

HIS BEATITUDE ATTENDS A FUNCTION AT THE HOLY VATOPEDI MONASTERY FOR ST GERASIMOS PALLADAS

On 13th Novemembr 2014, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, attended a function in homage and commemoration on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the passing of his Holy Predecessor Gerasimos Palladas (1714-2014). The function was organised by the Holy Great Monastery of Vatopedi at the Caravel Hotel in Athens. The Abbot of the Holy Monastery, Archimandrite Ephraim, welcomed His Beatitude and accompanied him to the function area, which had filled up from earlier on. The hall in the hotel had filled upwith Metropolitasn, Bishops, Clergy, Ministers, Parliamentarians and others. The function was opened by His Beatitude who said, amongst other things

“You exhausted streams of wisdom and knowledge through studying the scriptures, wise Father Gerasimos; that is how you gave forth the sweetness of the doctrine f faith, bringing sweetness to the intellect of the faithful”

With sacred emotion and unspeakable joy we stand before you today at this blessed function of the presentation of the first volume of the Complete works of St Gerasimos Palladas,on the occasion also of the completion of three hundred years since his holy falling asleep in the Lord. With sacred emotion and unspeakable joy we stand before you today at this blessed function of the presentation of the first volume of the Complete works of St Gerasimos Palladas,on the occasion also of the completion of three hundred years since his holy falling asleep in the Lord.

This function taking place here today is a particular honour for our Second Throne Patriarchate in the East, in memory of

him who came from the Great Island of Crete, he “who had much wisdom and was great in virtue”, who was one of our predecessors and a cause for doxology, because the providence of our Great God is amply demonstrated, as it is He who shows forth the saints, and He guided pious and saintly men to work and to bring to the light the works of our great Patriarch Gerasimos Palladas, which had been in obscurity for centuries. Defending the rights of the “criterion” of the universe, the God-guarded See of Alexandria, in times of adversity, with boldness and courage, with prudence and perseverance, being aware and observant night and day of the flock entrusted to him, he was proven to be a worthy successor of his Saintly predecessor Patriarchs, Ioakeim Panis, Meletios Pigas and Kyrillos Loukaris.

However, please allow me to comment that the case of St Gerasimos Palladas is, according to the great Theologian Fathers of the Church, particularly rare. According to the traditionally adopted “evidentiary” process of theology of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church, there is a differentiation between knowledge and wisdom, clearly preceding knowledge, according to the “the action is the theory of access” and this is because as St Diadochos of Fotiki points out : “Knowledge unites man with God...and wisdom, if given to someone, which is rare, reveals the actions of knowledge. But knowledge comes with prayer, serenity with no concerns, but wisdom comes from the study of the word of God which occurs without any vanity. And firstly with the Grace of God who gives it. (Cognitive Chapters, § 9). And according to the Dean of Theologians, St Maximos the Confessor, (Theological Chapters, 5 § 33).

Therefore the case of our St Gerasimos Palladas is rare, according to the opinions of the Holy Fathers commemorated above, because amongst the noise, the various concerns of our Ancient Patriarchate, the most difficult historical conditions, the ingratitude and slander from people who had benefitted, he managed to maintain the flame of divine love in-extinguished in his pure and loving heart, to attract the grace of the Most Holy Spirit, so that his venerable head

could finally be crowned, together with the Patriarchal tiara, with wisdom descending from on high, so that his rich and rare education which he achieved during his studies in various places, could become a vehicle of his spiritual experience which he obtained through his obedience of divine commandments, as we have said. So, our Saint "experienced the divine", as we say, he did not learn them through higher education, because according to the aforementioned St Diadochos Fotikis : "Nothing is poorer than the intellect which is apart from God, philosophising on issues concerning God" (Cognitive Chapters, § 7). So is explained the torrent of his thoughts in his wonderful homilies, in which the passages of the New and Old Testaments succeed one another endlessly, interpreted allegorically and originally and always intentional, as the distinguished interpreter, Mrs. Eleni Hatzoglou accurately comments, in the sanctifying transformation of people in the Church, complying with Gospel commandments, leading to the achievement of the aim, which for every Christian is theosis.

Εἰς Similarly, the case of St Gerasimos Palladas is rare for another reason too. And this is his resignation from his noble Patriarchal responsibilities, not because of aversion to work, nor because of faintheartedness, but as he himself mentions in his handwritten act of resignation, because of his love of a life of quiet and philosophy according to God. Besides which, there were health reasons, due to his age, which he mentions. And so, the Spirit-bearing St Gerasimos Palladas, Patriarch of Alexandria, completed his life ascetically three centuries ago, at the Holy Mountain's Great Vatopedi Monastery, which has among its valuable treasures, his precious skull which gives back grace and fragrance who come to him piously. He left for all of us his divine example, to the Church of Alexandria, which boasts in the Lord for its Patriarch and Shepherd and to the entire Church the wealth of his God-inspired words, which through Divine Grace are coming to light.

So, to all those who have undertaken the blessed and inspired

initiative of producing the complete works of St Gerasimos Palladas, Pope and Patriarch of the Great City of Alexandria, we bestow wholeheartedly our Patriarchal contentment and blessing, on the Great Monastery of Vatopedi, and its Hegumen Archimandrite Ephraim, as well as on the Society of Beneficial Books, its Chairman Mr. Manafis and the Executive Council, and particularly to the erudite and exceptional interpreter and researcher Mrs. Eleni Hatzoglou-Balta, a lady responsible for the success of the work, as well as to their other inconspicuous colleagues.

We pray that with the grace of our gift-giving Lord and the active prayers of our Saint and Patriarch Gerasimos, that we will soon enjoy the completion of the publishing of his works, for the benefit and spiritual support of us all. We also pray that we all receive the intercessions of the delightful son of Crete, the select one of Alexandria, the Orthodox interpreter of God's wisdom, the most holy vessel of the inspiration of the Spirit, the one who through his own will planted the flowers of God's wisdom, our Father amongst the Saints, Saint Gerasimos Palladas, Patriarch of Alexandria.

Holy Father, in accepting the divine you completely shone, give also to all of us who love your God-inspired virtues, so that we may endure the Christian plough and work tirelessly in the conceivable plough of faith. Amen!

Thereafter, speaking about the person and works of St Gerasimos Palladas, we His Eminence Metropolitan Makarios of Kenya, Hegumen Archimandrite Ephraim, the editor of the volume Mrs Eleni Hatzoglou and Mr. Konstantinos Manafis, Peer Lecturer of the School of Philosophy of Athens University and Chairman of the Society of Beneficial Books. In conclusion, an informative documentary was shown, about the times, the person and the activity of the Saint, entitled : "On the paths of holiness – St Gerasimos Palladas".