07/06/2022

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE GOD-CROWNED SOVEREIGNS AND EQUAL TO THE APOSTLES CONSTANTINE AND HELEN AT THE PATRIARCHATE



On Friday, May 21/ June 3, 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy glorious God-crowned and equal to the Apostles Constantine and Helen.

On this feast the Church celebrates that after Constantine the Great accepted the Holy Baptism, and received the sign that appeared in the sky for him with the Cross writing “be victorious with this” and made it an emblem for his army, he defeated the followers of Maxentius and recognized Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Country. His mother Helen came to Jerusalem and discovered the Holy Cross and the places of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, inaugurating Constantine’s Rum-Christian era from AD 326-336.

This feast was celebrated at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen of the Brotherhood, with Great Vespers on Thursday afternoon and the Divine

Liturgy on Friday morning, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with the ministering Priests of the Church, with first in rank the Typikon Keeper Archimandrite Alexios. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, representatives from the Patriarchates of Moscow and Romania, many pilgrims and local faithful.

After the Divine Liturgy, the Patriarchal Entourage headed to the Patriarchate Reception Hall via the Central Monastery gate and received the small loaves of bread that had been prepared by the baker Nun Seraphima.

There His Beatitude addressed those present as follows:

“Not from man did great Constantine with his blest mother Helen receive the royal sovereignty but by God’s grace from Heaven. For he beheld the divine Cross as a bright flashing trophy. With it he was victorious over all who opposed him and he destroyed the deceit and error of all the idols while making strong throughout the world Orthodox faith and practice” (Matins Exaposteilarion).

Your Excellency Consul General of Greece Mr Evangelos Vlioras,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Noble Christians

Today the Holy Church of Christ, and especially the Church of Jerusalem most joyfully celebrates the sacred commemoration of the Holy glorious God-crowned and great sovereigns Constantine and Helen, who became equal to Christ’s Apostles and Fathers of Romiosyni, as well as founders of the beautiful Monasteries and magnificent Churches around the shrines of the Holy Land, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, among others.

Constantine the Great received the calling from the Lord and the knowledge from the Holy Spirit and significantly contributed to the recognition not only of the Christian faith as the official religion of the Empire but also the support of the institution of God’s Church.

Two primary events point out the contribution of Constantine the Great in his grandiose work for the Church; First, the invitation of the distinguished Church Fathers at the First Ecumenical Council of Nice in AD 325, which condiment the heresy of Arianism. Second, the pilgrimage of his mother Helen to the Holy Land and the greatest of her achievements, the discovery of the wood of the Precious Cross, along with the establishment of the Order of the Studious (“Spoudaioi” in

Greek, referring to those who endeavoured in studying the teachings of Christ), namely of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

Let us hear at this point the words written in a letter by Constantine the Great to the Persian King Sepori about the care of the people of God: “By keeping the divine faith I earn the light of truth. Guided by the light of truth I gain consciousness of the divine faith” (Eusebius on Constantine the Great, Book 4, ch.9). And in another letter to the Bishop Makarios of Jerusalem about the construction of the Holy Sepulchre, he writes: “It is righteous to beautify the value of the most marvellous place in the world”.

Needless to say, the Christian character of the Holy Land and of Jerusalem is entirely attributed to the God-inspired initiative and actions of the Holy Sovereigns Constantine and Helen.

Honouring all these gratefully, our Holy Church of Jerusalem, for their commemoration held the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy at the Monastic Church dedicated to them, rendering thus a thanksgiving Doxology to the Holy Triune God.

And let us say along with the hymnographer, Constantine most respected, along with your pious mother Helen, pray to Christ our God to grant remission of sins to those who celebrate your holy commemoration. Amen. Many Happy returns!

At noon there was a festal monastic meal.

From Secretariat-General






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