31/01/2025

The Funeral Service for the Hegumen of St. Theodosios Monastery blessed Arcimandrite Ierotheos



On Wednesday, 16th/29th January 2025, the Funeral Service for the blessed Hegumen and Archimandrite of the Community Ierotheos of the Holy Monastery of Abba Theodosius, was held.

For the funeral service and his burial, His Eminence, the Patriarchal Commissioner Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolias, with the Fathers of the Holy Sepulchre, went to the aforementioned Holy Monastery and officiated. Also co-celebrating were the Spiritual Father of the Monastery of Saint Sabbas, Archimandrite Eudokimos, and the Priests from the neighbouring areas of Bethlehem. The service was attended by nuns, monks, pilgrims from Jerusalem, and a large crowd from the Bethlehem congregation.

The obituary was delivered by His Eminence as follows:

“Your Eminences, Holy Bishops,

Reverend Fathers and brethren,

Devout pilgrims of the Holy Land,

A sacred and holy duty calls us today to the renowned and historic Holy Monastery of our Holy Father Theodosios the Coenobiarch, that we may bid farewell to our beloved brother, Archimandrite Ierotheos, the Hegumen and renovator of this ancient and sacred Monastery.

Seeing once again “the most dreadful mystery of death” before us, we are left in awe with the words of the holy John of Damascus: “Which of the luxuries of life remains untouched by sorrow? Which glory has stood firm upon the earth, unchanging? All things are weaker than shadows, all things are more deceitful than dreams; one fate follows after all these things, and that fate is death”. This terrifying and grim reality, which has entered into our human race due to the ancestral fall, is a corruption and an unnatural end. However, our All-Good God has restored us, “that evil might not become immortal,” for “He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Romans 8:32), and “He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8), “that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14), and “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:15).

In this confession and the holy faith of our Church, our brother, Archimandrite Ierotheos, with passport name Ioannis Sifakis, was born in the year 1929 in the village of Machaira in Heraklion, Crete, and received his secular education there. In 1953, he was drafted into the army in Greece. He participated in a military campaign, eventually going to Korea, where hardships, suffering, and the lessons of war would guide him for the rest of his life. During his time in Korea, he made a vow to God that if he were to be saved from the war, he would travel to the Holy Land to venerate the Holy Places. After a few months of returning from Korea, he fulfilled his vow with one of his friends.

In September 1954, during his visit to Jerusalem, he met with the blessed Patriarch Timothy, who, upon seeing the then-young Ioannis, earnestly urged him to remain in the Holy Land and serve the Church. When the young Ioannis replied that he was illiterate and therefore unable to serve, the Patriarch responded, “Even the

Apostles were illiterate!" Thus, our beloved brother, having been caught by this call, left the army of the earthly King and enlisted in the heavenly army of our Lord, the venerable and sacred Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, demonstrating zeal and selflessness in his service, never again returning to Greece!

Upon his decision to stay here, he was appointed as a carer of the students at the Patriarchal School, and in 1956, he took on the supervision of the Holy Monastery of Mount Tabor. There, on 5th May 1957, he was tonsured as a monk and ordained as a deacon and priest in the same year by the Metropolitan of Nazareth, Isidore. Since then, he served in various ministries of our Holy Community, as the steward of the property of Saint Sabas' Tower, as the Hegumen of the Holy Monastery of Abba Gerasimos, as the Hegumen in Jericho, as the Hegumen of the Monastery of the Forerunner by the Jordan River, as the Hegumen of the Holy Monastery of the Holy Cross, and as the Hegumen of the Holy Monastery of Saint George Al Khader.

On 25th August 1976, he was appointed as the lifelong Hegumen of the Holy Monastery of Abba Theodosios the Coenobiarch. Throughout his nearly fifty years of service here, he worked with divine zeal for the restoration and beautification of the Monastery, adorning the sacred church with Byzantine frescoes and enhancing its floor with beautiful marble. He rebuilt the second floor of the southwestern wing of the Monastery, creating a guesthouse for the hospitality of the devout pilgrims, whom the elder Ierotheos cherished and always dedicated time to for spiritual building and strengthening.

Likewise, without fear in the face of dangers, he fervently defended the properties of the Patriarchate surrounding the Monastery from those who sought to harm them, often at the risk of his own life.
The humanly arising question: "How did he endure these difficulties?" can be answered through the words of the Apostle Paul, who says, "What shall we then say to these things? … who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:31, 35-37). These words can interpret the earthly life of Archimandrite Ierotheos and his unwavering faith in fulfilling his monastic calling and the sacred mission of our Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood, for which, without sparing any effort, he dedicated himself for 71 years.
On behalf of His Holy Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, who has travelled today to Albania to attend the funeral service of the late Archbishop Anastasios, I ask that we fervently pray from the depths of our hearts to

the immortal King of us all, Christ, who holds the power over both the living and the dead, for the repose of the soul of our blessed brother, Archimandrite Ierotheos, in the land of the living with the righteous and the holy, that on the Day of Judgment, “he may shine as the sun with the angels into eternal life with our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing Him and being seen by Him, and enjoying unending joy from Him” (John of Damascus).

May your memory be eternal, most blessed and ever-memorable brother of ours!”

His burial took place in the cemetery of the Holy Monastery.

From the General Secretariat



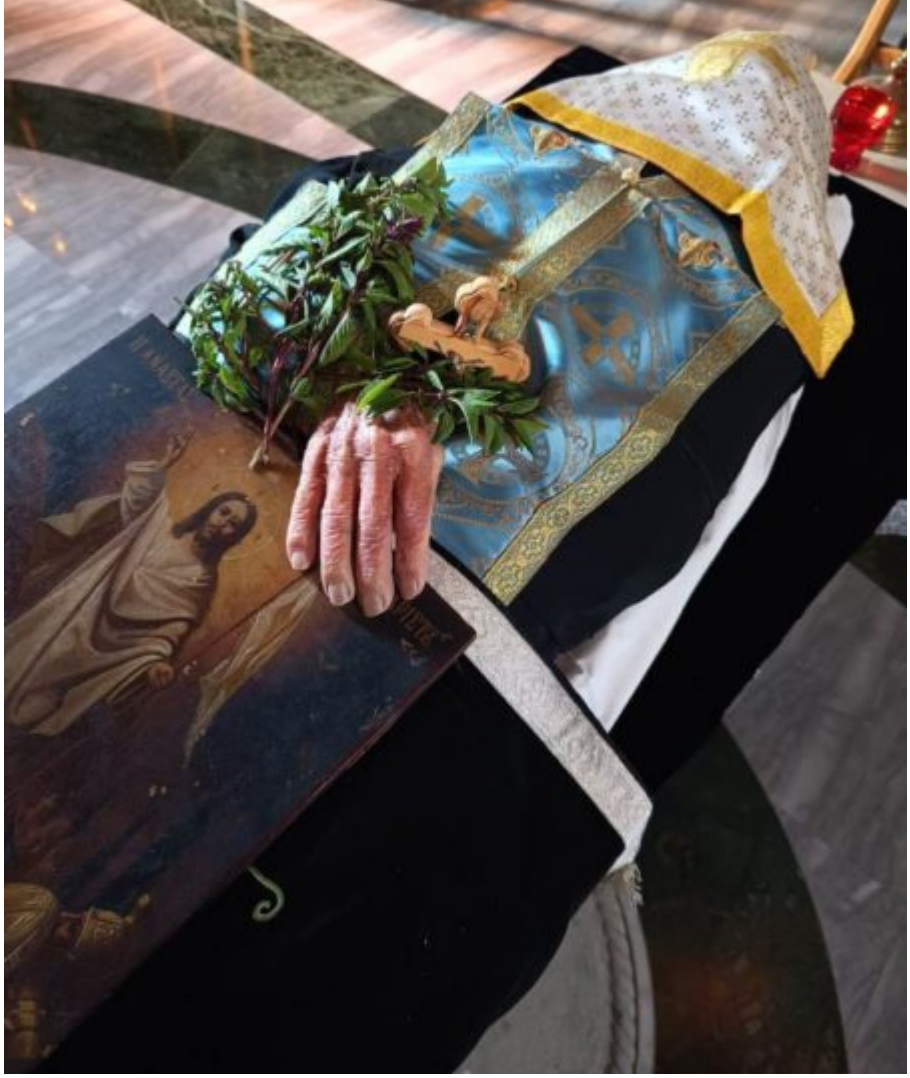
















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