12/09/2024

The the venerable commemoration of the beheading of Saint John the Baptist



On Wednesday, August 29 / September 11, 2024, the venerable commemoration of the beheading of Saint John the Forerunner and Baptist was celebrated by the Patriarchate, in his Holy and historic Monastery, located a stone's throw away from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

According to this special memory, the Church remembers that John is the "prophet of a prophet and the baptist", the one called the "voice of the one crying out in the wilderness", who baptized thousands of Jewish believers and baptized our Lord Jesus Christ and saw the Holy Spirit descending in the form of a dove on Him". He led an ascetic life, having "a leather belt around his loins", like Elijah the Prophet. He exposed Herod Agrippa, son of Herod the Great, because he cohabited illegally with Herodias the wife of his brother Philip. Having celebrated Herod's birthday, Salome, daughter of Herodias, came and pleased him so much, who promised to

give her “up to half of his kingdom”.

The daughter consulted her mother and asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod was sad because he respected John and feared the crowd, however, he kept his oath and sent a speculator to the prison and cut off the head of John the Baptist and brought it as a gift on a platter to the girl and she gave it to her mother, who completed thus this impious action.

In commemoration of the beheading of the Holy Head of John the Forerunner, Vespers in the evening and Divine Liturgy in the morning were held in the above-mentioned Holy Monastery, presided over by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hesychios of Capitolias, with con-celebrants the Archimandrites, Meletius, Silouanos, Claudius, Christodoulos and Philoumenos, Priests Ioannis, Farah and Nectarios, the representative of the Romanian Patriarchate, Archimandrite Ioannis, and Hierodeacons Patrikios and Dositheos. The chanting was delivered by Mr Eustathios Toumanis with the help of the Patriarchal School Students. The service was attended by many monastics and faithful Christians.

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

The Patriarchal and Episcopal entourages as well as the congregation were offered a fasting reception by the renovator of the Holy Church of the Holy Monastery, Archimandrite Vartholomeos.

The Divine Liturgy was also celebrated in the place of the prison and the grave of the Holy Forerunner in the ruins of ancient Samaria, near the Nablus, led by the Hegoumen and renovator of the Shrine of Jacob’s well, Archimandrite Ioustinos, with con-celebrants the Hegoumen of Rafidia Archimandrite Leontios and other local Priests, with the assistance of the Supervisor of the Shrine of the ten Lepers in Burkin, Monk Vissarion.

May the grace of the Holy Forerunner and Baptist John, the righteous, be with all of us!

From the General Secretariat

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