16/07/2026

Rethymno: Saint John the Hermit “Returns” to His Home



A moment of profound historical and spiritual significance unfolded on the afternoon of Sunday, 12 July, in the village of Myriokefala, Rethymno, as the founder of the historic Monastery of Myriokefala and missionary to western Crete, Saint John the Hermit (ο Όσιος κυρ-Ιωάννης ο Ξένος), symbolically “returned” to his home after almost one thousand years.

The occasion was marked by the solemn translation of a relic of the Saint from the Patriarchal and Stavropegial Monastery of the Prophet Elijah at Roustika to the Church of Panagia Antiphonitria in Myriokefala, the sacred Church established by Saint John around the year 1000 and made the centre of his missionary, pastoral and ecclesiastical ministry throughout western Crete.

In an atmosphere of festal joy and reverence, His Eminence Metropolitan Prodromos of Rethymno and Avlopotamos, together with the parish priest of Myriokefala, Protopresbyter Fr Theodore Sifakis, other clergy of the Holy Metropolis, the Deputy Regional Governor of Rethymno, Mrs Mary Lioni, the Mayor of Rethymno, Mr George Marinakis, representatives of the Armed Forces and Security Services, and a large gathering of faithful, received the holy relic in the village square.

The relic was solemnly conveyed by the Abbot of the Patriarchal and Stavropegial Monastery of the Prophet Elijah at Roustika, Archimandrite Ioannis Koufoudakis, accompanied by members of the monastery’s governing council, Archimandrite Romanos Anastasiadis and Protopresbyter Fr Pavlos Loukogeorgakis.



Following the reception, a Hierarchical Great Vespers was celebrated. Before the dismissal, Archimandrite Ioannis Koufoudakis delivered an inspiring address on the historical importance of the occasion and reflected upon the life, missionary labours and enduring witness of Saint John the Hermit.

The parish priest, Protopresbyter Theodore Sifakis, then addressed the congregation with visible emotion, expressing heartfelt gratitude to all who had contributed to this historic event. He also requested that His Eminence present certificates of appreciation and icons of Saint John the Hermit to benefactors whose generous support has sustained the life and ministry of the parish.

Concluding the service, Metropolitan Prodromos offered thanksgiving to Almighty God for granting the local Church the blessing of witnessing such a momentous event. He emphasised that the bodily return of Saint John the Hermit, through the

presence of a portion of his sacred relic, to Myriokefala constitutes both an immense blessing and a solemn responsibility for the faithful, who are now called to honour and imitate the Saint's life of holiness, missionary zeal and unwavering devotion.

Following Vespers, local musicians gave the premiere performance of a newly composed hymn dedicated to Panagia Antiphonitria of Myriokefala and Saint John the Hermit. The work was written and composed by the poet and musician Mr Elias



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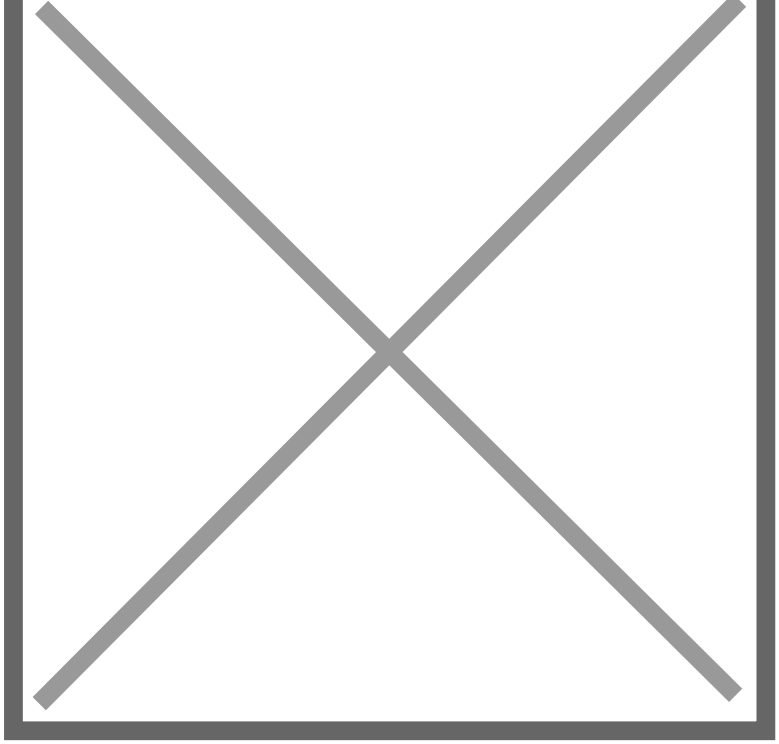


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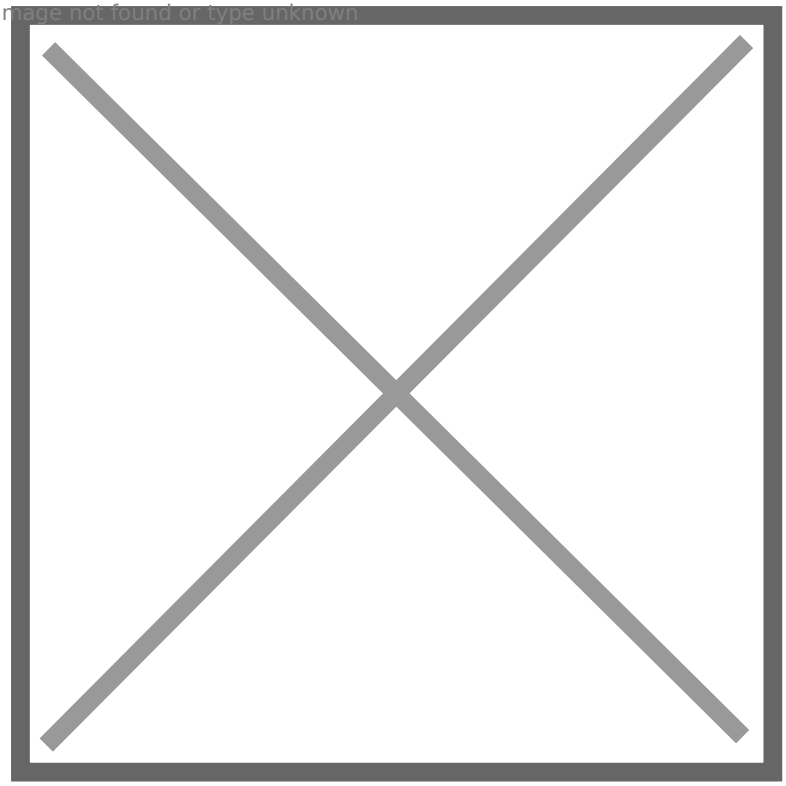






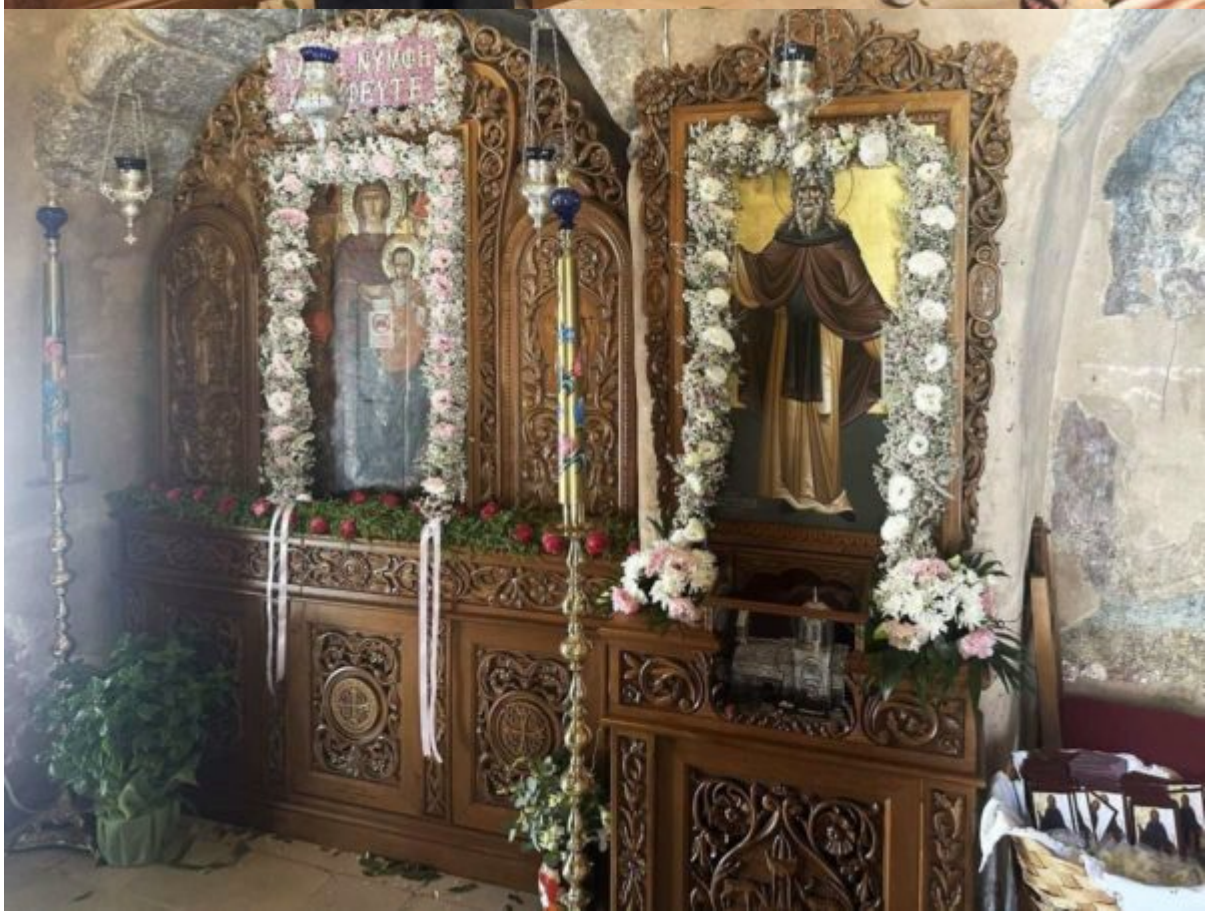




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