04/06/2024

The feast of Saints Constantine and Helen at the Patriarchate



On Monday, May 21 / June 3, 2024, the feast of Saints Constantine and Helen was celebrated in the Patriarchate.

On this holiday, the Church commemorates the work of the great glorious king and equal to the apostles Saint Constantine, the recognition of Christianity as a free religion within the Roman state by the decree of the Milanese, in AD 312 and of Saint Helen, who visited the Holy Land in the year AD 326 and erected the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem and other shrines.

Through the work of these two saints, the new era of Rum Orthodox tradition in the Holy Land was inaugurated.

In honour of these two holy sovereigns and equal-to-the-apostles, Constantine and Helen, founders and protectors of the Rum Orthodox era in the Holy Land, which is held today in the presence of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Great Vespers was held on Sunday afternoon and the Divine Liturgy on Monday morning at the Central

Monastery presided over by His Beatitude Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos. Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were the Typicon Keeper Archimandrite Alexios and the Archimandrites Nicodemus, Stephen, Amphilochios, Makarios, Epiphanios and Dionysios.

On Monday morning the Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Beatitude with the co-celebration of the Typicon Keeper Archimandrite Alexios and the Archimandrites Nicodemus, Stephen, Amphilochios, the Patriarchal representative in Acre Archimandrite Silouanos and Priest Farah. The chanting was delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba and Hierodeacon Simeon with the help of the Patriarchal School of Zion students. The service was attended by the Consul Mrs Anna Mandika, local faithful and pilgrims.

After the Liturgy, the congregation went up to the Patriarchate Hall, as the Fathers were still dressed in full priestly liturgical vestments.

At the central Gate of the Patriarchate, the responsible for the Bakery, abbess of the Holy Monastery of Panagia Sayda-Naya, nun Seraphima, distributed small loaves of bread to all, as a traditional blessing.

In the Patriarchate, His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“Not from man did great Constantine with his blest mother Helen receive the royal sovereignty but by God’s grace from Heaven. For he beheld the divine Cross as a bright flashing trophy. With it was he victorious over all who opposed him, and he destroyed the deceit and error of all the idols while making strong throughout the world Orthodox faith and practice” (Matins, exaposteilarion).

Your Excellency, Consul General of Greece Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brothers,

Dear Christians and Pilgrims,

Today the Holy Church of God and the city of Jerusalem are glad and rejoice on the solemn memory of the glorious saints, God-crowned and equal to the apostles, the great sovereigns Constantine and Helen.

These Saints became great sovereigns and leaders not only for Christ’s Church but also for the whole of humanity, since Constantine the Great issued, the Decree of Milanese in AD 313, through which all the persecutions against the Church ceased, Christianity triumphed and the darkness of demonic idolatry was dispelled. In 325 he convened the First Ecumenical Council in Nice, which he presided over in

person. In 328 he laid the foundations of the so-called Constantinople, to which the imperial throne was transferred from Rome, also named New Rome.

This invaluable contribution was greatly magnified by the reverence of Saints Constantine and Helen for the Holy Land and for the building of the redeeming testimony, the Holy Sepulchre of Christ in 326. “This is my first and only purpose… that this holy place, which by God’s commandment, I released from the addition of the burden of idols, and was made even holier, as it was holy by the beginning of God, and testifies for the faith of the redeeming passion, it was thus brought to light as a great structure to be magnificently adorned”, King Constantine writes to Makarios Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem.

Being grateful to these glorious founders of the “Order of the Spoudaioi (Studious)”, that is, our Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood on the one hand and to the originators of the Christ-like spiritual greatness of Romiosyni on the other, we celebrated a Patriarchal Divine Liturgy in the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen and prayed to the Holy Triune God for peace in our region tested by the fire of war.

Along with the hymnographer, let us say: “Rejoice, O great all-wise Constantine, thou fount of Orthodox Faith, that dost water continually all the lands beneath the sun with thy sweet and delightful streams. Rejoice, O root from which there sprouted forth the fruit that nourisheth Christ’s most holy Church. Rejoice, thou most glorious boast and fame of all the farthest ends of the earth, fist of Christian kings. Rejoice, thou joy of faithful men” (Matins, Praises, Troparion 1).

Amen. Christ is Risen. Many and peaceful returns.”

A monastic meal followed.

From the General Secretariat


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