24/03/2020

Sunday of the Adoration of the Precious and Life-giving Cross was celebrated at the Jerusalem Patriarchate



The 3rd Sunday of Great Lent, March 9/22, 2020 was celebrated by the Patriarchate as Sunday of the Adoration of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church has designated for this Sunday the veneration of the Holy Cross with a special service, so that the faithful may be strengthened by its protection for the remaining of the fasting during Great Lent.

At the Patriarchate of Jerusalem this feast was celebrated as Parresia with Great Vespers at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the afternoon, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

On the day of the Feast, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the All-Holy Tomb, again led by His Beatitude, with the co-celebration of their Eminences; Metropolitan

Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Theodosios of Sebastia, Demetrios of Lydda, Aristovoulos of Madaba, and His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and deacons, as the chanting was delivered by the Byzantine choir leader Hierodeacon Simeon on the right and Mr. Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the left. The service was attended by monks and nuns of the Patriarchate, members of the Greek Consulate in Jerusalem and only a few faithful of the city of Jerusalem, due to the restriction measures for the protection against COVID-19 virus.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by the Litany three times around the Holy Sepulchre and the shrines. After the Litany, His Beatitude read a prayer against infectious disease before the Holy Tomb.

Concluding the Services, the congregation returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters, where His Beatitude briefly addressed the few Fathers and faithful present, wishing the strength of the Precious and Life-giving Cross may help the tackling and eliminating of every disease and infliction of the evil one.

His Beatitude’s address follows below;

“Today the words of the Prophet are fulfilled: for see, we worship at the place on which Thy feet have stood, O Lord; and tasting from the Tree of salvation, we have been delivered from our sinful passions at the intercessions of the Theotokos, o Thou who alone lovest mankind”, the hymn writer of the Church proclaims (Triodion, Third Sunday of Lent, Matins, Canon 3, hymns of the Cross).

Today my dear brothers and sisters our Holy Church celebrates the Veneration of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is for our comfort and strengthening in order to go through Great Lent in fasting and repentance.

Christ’s Cross is not only a symbol of victory and triumph against the devil, it is also the incarnation of the righteousness in Christ and of our redemption from the corruption of death, namely of sin, as St. Paul proclaims by saying: “And you, being dead in your sins… hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Colossians 2:13-15).

Interpreting these words, St. Chrysostom says: “With His death on the Cross, Christ stripped the powers and principalities on the one hand; and on the other, He

humiliated the evil powers and put them in shame”. In this sense, Christ’s Cross is the means “by whom we have now received the atonement” (Romans 5:11) according to Paul.

In other words the Precious Cross is the means of the divine mystery of atonement and reconciliation of us humans with God, as St. Paul preaches: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Romans 5:10).

Behold therefore, why the Cross is the source of the power of the Church, but also its boast, St. Paul confesses, by saying: “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14). And according to St. Cyril of Alexandria, the Cross of the Saviour stands for the life of the world and its incorruption” (Sofon. 621.20).

This means that through the Cross and by the Cross, life in Christ is made understood, according to the Lord’s word: “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34). In other words, the word of the Cross is God’s power just as the Gospel of Christ is God’s power, leading to the salvation of anyone who believes, according to Paul (1Cor. 1:18, Romans 1:16).

Our Holy Church has called us to the communion of this power of the Cross, through the veneration of the Precious and Life-giving Cross in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre today, the third Sunday of Great Lent, so that we may be deemed worthy to celebrate also the Life-giving Resurrection of our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Whose mercy and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit may be with all of us. Amen.”

From Secretariat-General

— Source: en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info