

## The Patriarch of Jerusalem celebrates the Divine Liturgy at the Russian Monastery of Hebron



On Wednesday, the 9th/22nd of October 2025, His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos, presided over the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Monastery of the Holy Trinity of the Hospitality of Abraham by the Oak of Mamre, near the tombs of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

This Liturgy was celebrated on the occasion of the completion of one hundred years since the foundation of the Monastery in the year 1925, when it was consecrated by the blessed Patriarch of Jerusalem, Damianos.

Concelebrating with His Beatitude were His Eminence Alexios, Hierarch of the Patriarchate of Moscow and Metropolitan of Volokolamsk; His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias; His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina; His Eminence Metropolitan Makarios of Acre-Ptolemais; Archimandrite

Vassianos, Head of the Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem; Archimandrite Christodoulos, Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod; and many priests of the Patriarchate of Cyprus and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, among whom first was the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nektarios, together with Arabic-speaking priests and the Hierodeacons Eulogios and Prodromos, and a great multitude of pious faithful.

Among those honouring the celebration with their presence were also the Ambassador of Russia to Israel, Mr Anatoly Viktorov, and others.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to all present:

“And the Lord appeared unto him (unto Abraham) in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;  
And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground” (Gen. 18:1-2).

Reverend Archimandrite Vassianos,  
Representative in Jerusalem of His Beatitude Cyril, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia,

Your Eminence Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk,

Beloved brethren in Christ,  
Pious Christians,

The grace of the Holy Triune God hath gathered us all together in this holy place, near the oak of Mamre, where the Lord God appeared unto the Patriarch Abraham, that in divine eucharistic communion we may celebrate the centenary of this sacred Church, dedicated to the “Holy Forefathers.” This holy temple was erected on the ruins of the ancient Constantinian church by the late Archimandrite Leonid Sentsov, Head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. It was consecrated by our predecessor, His Beatitude Patriarch Damianos, in 1925.

This holy place bears a special significance not only for Christians, but for all peoples and all nations, according to the divine Apostle Paul, who calls upon the infallible testimony of the Holy Scripture: “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. 3:8; cf. Gen. 12:3).

It is noteworthy that the holiness of this place of the divine manifestation, namely, of God’s appearance herein, stirred the pious zeal of Emperor Constantine the

Great, who, in his letter addressed "To Makarios and the other Bishops of Palestine," commanded: "We have decreed that the place be adorned with a pure royal edifice... for ye are not ignorant that it was there that the Lord God, the Ruler of all, first appeared unto Abraham and conversed with him. There, indeed, the religion of the holy law first took its beginning; there the Saviour Himself, together with two angels, vouchsafed His manifestation unto Abraham; there God began to be seen by men; there He foretold to Abraham concerning the seed that should be born unto him, and straightway fulfilled His promise; there He declared that he should be the father of many nations. Since these things are so, it is meet, as it seems to me, that by our care this place be kept pure from all defilement, that is, from every pollution of idols, and be restored to its ancient holiness."

Truly marvellous is the fact that this very place and site, wherein we now stand, remains pure from all defilement, that is, from demonic idols, preserving its ancient holiness through the care and cooperation of our sister, the Orthodox Russian Church in Jerusalem.

And we say, "through cooperation," hearkening to the voice of the divine Paul who says: "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" (Rom. 15:20). Yet not less do we proclaim that "we are labourers together with God" (1 Cor. 3:9), preaching the Gospel of salvation, and "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7), and His love likewise, form the bond of perfection of the Body of the Church, over which "the Holy Ghost hath made [us] overseers, to feed the Church of God" (Acts 20:28). Therefore, we are called "to remember them which have the rule over [us], who have spoken unto [us] the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Heb. 13:7). Let us, then, beloved brethren in Christ, reflect upon and examine their Christian conduct unto the end, and become imitators of their faith. Because the Holy Apostles, who are our leaders and teachers, "achieved the best manner of life believing firmly in the things to come", according to Saint John Chrysostom.

This excellent manner of life was indeed achieved by the Patriarch Abraham through his faith, who came unto this sacred place, according to the divine Paul: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8). The significance of this historic event is further exalted by the Holy Scripture, through the mouth of Abraham, saying: "I am a stranger and a sojourner

with you" (Gen. 23:4). And this holy place itself bears witness, being indissolubly bound to the sacred history of man's salvation in Christ. In other words, this place stands as a sacred testimony of our faith, for the Incarnate Word of God, Christ, is preeminently the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16); consequently, all who belong to Christ and to His Body, the Church, are likewise the seed of Abraham. As the Apostle Paul proclaims: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29).

We, beloved brethren, "being sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13), on the one hand "ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:11), and on the other, to guard the deposit of the Holy Places, which constitute the point of reference for all Christians throughout the world, and the pledge of unity among the Holy Orthodox Sister Churches. For the Lord says: "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9:35).

Many happy returns, blessed and peaceful. Amen."

The Head of the Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem, Reverend Archimandrite Vassianos also delivered the following address:

'Your Beatitude, beloved in the Lord Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, Theophilos,

Your Eminence, beloved in the Lord Metropolitan Anthony,

Your Excellencies, venerable hierarchs of the Churches of Jerusalem and Russia,

Reverend fathers, brothers and sisters, pious pilgrims,

It is a great joy for us to participate in and witness this celebration, the Centenary of the consecration of the church, which was performed in 1925 by Patriarch Damianos of Jerusalem. It is an important event in our common church history and a profound spiritual symbol.

The city of Hebron is the site of the oaks of Mamre, where patriarch Abraham showed love and hospitality towards God Himself, Who appeared in the form of three angels.

For many centuries, the city of Hebron has been especially revered by believers who came here to pay homage to Abraham, whose faith and virtue have become an example for all who honour God.

A vivid symbol of this unity between the two local Churches – the Church of Jerusalem and the Russian Church – is today's Eucharist presided over by Your Beatitude, with the prayerful participation of the clergy and faithful of our sister Churches.

For a hundred years, the Church of the Holy Fathers has united believers in their trust in God. It also bears witness to the unbroken tradition of veneration of this holy place, which has special significance for all Christians.

Your Beatitude, allow me to express my gratitude for your paternal care for the Russian churches and sites in the Holy Land, and in memory of today's historic event and liturgy, to present to you and His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony icons and encolpia depicting the Holy Trinity.'

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a procession to the Oak of Mamre, where Patriarch Abraham, coming forth from his tent, received the three Angels in hospitality, and a supplication was offered.

The procession concluded at the Hegumen's quarters for a short refreshment, in which the Mayor of Hebron, among other representatives of the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr Abbas Abu Mazen, participated.

Finally, a rich meal was offered by the Head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission, Archimandrite Vassianos, during which His Beatitude once again addressed the gathering in English as follows:

"Your Eminences, Your Graces, Reverend Fathers,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

"The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them and bowed down to the ground" (Gen. 18:1-2).

So we read in the Bible, and today by Divine Providence we have been able to gather here to celebrate the centenary of this church and monastery, which were built on the site of an earlier Constantinian church by the late Archimandrite

Antonin at the place of the Hospitality of Abraham, the great prefiguring in the Old Testament of the Holy Trinity. As Saint Paul says, the Scripture, foreseeing that God would reckon as righteous the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you" (Gal. 3:8).

We are thankful to Almighty God for calling us to be guardians and servants of the Holy Places, which are tangible and eloquent witnesses of our sacred history, the history in this Holy Land of the divine-human encounter.

This holy place in particular is a reminder to us that our forefather Abraham was not just a symbolic figure. He is, in reality, our historic common forefather. He is the father of all peoples. As we read in the Bible: God said to Abraham, in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 12:3). Therefore, we share a common humanity and have the capacity to live together in peaceful co-existence as God's human family.

We are inspired by the meeting between God and humanity that took place here and which shows us that peaceful co-existence between the children of God is possible, and this land can be shared by all who call the Holy Land our home. We may not always know the way to the future, but we trust in God who is faithful, just as Abraham did: "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, and he set out, not knowing where he was going" (Heb. 11:8). Yet this future is possible, and we must never lose hope. As Saint Paul reminds us, "Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation" (2 Cor. 1:7).

So let us raise our glasses in a toast to the mission of this holy place as an invitation to all people of faith and of goodwill to find the strength and commitment to live in hope as children of our common forefather Abraham, and children of God.

Chronia polla".

From the Chief Secretariat

























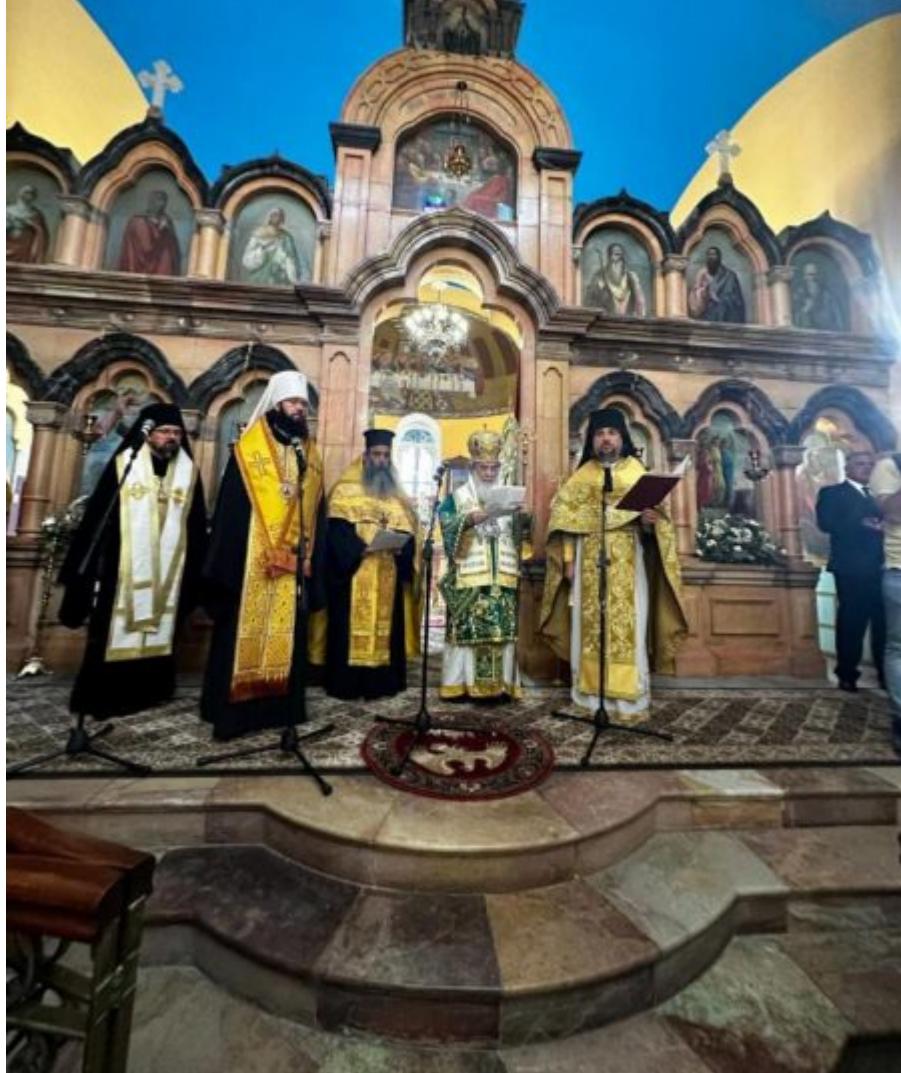
















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