepers lived in isolation as imposed by their surrounding society.

On the morning of the aforementioned day, at this place and in this chapel, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos celebrated the Divine Liturgy, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, the Hegoumen of the Shepherds Archimandrite Ignatios and Arab-speaking Priests, Archdeacon Mark and other deacons, while the service was attended by many faithful who came from the neighbouring towns, parishes, for Toubas, Rafidia and Zababde.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation;

“And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us” (Luke 17:12-13).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and Pilgrims

The infinite mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ led our footsteps today to this holy place of the lepers, known as Burkin, so that we also glorify Him in gratitude, in festivity and thanksgiving.

This holy place of Burkin is not only identified as the place of the healing of the ten lepers, as Luke the Evangelist mentions, but also as the place witnessing that our Lord Jesus Christ as perfect God and perfect man is the One who according to Prophet Isaiah "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17). And elsewhere, Luke the Evangelist says: "But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities" (Luke 5:15).

Today's gospel narrative, my dear brothers and sisters, is not a mere parable, but a fact that happened at a certain place and time. And we say this because this Rum-Orthodox ancient Byzantine Church is built above the cave of the isolation of the ten lepers, in the certain town from which Jesus passed via Samaria and Galilee, heading towards Jerusalem (Luke 1:11).

God's love and infinite mercy are given to every man who puts his trust in Him. The ten lepers cried out loud all together saying; "Jesus Master, have mercy on us" (Luke 17:13). And the loud voice, the lepers' voice, was a voice of entreaty, and a voice of invocation in truth, as St. Theophylaktos interprets: "and while they stood afar from the place, the supplication was drawn near. For He is near to all who call upon Him in truth". And Evangelist Matthew says: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt. 4:23).

The ten lepers ask for the mercy of the Son of God; "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (Luke 17:13) because they trust Christ to whom they assign themselves and their healing. This means that the man, whose "days are as grass" (Psalm 103:15), is not able to rely on himself when he faces serious and painful physical and mental health problems, seeing himself collapsing and coming apart. This very collapsing and torn apart self does he entrust on the mercy and philanthropy of

God, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

"O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit" (Psalm 30:2-3). My Lord and my God, I have cried unto Thee in my sickness and Thou hast healed me. Yes, O Lord, from the gates of Hades Thou hast returned my life, Thou hast saved me for Thou hast not counted me along with the dead who are brought into the grave; this is what Prophet David exclaims, thanking God in gratitude.

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan" (Luke 17:15-16), meaning that he was a foreigner. St. Cyril of Alexandria says that "the Samaritan was a foreigner because he was from the nation of Assyria". This foreigner, the Samaritan, by expressing his thanksgiving and gratitude towards Christ, and by glorifying God, receives on the one hand the resurrection of his being, and on the other, he discovers the salvific power of faith, when he hears the words of Jesus telling him: "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:19).

On the contrary, the ingratitude and ungratefulness of the nine lepers – "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17) according to Jesus' question, returned them to the condition of sin, namely, to the sickness of the soul, or better say, to the leprosy of the soul. And this is so, because ungratefulness is a sin, which ignores the philanthropic and benefactor God and projects the injudiciousness and the egocentrism of man.

Behold my dear ones, why the great and wise Paul advises his disciple Timothy, and not only him, but all of us, saying: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall

come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, and ungrateful" (2 Tim. 3:2)... "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:5).

We, as members of the mystical body of Christ, namely of His Church, enjoy God's benevolence, as well as the healing that was brought forth by the divine Word, Christ, to "all the nature of men stricken by leprosy" as the God-bearing Fathers of the Church teach.

This healing of the physical and mental infirmities of ours is made possible within the Church and by the Church, which is the sanatorium and hospital of all who participate in its liturgical and sacramental life in fear and faith and love, but also in a clear conscience.

Our way of "giving glory and thanksgiving to God" is the order by St. Paul saying: Brothers, "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:8-11). Amen.

After the Divine Liturgy His Beatitude inaugurated the new hall which is going to be the Hegoumeneion, refectory and reception hall and has been built by the Caretaker of the Monastery Monk Vissarion.

At noon Monk Vissarion offered a meal to His Beatitude and the congregation.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday January 17/30, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our Righteous Father Anthony the Great at the chapel dedicated to him at the north aisle of the Church of St. Nikolaos, on the west side of the Patriarchate.

The Church celebrates St. Anthony as the great ascetic of Egypt who lived from 251 A.D. to 356 A.D. He strove in asceticism in strict self-denial, humility and evangelic precision for years, he was the teacher of thousands of monks and supported many Christians who were being persecuted by Maximian in 312 A.D. and by the Arians during the time of the First Ecumenical Synod in Nice in 325 A.D.

The Patriarchate honoured at the aforementioned chapel this luminary of the Christian life, the legislator and leader and citizen of the monastic life, with Vespers in the evening and with the Divine Liturgy in the morning of the feast which was led by Priest Nikitas under the chanting of monks, and the prayer of monks, nuns and Christians.

The Care taker of the Monastery Archdeacon Mark offered a reception to this congregation at the hegoumeneion.

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

On Tuesday, January 29, 2019 16/29, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the veneration of the sacred chain of Apostle Peter, at the chapel dedicated to him, which is located inside the Holy Monastery of St. Nicodemus with the nickname “of the Lentil” due to the fact that during the Byzantine years when there was famine and starvation there used to be a common meal offering there with lentil soup. The place is located in a short distance on the east side of the Monastery of Preatorion/Prison of Christ.

During this feast the Church commemorates the imprisonment of Apostle Peter by Herod Antipas and the miraculous release of the Apostle by a holy angel of God, as we read in the narrative of the book of Acts (Acts 12:1-19), and we venerate the chain by which the Apostle was bound in order to receive his intercession and help.

For this feast Vespers was held in the evening and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning of the feast, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, with co-celebrants the Archimandrites Ignatios and Meletios and the Priests George and Nectarios and Hierodeacon Sophrony. The

chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos, monk Raphael and nun Danielia, with the participation of a noble congregation.

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

After the Divine Liturgy the Hegoumen of the Monastery Archimandrite Makarios offered a reception to the Episcopal entourage and the congregation at the hegoumeneion.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF ST. THEODOSIUS THE CENOBIARCH AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, January 11/24, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our Righteous Father Theodosius the Cenobiarch at his Holy Monastery which lies at the desert of Judea, between Beit Sahour and the Monastery of St. Savvas the Sanctified.

St. Theodosius founded this Cenobitic Monastery in the middle of the 5th century A.D. Having arrived at the Holy Land from his hometown Cappadocia, St. Theodosius strove in asceticism at the Monasteries of Palestine, leading a cenobitic, anchorite and hesychastic life.

At this Monastery the monks would receive the necessary

training in order to join the Monastery of the Lavra, leading a strictly hesychastic-solitary life, and earning their living by working with hard physical toil, making handicrafts for the sustaining of the poor and keeping charity foundations. Their slogan was "no lazy man should enter here".

St. Theodosius, along with his co-patriot and fellow ascetic St. Savvas the Sanctified and their monks, played a significant role in the fight against Monophysitism and the prevailing of the decision of the 4th Ecumenical Synod in 451 A.D. regarding the one Hypostasis of our Lord Jesus Christ in two natures, the divine and the human.

This Holy Monastery underwent serious destructions from the various raids and was renovated around 1905 by the Cretan Monks Galaktion and Leontios, around 1950 by the memorable Archbishop Bartholomew of Madaba and in the last forty years it has been preserved and renovated by the Cretan Hegoumen Archimandrite Ierotheos.

The commemoration of St. Theodosius was celebrated at this Monastery with Vespers in the evening, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia and with the Divine Liturgy in the morning, led by His Holy Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra, the Most Reverend Archbishops; Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theophylactos of Jordan, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Arab-speaking Priests, Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons. The chanting was delivered by the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and monks from the Lavra of St. Savvas, while the services were attended by a large congregation, mainly from the neighbouring town of Beit Sahour and other pilgrims.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation:

“With the streams of thy tears, thou didst cultivate the barrenness of the desert; and by thy sighings from the depths, thou didst bear fruit a hundredfold labours; and thou becamest a luminary, shining with miracles upon the world, O Theodosius our righteous Father. Intercede with Christ our God that our souls be saved” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

Our Father Theodosius, who has been shining with miracles, who has cultivated the barrenness of the desert both spiritually and physically, has gathered us all today in his Holy Monastery in order to honour his commemoration.

“Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints” St. John the Evangelist says in his holy revelation (Rev. 15:3).

Precisely this righteous and true way did our Father Theodosius follow and walked on, who was established a Cenobiarch, namely the introducer of the coenobitic manner of asceticism of the Monks, but also a teacher of the desert, namely an educator of the spiritual life in Christ to those who strove in asceticism under his lead, as his hymn writer says; “O righteous Father Theodosius, into all the earth hath the sound of thine achievements gone forth; wherefore thou hast found in the Heavens the reward of thy labours. Thou didst destroy the ranks of the demons; thou didst attain to the orders of the Angels, whose life thou didst emulate without blame. Since thou has boldness with Christ God, pray that peace be granted unto our souls.”

Indeed my dear brothers, St. Theodosius “didst attain to the orders of the Angels, whose life he didst emulate without blame”. This is also confirmed by his Synaxarist who records the many miracles the saint worked during his earthly monastic life.

Our Father Theodosius has set St. John the Baptist as an example to imitate, along with the great ascetics of the desert around the river Jordan, and of those in Palestine in general, Euthymius the great, Savvas the Sanctified and the Great monastic in Antioch, Symeon the stylite "from whom he received the initiation to the virtue that was in him". His biographer, Cyril of Skythopolis calls Theodosius of Cappadocia citizen of heaven, the great glory of Palestine, the boasting of the desert, the foothold of the monastic schema, the general and advocate of the right doctrines and the leader and protector of the coenobitic rule. Before he came to the top of the hill where his Holy Monastery lies, elder Logginos who was a member of the Order of the Studious, namely of the current Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, "received to bury blessed Ikelia, who had built the Church of the Seat of Theotokos". Once blessed Ikelia had slept in the Lord, he worked out the providence of the place. In other words, all the monks of the Seat of Theotokos voted for him [Theodosius] to be the Hegoumen of the Seat of Theotokos.

Our Father Theodosius was distinguished as the great citizen of the desert of Palestine because he hearkened to the words of the psalmist saying; "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Psalm 103:17-18).

The Lord's commandments, which we also are encouraged to keep, my dear brothers, are not heavy and unbearable, as our Lord Jesus Christ says: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). And while a man's life is temporary, the mercy of the Lord is eternal; "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth" (Psalm 103:15). The fear of the Lord is a prerequisite in order to attract His infinite mercy. Moreover, a simple thought or remembrance of the divine commandments is not enough; the

action should follow. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27) St. Paul orders.

Christ, whom we are called to put on, is no other than the new Adam, who has been illumined by the divine and uncreated light of the Father, namely of the Holy Spirit who descended on Him in the river Jordan when He was baptized by St. John the Forerunner. This very Christ, the new Adam, for whom "there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11) did our Father Theodosius put on with the garment of the uncreated light.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Paul preaches, is "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:16). It is impossible for mortal eyes to bear and attain to the brightness of the light of the divine glory. "No man shall see the face of God and live". However in the future life those who have come to perfection will see Him. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8), the Lord says.

Today's honoured Father of ours Theodosius reached to the point of the purification of heart as his hymn writer says: "Though by nature a man, O Father, thou wast seen to be a fellow citizen of the Angels. For while living like a fleshless being upon the earth, O wise Theodosius, thou didst cast away and care for the flesh". Therefore thou became participant and communicant of the vision of the divine glory and of the kingdom of heaven.

Let us pray to our Holy Father Theodosius, to intercede for us to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who became incarnate through the pure and immaculate blood of the Virgin Mary the Theotokos, was born in Bethlehem and baptized in the Jordan. And let us say along with the hymn writer; "Grace hath appeared to all; enlightenment is come forth; deliverance is

present; the world hath been enlightened; ye peoples, be filled with joy". Amen."

At noon, the elder renovator and Hegoumen of the Monastery Archimandrite Ierotheos offered a meal to the Patriarchal entourage and the congregation.

From Secretariat-General

THE COMMEMORATION OF SAINTS IOANNIS AND GEROGE THE HOZEVITES

On Monday, January 8/21, 2019, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of our Righteous Fathers Ioannis and George the Hozevites at the Holy Monastery bearing their names, which lies at the bank of brook Chorath, at the natural cave of a rock, at the brook's estuary before Jericho.

The first of these Saints, Ioannis, is honoured by the Church on this day as the former Bishop of Caesarea, which came and lived in this Monastery in the 5th century, as a complacent Bishop who guided monks.

While Saint George, of Cypriot descent, rebuilt the Monastery after the destruction due to the Persian raid in 614 A.D.

In honour of these Saints as the founders of the Monastery there was an All-night Vigil, at the beginning of which the current Hegoumen and renovator of the Monastery Archimandrite Constantine Peramatzis welcomed H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the following words;

“I praise the two founders of the Monastery of Hozeva, wise George along with Ioannis...”

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

The Lavra of Hozeva celebrates today its founders, Saints Ioannis and George. Their lives had been a continuous sacrifice, having as their basic axis the liturgic life. It was a sacrifice of love and total devotion to the Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. It was also a sacrifice of Godly love towards their fellow men.

We read in the life of St. George: “A certain day our Righteous Father George was sitting on a stone, being heated from the sun (because he was frail due to the excessive abstinence), and being totally afire inside from the desire of the spiritual love, with the aim of accomplishing the divine will. With continuous tears he was entreating the philanthropic God to have mercy on His people”.

We generously experience this very same love towards God and our fellow men in You, Your Holy Beatitude! And we agree with the biographer of our Holy Father George in those things he characteristically mentions about his Holy Geronda: “Believe me Reverend Fathers and Brothers....if I was under temptation or any kind of sorrow and I would meet him, immediately everything vanished from me, as if a sponge had erased them, and from then onward I had much serenity and peace...Then, returning to ourselves, we remember the pious manner of living of the Holy Father, namely the stability in fasting, standing up all night during the night-vigils, the unceasing tears, the patience in the temptations. And to cut a long story short, we remember the stable and patient manner of his virtuous and angelic life, and we are filled with good and useful hopes.”

Likewise, we have the same comfort of souls under Your Patriarchal and Fatherly Prayer and Protection!

Friend of Saints, Father and Master,

Welcome!”

The All-night Vigil with the Compline, Salutations, Matins and the Divine Liturgy were officiated by His Beatitude, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Archdeacon Mark and other Deacons. The choir was formed by the choir leader of the Metropolitan Church of the Annunciation of the Holy Metropolis Iliou Mr. Leonidas Doukas, the choir leader of the Holy Church of St. Paul in Athens Mr. Eustathios Kasteliotis, the choir leader of St. Paraskevi in Athens Mr. Christos Stavrou and the choir leader of the Holy Church of St. Kyriaki in Pyrgos of the Holy Metropolis of Ilias Mr. Nikolaos Papademetriou, with the help of monks and the participation of a congregation of monks, nuns, Priests and pilgrims.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this congregation;

“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. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mat. 11:29-30) the Lord says.

Beloved Brothers in Sisters in Christ,

Noble Pilgrims

We glorify the only-begotten Son of God, Who has no Father from the Mother’s side, and no Mother from the Father’s side; in the recent Christmas feast we saw Him as an infant, while in yesterday’s celebration of Epiphany we saw Him made perfect the One who is manifested perfect, our God. Today we see Him in the dwellings of the Monastery of Hozeva, and the surrounding area of the river Jordan. Today we see Him being glorified in His saints, namely Ioannis, Ioannis the New and George, who were redeemed from the darkness and now dwell in

the light of God's knowledge along with the Heavenly hosts, praising and glorifying Him.

We glorify the Holy Trinitarian God who has called all of us in this sacred Eucharistic gathering in order to festively honour the great ascetics of the desert of the Jordan and brook Chorath, the righteous George who came from Lefkara of Cyprus to these holy places that the preaching of repentance of St. John the Baptist was heard saying: "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose... He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." (Mark 1:7-8).

Having been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, our Father George came in this deserted place following the footsteps of Holy men, such as Prophet Elias, and hearkening to the Lord's words: "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" (Mat. 11:29). "Taken captive by divine love for the holy places of Sion, O all-blessed, thither didst thou depart, and there didst thou abide till thy death, O wisest of men, afflicting thy flesh with labours, towards the heavenly Sion" the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

The Church honours and venerates the commemoration of its saints because the prophets and the saints of the Law foretold us the kingdom of heaven: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 3:2) as St. John the Baptist used to preach in the desert of Judea. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27) St. Paul preaches.

And Christ, who we are called to "put on", is no other than the new Adam, who has been illumined by the divine and unapproachable light of the Father, namely of the Holy Spirit, who descended upon Him in the form of the dove when He was baptized in the river Jordan by St. John.

This very Christ, the new Adam for whom “there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11) is the One St. George put on from the garment of the unweaning and uncreated light. And we say this because Christ is the true light. “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). While St. Paul advises us by saying: “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephes. 4:24). Put on the new man, who is the new creation, which has been created according to the Will of God, so that you live in righteousness towards men and in devotion and holiness towards God, namely with the virtues which are the fruit of the truth of the gospel.

Indeed, my dear brothers and sisters, the yoke of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is good and the burden is light. In other words, the yoke of the obedience in Christ and His teaching is soft and salutary for the one who carries it; but also the burden of the commitments and duties the Lord asks from us is light.

This very thing did our Father George acknowledge, who has become a precise measurement and example for his imitators who also became saints, the Fathers of this modest place of Hozeva, the luminaries, Ioannis and Ioannis the New from Romania.

Let us entreat our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as “at thy divine giving of birth [Theotokos], the Word stripped Adam of the coats of mortality and clothed him with the robe which He alone had woven when He received a body in thy womb”, so that by the intercessions of our Holy Father among the Saints George the Hozevite and the saints of Hozeva with him, we who honour them, may be granted the enlightenment of the divine Epiphany of the river Jordan and the divine communion. Amen.”

The contrite feast was followed by a monastic meal which was

offered to the Patriarchal Entourage and all congregation.

After the aforementioned two Saints of the Monastery, the Monastery always honours the first five ascetics who lived there in the 4th century, Promos, Elias, Aias, Gannaios and Zinon, and the new Saint Ioannis from Romania who has been recently canonized a Saint of the Orthodox Church by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

On Sunday, January 7/20, 2019, the commemoration of the Synaxis of St. John the Forerunner and Baptist was celebrated at his Holy Monastery near the West Bank of the River Jordan at the place of the Lord's baptism.

When we say that we celebrate the Synaxis of St. John the Forerunner, we mean the Synaxis (gathering) of us Christians in the Church, in order to honour, as we should, St. John the Forerunner, as the one who performed the Lord's baptism and prepared the way for the Lord's coming, and also as the one who baptized Him with his own hands.

This Synaxis by the Patriarchate took place at the aforementioned old Monastery of St. John the Baptist, which had been almost totally destroyed during the six-day war of 1967, and which has been preserved and recently renovated by the Patriarchate with the funding of the Hegoumen of Sarantaron Mount Archimandrite Gerasimos.

For this feast the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning by the Spiritual Father of the Holy Monastery of St. Savvas the Sanctified, Archimandrite Eudokimos, with co-celebrants Fr. Onuphrios and other Hieromonks and Deacon Synesios. The Fathers from St. Savvas Monastery chanted and the service was attended by a pious congregation of nuns and pilgrims from Greece and Cyprus.

After the Divine Liturgy the Hegoumen and good carer of the preservation of the Church and the monastery Archimandrite Bartholomew offered a reception at the renovated Hegoumeneion.

From Secretariat-General