

Thanksgiving prayer on the occasion of the glorification of the two hieromartyrs, Fathers Nicholas and Habib Khasha at the Church of the Holy Cross in Al-Qassaa



His Beatitude Patriarch John X held a thanksgiving prayer on the occasion of the glorification of the two hieromartyrs, Fathers Nicholas and Habib Khasha at the Church of the Holy Cross in Al-Qassaa with the participation of their Graces the bishops, the parish priests of Damascus and a crowd of the faithful.

First, the procession of clergymen and faithful crossed the outer square and reached the Church of the Holy Cross while the scouts of the church were playing music. At the front, the icon of the two hieromartyrs was held in procession, while the Patriarchal Choir "Spiritual Cithare" chanted during the prayer of thanksgiving.

During the service, the text of the Holy Synod of Antioch's declaration of glorification of the two hieromartyrs was read. This text was written in the Synodal Register and signed by the members of the Synod during the thanksgiving prayer

that was held on October 21, 2023 in the Patriarchal Monastery Our Lady of Balamand.

At the end of the prayer, His Beatitude gave a homily that began by expressing the importance of the Church of Antioch, saying: "Antioch is the mother Church that introduced the word "Christians" to the world, since the disciples were first called Christians here; it gave this name to the whole world and made it dance with joy on people's lips.

Antioch is the Church that gave the whole world great men, male and female saints, who showed benevolence and virtue.

Antioch gave to the world Saint Ignatius the God-bearer, Saint John Chrysostom, and Saint John of Damascus; it recently sprouted Patriarch Gregory IV, Patriarch Elias IV, and Patriarch Ignatius IV, and today we honor the two martyrs, priests Nicholas and Habib Khasha of Antioch... The Church of Antioch is the Church of bearing witness and martyrdom at the same time."

He also emphasized that we are rooted in this East and firmly established in it.

He raised his voice, calling on decision-makers in the world for the right of the Palestinian people to establish their state, focusing on the tragedy taking place in Gaza today.

He also said: "Enough oppressing the Palestinian people, the Syrian people, and the Lebanese people."

He asked, "Where is justice? Where are human rights? We demand that those who have the right to have our just right, to have dignity like all other peoples, and here I mention once more the abducted bishops Paul and John."

Regarding the lives of the saints, Fathers Nicholas and Habib Khasha, he stopped at two points:

The first: that holiness is the path of every believer, and not "exclusively" for monks and nuns. Holiness is the path of every good human being, which is to forget what is behind, that is, darkness, murder, and vice, and to extend forward, to the master and to virtue.

Second: about the importance of family. Saint Nicholas and Saint Habib, were both born into a family and raised one, so let us preserve our families and our children. His Beatitude pointed out that the words father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, brother, and sister are sacred words that we must preserve them. We must raise our children according to the Holy Bible.

In conclusion, he touched on recent events in our church, during the International

Scientific Conference in Balamand, followed by the Holy Synod. These events express the complete unity and full strength in our church, which is extending around the globe. This Church has expressed a strong unity and exemplary teaching by the decision to glorify Rev. Fathers Nicolas and Habib Khasha, which everyone cheered for, stressing that the declaration of glorification is not for boasting and arrogance, but for the God-given joy.

After concluding the prayer, the believers participated in the procession with the icon of the two holy hieromartyrs, which they venerated at the end of the procession. Booklets containing their lives and copies of their icon were distributed to them as well.

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