27/01/2026

The Feast of AbbaTheodosios the Coenobiarch



On Saturday, 11th/24th January 2026, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of Saint Theodosios the Coenobiarch at the Holy Monastery dedicated to his name, situated in the Judean Desert between the village of the Shepherds' Field and the Lavra of Saint Sabbas the Sanctified.

Concerning Saint Theodosios, the Church transmits to us information drawn from various sources, chiefly from the writings of Cyril of Scythopolis, Lives of the Palestinian Saints, among whom is Saint Theodosios.

From this Life, we learn that Saint Theodosios originated from the Mogarissos of Cappadocia and came to the Holy Land for ascetic struggle in the year 451. He pursued the ascetic life chiefly in the Monastery founded by him and bearing his name, situated in the cave on the “other” road by which the Magi departed to their homeland, having not returned to King Herod.

In this Monastery also dwelt Saint Modestos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, as well as Saint Sophronios. In this same Monastery Saint Theodosios gathered a multitude of monks and guided them in the monastic life in Christ according to the coenobitic manner, that is, the monks held common prayer, a common table, and common labour, bearing the maxim: “Let no one enter here in idleness.” Through their manual labour, they accomplished a great work of mission and philanthropy. After this coenobitic formation, they would proceed to the Lavra of Saint Sabbas for a more strictly ascetic life.

Saint Theodosios, in cooperation with his compatriot Saint Sabbas, struggled steadfastly for many years in defence of the dogma of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, namely, that in Christ God there is one hypostasis and two natures, the divine and the human.

These saints raised voices of protest against the adherents of the doctrine of one nature and voices of support for this dogma of the two natures of the Orthodox Church.

At this Holy Monastery, an all-night vigil was celebrated on the eve of the feast at the Cave of the Magi by Archimandrite Eudokimos and Archimandrite Simeon, while a festal Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning in the magnificent Holy Church, originally built by Theodosios the Coenobiarch, destroyed by the Persians, and restored in the twentieth century by the late Archbishop of Madaba, Bartholomaios, and by the late Archimandrite Hierotheos, who served as Hegumen there for more than fifty years.

The festal Divine Liturgy was presided over by the Patriarchal Representative of Bethlehem, His Eminence Metropolitan Benedictos of Diocaesarea, with the concelebration of the Hegumen of the Shepherds’ Field and Beit Jala, Archimandrite Ignatios; the Sacristan of Bethlehem and Assistant of the Patriarchal Representative Archimandrite Polykarpos; the visiting Archimandrite Chrysostomos of the Church of Greece; the priests of the neighbouring regions, Fr Elias and Fr Yousef; with the chief cantor of the All-Holy Church of the Resurrection, Deacon Efstathios, chanting in Greek together with the Fathers of Saint Sabbas, and choirs

from Beit Jala and the Shepherds' Field chanting in Arabic; with the participation of pilgrims from various countries and local Orthodox faithful from Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and the Shepherds' Field.

All were received hospitably by the new Hegumen, Monk Ephraim, who assumed the abbacy one year ago following the repose of the late Hegumen Hierotheos.

From the Chief Secretariat
















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