

## St. John the Chrysostom (Chilandari)

Tuesday, 30 January 2007

Last Updated Thursday, 01 February 2007

The cell of St.

John Chrysostom belonging to the monastery of Hilandar is located on a lonely hill. As well as many other Athos cells it had been constructed centuries ago presumably in XII century. Names of the Russian elders inhabiting the cell in the XVIII century are Matvey, Nektary and Anfim, monks Nikifor and Rafail.

Father Kyrillos made

it possible to arrange a cell with 90 inhabitants and a guest house for pilgrims with 150 places. With the permission of the monastery of Hilandar father Kyrill built a magnificent two-storied temple dedicated to St. John Chrysostom with Alexander Nevsky and Maria Magdalene side-altars in the memory of the wonderful rescue of the Imperial family in Borkah. The temple constructed on the superior's project became an embellishment of the Sacred Mountain.

The temple had

been consecrated on January, 13th, 1894 by the archbishop Agafangel, Serbian Metropolitan Mikhail who knew father Kyrillos in person sent the superior a letter where he expressed a regret that could not take part in consecration of the temple. The metropolitan already visited the cell when he came to the Mount Athos to see the elder Kyrillos.

The cell had

iconographic workshop and photographic laboratory in its possession. It was well-known for its creamery where sage, laurel, melissa and most importantly olive oils used in lamps were produced. The organisation of the cell's oil manufacture was important because in Constantinople and then and in Russia dishonest merchants were selling the oil mixed with kerosene, gasoline instead of natural fragrant oil. The Manufacture of pure natural oil became the main means of maintenance of the cell.

For the short term

of the existence the cell got some rare manuscripts in its library among them are the missal written by St. Theodosius and some Ethiopian manuscripts on parchment.

In the beginning

of the XX century a cell possessed two honoured icons: The Spanish Virgin Mary and St. John Chrysostom.

In the end of the

XIX century in Russia there was and unprecedented campaign for struggle against Russian Athos monks. They were portrayed as the swindlers plundering the people. Unfortunately the government had the same view point.

A pilgrim who had

visited a cell emphasized the

solemnity of the liturgy in the cell. The Saturday liturgy was performed by the superior: «Of an average height, slender, he was motionless in all greatness of his vestment with a shining cross on his breast and with a prayer on his lips and his deep ardent look directed to the sacred altar. He was surrounded by celibate priests, monks and choristers similar to angels, rather than people».

The cell of father

Kyrillos is named in «the Church Bulletin» a monument of Russian patriotism on the St. Mountain: «Possessing well organised iconographic school it spreads its art across Russia and understanding Siberia's need in accomplishment of its spiritual life in the area of a great railway way valuable icons for the churches and schools were sent by the cell, for what they had received the Highest gratitude from the Siberian committee...»

The inhabitants of

the cell actively took up the problems of slavic unity. One of the reasons of the election of father Kyrillos on a post of a superior of the brotherhood was that he was «the most active and convinced supporter of necessity of brotherly connection of Athos monks of all slavic nationalities».

Nowadays a cell of St. John Chrysostom that survived terrible years of suppression of Orthodoxy is delapidated.

The crones of the Athos

woods have bashfully hidden the humiliated position of the cell. There are no icons, no window frames or any doors. The ladder of a three-storied building of a temple has no steps and is ready to fall off. The building ground floor was a shelter for mules.

The temple floor

is covered by the semidecayed Russian books. They are left to decay there as it is strictly forbidden to take them out.»