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Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew II: Elder Sophronios of Essex will enter into the Official Calendar of the Church, and other gifts



On the 23rd of October, 2019, the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All-Holiness Bartholomew II, proclaimed the entry into the Official Calendar of the Church of yet another Athonite saint: Elder Sophronios (Sacharov) from Essex. The announcement was made in the conference of the Holy Council of Mount Athos by His All-Holiness with a lot of emotion.

This is yet another marvelous gift which God gave us, a gift which for our monastery has a very special meaning: Elder Sophronios left Mount Athos to France in order to treat his illness in his capacity as a Vatopedi monk – more exactly, a monk of Skete of Saint Andrew which is a Vatopedi dependency.

These days, God gave us a lot of gifts: the entry in the Official Calendar of the Church of Elder Joseph the Hesychast who is the spiritual root of our brotherhood, Elder Ephraim of Katounakia, the first disciple of Saint Joseph the Hesychast and spiritual brother and also confessor of our Elder Joseph of Vatopedi. Another gift was the official recognition of the sanctity of Saint Daniel of Katounakia, who was

also a monk at Vatopedi for 8 -10 years. He served during this period at our guesthouse and during this time, the Mother of God healed him miraculously from a difficult illness, when he venerated the Holy Belt.

Another special gift from God these days was the fact that our bishop, His All-Holiness Bartholomew, was very pleased from his visit at our monastery, having been impressed by the monastic life and the number of monks (especially young ones) of our brotherhood. We continuously strive to be a factor of spirituality and unity for our Church and we are very pleased and thank God when this aim is fulfilled at least partially.

However another great gift from God in this period is the phenomenon of continuous earthquakes today, through which our all-merciful God tells us that we are absolutely nothing and we can all die in just a second .

In my humble opinion this is the greatest gift: to see one’s nothingness.

Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust.

Ruins remain.

…And our immortal soul.



- Source: asceticexperience.com