26/06/2024

The feast of Saint Onuphrius at the Patriarchate



On Tuesday, June 12th/25th 2024, the commemoration of our Holy Father Onuphrius of Egypt was celebrated by the Patriarchate in the Holy Monastery named after him in the site south of Siloam's pool and in the place of Alcedama, i.e. the field of "the price of blood" which the Jews bought to bury the foreigners with the money that Judas returned repentantly.

On this day, the Church remembers that the holy Onuphrius lived initially in the Coenobitic monastery of Hermoupolis and then went to the desert and lived there for sixty years with extreme fasting and prayer, even without clothing. The monk Paphnutius found him in this condition, who also revealed him to the Church and buried him there covering him with his garment. On his memory and in this place, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with concelebrants their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth and Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Hegoumen of the Oblou Monastery Archimandrite Nektarios, Archimandrites Claudios, Ieronymos, Silouanos and Christodoulos, Archdeacon Markos, and Hierodeacon Dositheos. Hierodeacon

Simeon and Mr Eustathios Tsoumanis delivered the chanting as the service was attended by faithful Orthodox Christians.

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

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness”, Saint Paul preaches (Eph. 4,22-24).

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

The Grace of the Holy Spirit brought us all to this hagiographic place of Alkedamas, i.e. the village of blood (Acts 1:19), the eponymous Holy Monastery of Saint Onuphrius of Egypt, so that we may thankfully celebrate his sacred commemoration.

Our Father Onuphrius is distinguished among the righteous and faithful personalities of our Holy Church, because he was, in his ascetic and solitary ascetic life, a perfect imitator of the great prophets Elijah of Thesbes and John the Forerunner. “At the age of sixty, Saint Onuphrius lived in the desert, a man who did not understand the whole” his synaxarist reports. His hymnographer also says: “Thou becamest an earthly Angel, deified by thy Godward striving, O all-blessed Onuphrius; for thou didst emulate the life of John and of Elijah” (Matins, Ode 6, Troparion 2). And elsewhere, “As Angels in the flesh who dwelt with the hosts incorporeal, ye lit the desert like stars flashing n the night with your ascetic pains and toils. Now, O God-bearing Fathers, importune God’s great mercy for us who sing your praise, Onuphrius and cry out: Alleluia” (Kontakion).

And the psalmist chants wondering: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob” (Ps. 24,3-6).

Those who seek the face of Jacob’s God, that is, God the Father, are according to the wise Solomon the righteous, whose reward is in eternal life and in the Lord and their care of the Most High; “for this, they receive the kingdom of decency and the diadem of goodness from the hand of the Lord”. (Wisdom of Solom 5,16).

Our Holy Father Onuphrius, who is honoured today, was shown to be righteous, who, on the one hand, received his care in the desert, being alone in it for sixty years, apart from the Most High God; on the other hand, he obtained the diadem of beauty that is, the crown of justice from the hand of the Lord. In this case, let us also listen to Saint Paul saying: ” I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”, (2 Tim. 4, 7-8).

According to Saint Chrysostom, “there is not one surface, but two. One is the present and existing, the other is the future and in the end gloriously existing”. The second and subsequent appearance of the righteous judge, that is, of Christ, was loved by all the friends and believers of him, of Christ, especially the blessed Onuphrius. And this is because Jesus Christ commanded: ” If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14, 23).

Interpreting this word of Jesus Christ, St. Cyril of Alexandria says; those, whose mind shines with every virtue and who is suitable for learning the divine and hidden mysteries, will receive the fatherhood, the illumination of the Holy Spirit and will see with the eyes of their intellect the Lord, Who has dwelt in them. Therefore, the knowledge of the saints is not common to all, but it is excellent, special and very different.

Our God-bearing Father Onuphrius, who loved God with all his mind and with all his heart, received precisely this guidance, illumination, but also the knowledge of the Holy Spirit in his mind and pure heart.

To this, our wonderful Father Onuphrius exhorts us and calls us, to the love of the Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ through the intercessions of our Most Blessed Virgin Mary the Theotokos and the Holy Apostles.

And after the hymnographer we say: “O righteous Father Onuphrius, since in all godliness thou didst possess a most sacred soul, thou didst bear temptations well, being strengthened with faith divine; and once united to God by means of love, thou in the land of the meek didst pitch thy tent, since thou wast made most fair with the splendour of the virtues; hence, we all joyously keep festival on thy memorial” (Matins, Praises, Troparion 2). Amen. Many and peaceful returns!”

Subsequently, a Trisayon took place for the repose of the soul of the departed nun of the Monastery Serafima Euthymiadou. Then at the Tomb of the Monastery’s

Founder Hieromonk Kyrillos, the blessing of the beginning of the fruits was read.

Finally, the hard-working and caring Nun Paisia, the abbess of the monastery, offered a rich festive treat and recreation necessary for the heat of that day.



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