02/12/2025

The feast of the holy Hieromartyr Philoumenos the Holy Sepulchre Father at the Patriarchate



On Saturday, the 16th/29th of November 2025, the Patriarchate celebrated, together with the feast of the holy apostle and Evangelist Matthew, the feast of the holy Hieromartyr Philoumenos the Holy Sepulchre Father.

During this feast, the Church of Jerusalem commemorates that Saint Philoumenos was from his youth a Holy Sepulchre Father cleric, serving in various ministries and also as the Hegumen of Jacob's Well, where, on the 16th/29th of November of the year 1979, he was murdered by an unholy hand, becoming through his death a martyr of Christ. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem enrolled him in its martyrology in the year 2009.

In memory of this holy new Hieromartyr, a Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the newly erected magnificent Church of Saint Photini the Samaritan Woman, for it was at this Well that this Samaritan Woman encountered the Lord, and the beautiful Catholicon built by the present Hegumen, Archimandrite Ioustinos. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, concelebrated by the Hierarchs of the Patriarchate: their Eminences Archbishop Aristarchos of Konstantina, Metropolitan Makarios of Acre–Ptolemais,

and Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella; Archimandrite Alexios, Rite Keeper of the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen; Archimandrite Alexios; Archimandrite Kyriakos of the Holy Monastery of Abba Gerasimos; the Exarch of Athens, Archimandrite Hieronymos; the Hegumen of the Shrine of Saint Anna, Archimandrite Meletios; Archimandrite Raphael; Presbyter Georgios of the Cathedral of Saint James the Brother of the Lord; the Presbyters of the region and Fr Elias of Beit Jala, together with other Priests from sister Orthodox Churches.
The chanting was rendered in Greek on the right by Dr Iakovos, and in Arabic on the left by members of the choirs of the neighbouring Communities. A large crowd of faithful Orthodox people, among whom were also pilgrims, attended the service.

To this congregation, His Beatitude preached the divine word as follows:

“I will never forget Thy precepts: for with them Thou hast quickened me,” the Psalmist exclaims (Ps. 118:93).

Beloved brethren in Christ,
Reverent Christians,

The Grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us in this holy place of the Well of Patriarch Jacob, where our Lord Jesus Christ conversed with the Samaritan woman, that we may celebrate the memory of the holy Hieromartyr Philoumenos the Holy Sepulchre Father.

Our Father Philoumenos was vouchsafed the promised glory — that is, the vision of the glory of God — together with the martyrs of the love of Christ enrolled in heaven, because with boldness he confessed the redeeming name of our Saviour Christ, heeding the words of the Lord who says: “Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32).

The blessed Philoumenos, in his ministry as Hegumen and parish Priest to the ecclesiastical Communities of the Rum Orthodox flock of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, manifested a great missionary activity successfully, preaching and teaching the law of the Gospel and the patristic tradition grounded in the Apostolic teaching. This is none other than the “consignment” concerning which the divine Paul admonishes his disciple and Apostle Timothy, that he should “keep it by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (cf. 2 Tim. 1:14).

This Apostolic “consignment” the confessor Philoumenos preserved intact until his martyr’s death within the chapel where Jacob’s Well is located, confirming the word

of the divine Paul concerning the martyrs, who “were slain with the sword” (Heb. 11:37). And the First Martyr Stephen, in his confession at the hour of his stoning, reproves his murderers, saying: “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost” (cf. Acts 7:51).

Such a stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears man was also the murderer of Hieromonk Philoumenos, who thought that his victim had perished, though the “Wisdom of Solomon” most clearly saith: “But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them” (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1–4).

According to the true testimony of the Evangelist John, our Lord Jesus Christ warns, saying: “These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” (John 16:1–2). Interpreting this saying, the renowned Fathers comment: the divine Chrysostom says, “Thus they will pursue our murder as a pious act and pleasing unto God,” while Saint Cyril of Alexandria says, “They will imagine that the death they inflict upon us is an act of God-pleasing worship.”

The Hieromartyr, our father Philoumenos, now participating in the assembly of the saints in heaven, perceives together with the holy Angels both wonder and fear, surrounding God, as the Psalmist exclaims: “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him” (Ps. 88:8).

In other words, my beloved brethren, the holy martyrs are those who unceasingly proclaim, like another David, the righteousness and the saving work of the Divine Providence: “My mouth shall shew forth Thy righteousness all the day long: for I know not the number thereof” (Ps. 71:15), exclaims the Psalmist. This precisely is accomplished by the holy martyr Philoumenos, invisible in the heavens, yet visible upon the earth through his sacred relics, which issue healing to those who venerate them with devotion. Moreover, the holy martyrs of Christ drew inspiration from the preaching and the martyrdom of the holy Apostles and Evangelists. As the Evangelist Luke relates: “And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases; and He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick”.

Let us also hear the hymnographer of the Church saying: “Delivering Thy body to manifold tortures, and shedding Thy blood, ye did choke the incorporeal enemies, most glorious Martyrs, and ye gush forth springs of healing; showing yourselves

imitators of Thy sufferings, O Philanthropist, ye Athletes of renown, enduring manifold tortures, whereby ye obtained crowns of glory, and were deemed worthy of Thy kingdom, O Christ".

Behold, then, why today we honour the martyr of the love of Christ, Saint Philoumenos, who became a fellow-martyr with the holy Photini, the Samaritan Woman; and behold why the Holy Sepulchre Brotherhood rejoices and exults, boasting in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world.

Let us entreat the light of the world, the blessed Hieromartyr Philoumenos, that, together with the intercessions of our most blessed Lady Theotokos and Mother of God, and with his own supplications, we also, who venerate his sacred memory, may be deemed worthy of the kingdom of Christ.

Let us prepare ourselves, that in fasting, repentance, humility, and also in peace, we may be deemed worthy to celebrate in Bethlehem the city the Nativity of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

After the Divine Liturgy, a procession took place around the church, followed by a reception and banquet offered by the Hegumen and founder of the Holy Monastery, Archimandrite Ioustinos.

From the General Secretariat





























































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