

THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM OFFICIATES IN ABUD COMMUNITY

On the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the first day of the Triodion Period, namely the 27th of January/9th of February 2014, a Divine Liturgy was held in the Greek Orthodox (Rum Orthodox) Community of the Patriarchate in the town of Abud, in the vicinity of Ramallah.

This particular Community numbers approximately 1500 members. Its liturgical center is the Church of the Dormition of Theotokos, which to this day preserves pronounced elements of early Byzantine Architecture. Abud was visited for pastoral reasons by His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, who went on to officiate the Divine Liturgy. Co-officiating were His Eminence Dorotheos, Archbishop of Avila; the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina; the master of ceremonies, Archimandrite Porphyrios; the Head of the Community, Steward Emmanouel; Archdeacon f. Evlogios, and Hierodeacon Dionysios. The Orthodox parishioners participated in the Liturgy with piety and devoutness.

To this pious congregation, His Beatitude preached the Word of God, referring among other things to the significance of fasting and praying, *“the spiritual means of preparation towards controlling and overcoming the will of the flesh, therefore towards achieving purification of the soul and the body, and cleansing of the mind”*.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, during the brief reception which was followed by lunch, His Beatitude had the opportunity to listen to topics of concern to the Community from the Priest and Vestrymen, and provide answers towards their settlement and resolution.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/5-bVrApI6q8>



THE FEAST OF ST EFTHYMIOS THE GREAT

On Sunday, the 20th of January/2nd of February 2014, the memory of our Father, Efthymios the Great, was celebrated by the Patriarchate.

1. I. In Jerusalem

In the Monastery dedicated to the name of Hosios Efthymios, in the Christian quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, the services of Vespers and Matins were led by the Elder Secretary-General, His Eminence Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina. Co-officiating were the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Archimandrite f. Dositheos; the vicar of the Church of St James the Brother of God, f. Issa-Christos Tumas, and Archdeacon f. Evlogios. Cantor Evangelos Tsarkatzoglou, of Greece, chanted in the presence of several faithful, monks, nuns, members of the Greek Parish of Jerusalem and the Arab-Speaking (Rum Orthodox) congregation.

His Eminence Aristarchos of Constantina preached the Word of God on the life and deeds of Hosios Efthymios.

At the end of the divine Liturgy, Abbess Christonymphe hosted a reception for the Prelatic Retinue and all those present.

1. II. In the desert ruins of St Efthymios'

Lavra

On the eve of the memory of St Efthymios, namely the 19th of January/1st of February 2014, an open-air divine Liturgy was held on the ruins of the renowned Lavra (Monastery) of Hosios Efthymios, by Archimandrite Aristovoulos, the head cantor of the Church of the Resurrection. Approximately 30 faithful attended the service, nuns and others, following a permit by the Israeli Archaeological Service.

This particular Lavra is the last of those founded in the desert of Judea by St Efthymios. Between the years 430-473 AD, it became a Christian and missionary center, a great beacon of Orthodoxy, through the spiritual guidance of Hosios Efthymios, who was granted by God the gift of insight and healing, and led thousands of monks and Christians from the dogma of monophysitism of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, to the existence in Christ of two natures, one divine and one human. Among those returning to Orthodoxy upon the mediation of St Efthymios, was Empress Eudocia, wife to Emperor Theodosius the Small.

From the Secretariat-General

http://youtu.be/YE_G8UFaIEs



THE FEAST OF ST ANTONY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, the 17th/30th of January 2014, the feast of St Antony the Great was celebrated in the chapel dedicated to

him, which lies within the Church and Monastery of St Nikolas, adjacent to the Patriarchate.

The master of ceremonies, Archimandrite f. Porfyrios, and the Assistant Dragoman, Archimandrite f. Athanasios, led the Vespers and the Divine Liturgy, whilst the head cantor of the Church of the Resurrection and Hegoumen of the said Monastery, Archimandrite f. Aristovoulos, chanted in the presence of pious monks, nuns, members of the Greek Parish and pilgrims.

From the Secretariat General

<httpv://youtu.be/AR-IcdgT-qA>

THE FEAST OF THE VENERATION OF THE CHAINS OF THE APOSTLE PETER

On Wednesday, the 16th/29th of January 2014, the feast of the veneration of the chains of the Apostle Peter was celebrated in the chapel dedicated to him within the Holy Monastery of St Nicodemus (of Lentils) in the Praetorium area, in the Old City of Jerusalem.

In this chapel in the area of the Praetorium, that used to be the residence of the Roman Governor, the Apostle Peter was incarcerated by king Herod. Herod intended to offer him for execution to the Jews, in order to please them, as was the case with the Apostle James, the son of Zebedee and brother of the Evangelist John (Acts 12, 1-3).

While Herod was conspiring to the above, God sent an angel to release the Apostle Peter from his chains and lead him from the prison to the gate outside the city, where he was to become unseen (Acts 12, 10-11).

With this feast the Church honours the incarceration and liberation of the Apostle Peter and asks for his mediation by veneration of his chains, which was transferred from Jerusalem to Constantinople (See the Great Horologion on the 16th of January).

His Eminence Archbishop Dorotheos of Avila led the feast and the Divine Liturgy, with the Hegoumen of the Monastery of the Shepherds, Archimandrite Ignatios, co-officiating. Praying with them were monks, nuns and pilgrims.

During the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude Theophilos arrived with His retinue to venerate at the underground chapel of the Apostle Peter, shaped after a prison, and also in the Church of the Lord's secret disciple, St Nicodemus. The church is now being preserved and renovated with the subvention of the Greek Association of the Holy Sepulcher.

Hieromonk f. Makarios went on to host a reception for the Patriarchal and Prelatic retinue and the congregation.

From the Secretariat-General



THE FEAST OF ST THEODOSIOS

THE CENOBIARCH

On Friday the 11th/24th of January 2014, the feast of Hosios Theodosios the Cenobiarch was observed at the Monastery he had founded in the desert of Judea, to the south of the city of Bethlehem and the Village of the Shepherds – Beit Sahur.

As is well known, this historical Monastery was founded by St Theodosios on the site and the cavern where the Church accepts that the three wise men spent the night before leaving for their own country by another way (Matthew 2, 12), after he arrived at the Holy Land and dwelled for a short time at the Monastery of Theotokos near Jerusalem, founded by the pious pilgrim Ikelia.

The Monastery was founded by St Theodosios in response to a request by monks in the desert to follow his spiritual guidance. The Monastery used to be a Coenobium, that is, it received novice monks who would go on for years communicating with and obeying the Hegoumen, living among each other and sharing prayers, food and work. Work was a condition of admittance to the Coenobium of St Theodosios, the Monastery's motto being "no one slothful shall enter". With their manual work, the monks used to help the poor and maintain charitable institutions, i.e. a nursing home and a poorhouse. The Monastery also maintained a School for educating the monks.

Upon the completion of their diaconate at the Monastery, the monks would proceed to a Lavra, i.e. the Lavra of St Sava and St Efthymios, for more intensive monastic practice in prayer and isolation.

At this Monastery, St Theodosios had gathered 700 monks of different nationality, Greeks, Iberians, Armenians etc, praying together in their own dialect during Matins and in Greek during the Divine Liturgy.

St Theodosios, working together with his contemporary and fellow countryman, Hosios Sava the Consecrated, contributed greatly to the fight against the heresy of monophysitism and the prevalence of the Christological dogma of the fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon in 451 AD, namely the existence in Christ Our Lord of a single hypostasis and two natures, the divine and the human, the human willingly obeying the divine.

In later years, namely the 7th c. AD, St Modestos, who was to become Patriarch of Jerusalem, St Sophronios, also Patriarch of Jerusalem, as well as Hosios John Moschos, author of the 'Leimonarion' [Spiritual Meadow], led an ascetic life in this Holy Monastery.

At the Cavern of the Magi, which had through the centuries served as a Cemetery, lies the tomb of St Theodosios, of his mother Evlogia, of St Savva's mother, Sophia, of the mother of the Holy Anargyroi, Cosmas and Damianos, namely St Theodotis, and of Hosia Maria, wife of St Xenophon and mother of St John Arkadios and St John Moschos.

Leading a rich spiritual life and having survived the ferocities of human history, the Monastery was renovated in the 20th c. by monks Leontios and Galaktion of Crete, and by Hagiotaphite Archimandrite Bartholomew of Chios, all buried in the Monastery, and by Archimandrite Ierotheos, the Hegoumen for the past thirty years.

On the morning of the aforementioned day, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, led the Divine Liturgy at the Monastery. Co-officiating were His Eminence Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias; their Eminences Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Theophylaktos of Jordan and Theodosios of Sevasteia, as well as Hieromonks, including the Hegoumen of the Monastery of the Shepherds in Beit Sahur, Archimandrite Ignatios, and of the Monastery of Hosios Sava,

f. Evdokimos. Praying with them were Arab-speaking Presbyters and Hierodeacons, amid Greek chanting by monk Iacovos of Mount Athos and Hagiosabbaite monk Efrosynos. Members of the choir of the Village of the Shepherds chanted in Arabic. A crowd of people, nuns and pilgrims attended the service, mostly from the nearby town of the Village of the Shepherds.

His Beatitude preached the Word of God to the pious congregation in Greek. In Arabic, the speech may be read here: <http://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2014/01/24/3350>

The Divine Liturgy and the Apolysis were followed by a procession around the Church and in the cavern of the Holy Monastery where lies the tomb of the Hosios, as well as in the forecourt of the Monastery, where a memorial service was held for its proprietors on the tomb of the late Archbishop Bartholomew of Madava.

A reception at the Hegoumen's Quarter was followed by lunch, hosted by the Elder Hegoumen, Archimandrite Ierotheos.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/yejv0NqR8rE>



THE FEAST OF THE HOLY MONASTERY OF HOZEVA

On Tuesday the 8th/21st of January 2014, the feast of the Holy Monastery of Hozeva was celebrated.

The Monastery is one of the most ancient in Palestine; it lies

on the slope of the torrent of Horrath which, passing through Jericho, flows into the Dead Sea.

On the footsteps of the first ascetics, Promon, Aias, Zenon and Yannaios, the Monastery had distinguished Hegoumens, i.e. St John the Bishop of Caesarea, Palestine who came here after abandoning his Episcopal duties in the fifth c., as well as St George the Cypriot, who in fact renovated the Monastery in the wake of the destructive Persian invasion in 614 AD.

It is to the name of these two saints, considered to be the Monastery's proprietors, that the Monastery is dedicated, having survived several damages through a turbulent history. Remembered fondly as Hegoumens of the Monastery are – the late Archimandrite Amphilochios, its dedicated servant for more than thirty years; the late Archimandrite Antonios of Thessaloniki, killed when a wall of the Narthex collapsed during repairs; the late Archimandrite Germanos of Thessaloniki, murdered on his way to the Monastery by an unholy hand; the Hegoumen of Abba Gerasimus of the Jordan, Archimandrite f. Chrystostomos, who took over as Hegoumen for a transitional period of time after a rock had landed on the Monastery. Today, Archimandrite Constantinos is the Hegoumen, having joined the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood from the Church of Greece.

In this historical Monastery, which is greatly loved and very often visited by pilgrims, either Orthodox or not, both Christians and non Christians, His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, was received warmly by the Hegoumen, Archimandrite Constantinos.

In his welcome speech, Archimandrite Constantinos referred to Sts Johns and George as “having given breath to the barren desert, given life to the area of the torrent of Horrath. The purpose and objective of their arrival to this consecrated site was their pure intention to cleanse themselves from passions.”

“Therefore”, the Hegoumen went on to say, “they became models to be emulated from that time to the present day; models of safe and successful sailing across the sea of life. Because only if man offers God his exclusive love, when he does everything there is to cleanse his heart, when he fervently wishes to communicate with God, only then shall he be given the evangelic: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5, 8).

At the conclusion of the Hegoumen’s speech, His Beatitude Theophilos led the commemoration of Sts John and George the Hozevites during a nocturnal vigil. Co-officiating were the Patriarchal Commissioner, His Eminence Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias; the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina; and the Hegoumen, Archimandrite Constantinos. A crowd of pious Christians, monks and nuns, locals and pilgrims participated in the celebration.

To this pious congregation His Beatitude preached the Word of God in Greek, referring to the Epiphany of Christ in the Jordan river, through which He “vanquished the domain, the power of sin, investing within Himself our human nature with the new garment of imperishableness”.

“It is precisely this garment of the divine and sanctifying and unapproachable light”, His Beatitude added, “that Hosios Father George, hailing from Cyprus, had put on. Of the same garment of the divine light of the Holy Spirit we are called to become communicants and sharers”.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the Patriarchal Retinue as well as the entire congregation were hosted to lunch at the monastery, after which His Beatitude left for Jerusalem.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/MPYI2p4CJDk>



THE FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Monday, the 7th/20th of January 2014, the day after the feast of Theophany, marked the celebration of the feast of the Synaxis of John the Baptist at the Monastery dedicated to him, which lies in the vicinity of the Church of the Resurrection in the Old City of Jerusalem.

The term “Synaxis” denotes the gathering of the faithful with the purpose of honouring a saint for his diaconate in a specific event. It is in this spirit that Christians gather to honour John the Baptist, especially for his diaconate in the sacrament of Christ’s Baptism in the Jordan river, by means of his honest hand touching upon the Lord’s pure head.

Archimandrite Nikodemos, Hegoumen of the Monastery of John the Baptist in the Old City of Jerusalem, led the Vespers on the eve, and the divine Liturgy on the day of the feast, before hosting the congregation to a reception at the conclusion of both services.

From the Secretariat-General



THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday the 6th/19th of January 2014, the feast of Theophany was celebrated by the Patriarchate according to its typical order and the status of veneration at the All Holy Church of the Resurrection.

Upon His descent from the Patriarchate on the morning of the feast, to the Church of the Resurrection, and after venerating at the Holy Apokathelosis and the Holy Sepulcher, our Father, Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem, was dressed in Prelatic attire in the Holy Bema of the Katholikon, and went on to perform the Grand Blessing at the center of the church – the blessed water intended for drinking after abstaining from meat on the eve of Theophany, and also for strengthening and enhancing the pious congregation of Orthodox Christians.

Immediately after the holy water rite, the Divine Liturgy was held in the Holy Sepulcher of the Lord, led by His Beatitude. Co-officiating were the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias, their Eminences the Archbishops: Dorotheos of Avila, Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor, Theodosios of Sevastia and Demetrios of Lydda, in the presence of Hieromonks and deacons and a great crowd surrounding the Holy Aedicula, piously observing the choir chanting under the direction of the Head Cantor of the Church of the Resurrection, Archimandrite Aristovoulos.

The antidoron was distributed in front of the Holy Aedicula, followed by the blessing of the faithful by means of the blessed water. At the conclusion of the blessing, the Patriarchal retinue and a crowd of pilgrims left for the Patriarchates amid ringing bells.

There, the brotherly embrace took place, as well as the

kissing of the Patriarch's hand, who wished everyone that they be enlightened by the Holy Spirit, descending in the form of a pigeon upon the baptized Lord.

The service was broadcast live from the Holy Sepulcher on the online radio station of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem:

www.radio.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/en

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/vYwfQDpljm8>



THEOPHANY EVE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

I. In Jerusalem

On Saturday, the 5th/18th of January 2014, namely the eve of Theophany, His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, led the Matins, the divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom and the procession of the Lesser Blessing of the Waters at the monastic Church of Sts Constantine and Helen. Praying with Him were Hagiotaphite Prelates and Hieromonks, with participating novices at the Patriarchal School of the Holy Sion, pilgrims and locals, all receiving the grace of the blessed water.

At the conclusion of the holy water rite, the Patriarch, putting on a mantle, followed chanting priests to the Hall of the Throne. After Him came the vicar of the Church of St James the Brother of God, with His Eminence Theodosios, Archbishop

of Sevastia, who had led the procession at the Church.

II In the Jordan River

Subsequently, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, accompanied by the Patriarchal Commissioner, the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias, and the Elder Secretary-General, His Eminence Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina, and Archdeacon f. Evlogios, left for the holy water rite in the Jordan river, Jericho, where our Lord Jesus Christ was baptized.

His Beatitude made a stop at the Hegoumen's Quarters in the Monastery of the Prophet Elisha, where he was hosted to a reception by the Hegoumen, Archimandrite Philoumenos, before arriving at Jericho Municipality, where He was addressed by the Mayor with wishes for the resolution of the political problem and for the celebration of Theophany. His Beatitude made His reply speech in Arabic.

He then proceeded eastward, to the terminal at the border. Through the iron gate, His Beatitude arrived at the Holy Monastery of St John the Baptist, on the West Bank of the River Jordan. The monastery, damaged because of the 1967 war and a series of earthquakes, is now in the process of conservation.

There, His Beatitude was warmly received by the Israeli Military Administration of Jericho, the Boy Scouts of Jericho, priests in festive attire and a great crowd.

Putting on a mantle, His Beatitude entered the Church of John the Baptist, where the 9th Hour of the Epiphany was read out.

This was followed by a procession on foot to the West Bank of the River Jordan, in the presence of the Greek Consul-General to Jerusalem, Mr Georgios Zacharoudiakis, and Mr Alexandar Vulin, the Serbian Minister without portfolio.

There, on a platform, the Lesser Blessing of the Epiphany was performed by His Beatitude. Co-officiating were priests and a great crowd of pious faithful, the latter participating with occasional cheering.

After having performed the Holy Water Rite, His Beatitude proceeded to the bank of the River Jordan, where he immersed the cross thrice in the water, chanting: "When you were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord...", blessing as many of the attendants as possible.

After the holy water rite, His Beatitude proceeded to the Holy Monastery of Abba Gerasimus of the Jordan, where He and His retinue, as well as a great crowd, were hosted to meatless lunch by the Hegoumen, Archimandrite Chrysostomos.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/Y3QXWE3s1TM>



THE PROCESSION OF THE GREAT HOURS OF THEOPHANY

According to the typical order of the Church, which provides that when the feast of Theophany falls on a Sunday, the Great Hours are read out on Friday, the Great Hours of Theophany were read out on Friday the 4th/17th of January 2014, at the monastic church of Sts Constantine and Helen of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

The procession of the Hours, which followed Matins, was led by

His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, who read out the Gospel of the First Hour, with co-praying Prelates reading out the Gospel of the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hour.

The procession was attended in piety by monks, nuns, and pilgrims in anticipation of the Lesser Blessing of the Waters on Saturday, and the Great Blessing of Theophany on Sunday.

From the Secretariat-General

