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## **CHURCH OF ST. JOSEPH THE HESYCHAST AT MADAGASCAR'S FIRST MALE MONASTERY COMPLETED**



Construction on the Church of St. Joseph the Hesychast in Toliara, Madagascar was recently completed.

The church is the first in honor of the great 20th-century saint, with the foundation laid soon after the announcement of his glorification. It will also serve as the church for the first male Orthodox monastery in Madagascar, reports Bishop Prodromos of Toliaras and South Madagascar.

Bp. Prodromos laid the foundation for the church, together with the newly-formed brotherhood, in late December. The monastery will also house a seminary and missionary training center aimed at preparing native missionaries to spread the Gospel of Christ.

In his post, Bp. Prodromos recalls how several months ago he received a call from a brother in Greece, begging him to build the first church in honor of Elder Joseph. However, in his “lack of faith,” he replied: “But there hasn’t been an official canonization yet.”



Then, “in the blink of an eye,” the glorification of Elder Joseph was proclaimed, Bp. Prodromos recalls. Patriarch Bartholomew announced the canonization of Elder Joseph during his visit to Mt. Athos in October, and he was officially added to the calendar of saints by the Holy Synod of Constantinople on March 9.

And the construction of the church proceeded at a rate that far exceeds limited human abilities, His Grace writes, “as if the saint himself is looking for a place.”

“I venerated the foundation stone the first day, in deep disbelief about the undertaking. On the day the work was completed, God also required that I venerate the true foundation stone of the monastery, the tomb of the saint, apologizing and offering gratitude for taking my disbelief and making it the abode of the Holy Spirit,” the bishop concludes.

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