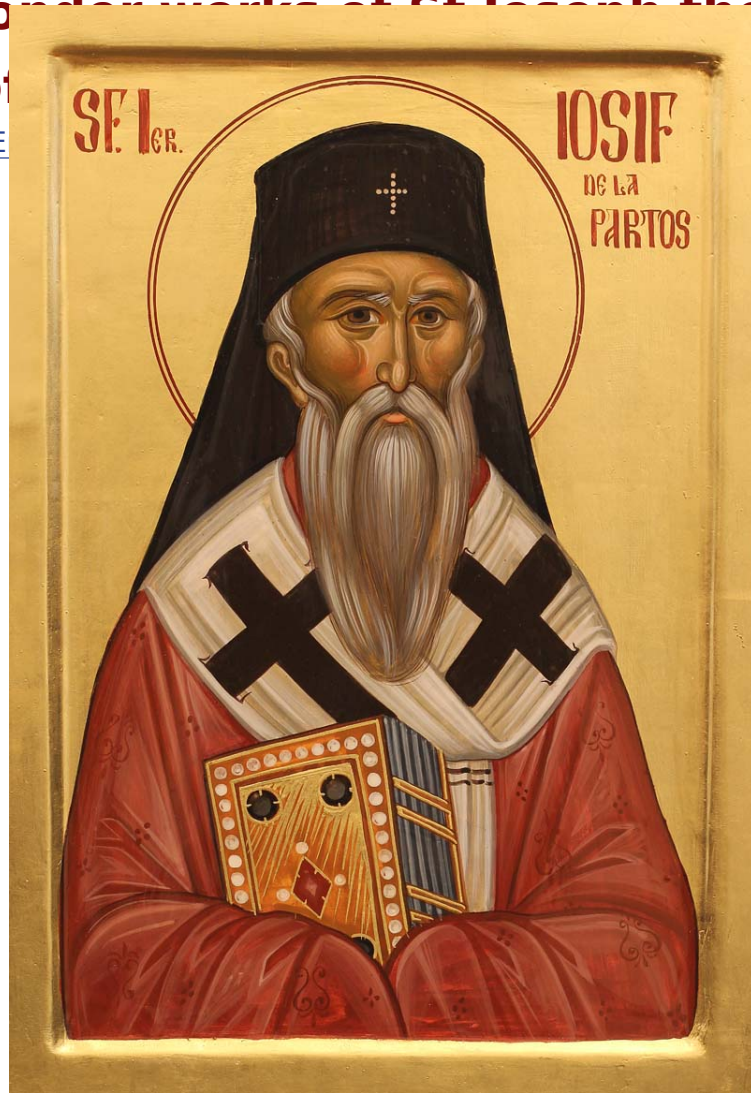


11 Μαρτίου 2013

The life and wonders of St Joseph the New-Metropolitan of (died 1656)

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By Alekos

Christodoulou, Theologian

St Joseph the New, this holy hierarch and Jesus' dwelling, the toast of Mount Athos and jewel of the Great and Holy Monastery of Vatopedi, was born in Ragouza (Dubrovnik of Croatia) in 1568.

His father John hailed from Venice and was a wealthy skipper. While staying at the Greek isle of Limnos, he met and married Katherine, a Greek girl. Young James, who was later to be given the name 'Joseph', grew up alone with his orthodox and devout mother because his father was travelling a lot.

At the age of twelve his father drowned and his ship sank to the bottom of the sea. He and his mother sought refuge at her brother's place in Ocid (in today's Skopje).

St Joseph attends school for three years. At the same time he loves going to the church and reading the scriptures. At fifteen with his mother's blessing, he enters the monastery of the Most Holy Lady at Ocid, under the guidance of a hieromonk who was her cousin. He stays there up to the age of twenty.

In 1588, he hears the Lord's calling "Follow Me". The Lord's love pierced his heart like an arrow and like a thirsty deer he hastens to the garden of the Most Holy Lady. Abandoning the vainness and the disorder of this world he enters the Holy monastery of Pantocrator at the Holy Mountain along with a novice called Nikodeme. Jacob is thereafter named 'Joseph'.

He continues his unrelenting spiritual struggles, assisted by the brunt of his youth, in order to accomplish virtue, particularly obedience and prayer. He bears Christ's benign cross and slowly ascends the ladder of the beatitudes, acquiring the garment of the divine and Christ's humility by deadening his self-will.
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