



**St. Lazarus Church & Ecclesiastical  
Museum Larnaca**

REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS  
DEPUTY MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Little is known about St. Lazarus prior to his Raising. According to tradition, he was a Jew born in Bethany, which in Hebrew means “city of dates”, a small town near the Mount of Olives, around 3 km from Jerusalem. The name Lazarus is a variant of Eleazar, meaning “God is my help”. Some say that Simon the Pharisee was his father and that he had two sisters, Martha and Maria. According to John the Evangelist, Maria was the woman who anointed Jesus’s feet with myrrh and dried them with her hair. Jesus himself called Lazarus his friend. On occasion Jesus stayed in Lazarus’s place and had bonds of friendship with the whole family. John is the only evangelist who wrote not only about the raising of Lazarus, but also about the ensuing events. In the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus there is also a brief reference to Lazarus. However, the sources of most of what we know about the life of the Saint after his raising lie in tradition and various Byzantine records.

In the relevant passage in John’s gospel, it is said that Jesus arrived in Bethany with his disciples four days after his friend’s death. Lazarus’s sisters, who were lamenting the loss of their brother, immediately led him to the grave. Jesus had the stone rolled away from the entrance to the tomb and then said the famous “Lazarus come forth”. Lazarus came out of the tomb, removed the shroud he was wrapped in and returned to his house.

John then continues by saying that the raising of Lazarus increased Jesus’s reputation, thus incurring the wrath of the chief priests, who plotted to kill Lazarus. Tradition has it that this was the reason Lazarus and his sisters fled the city to save their lives. What intervened between the Saint’s raising and his second death is a bone of contention between eastern and western tradition, since both Kition and Marseilles claimed his presence as well as the presence of his holy relics.

The tomb of St. Lazarus in Bethany has been an important place of pilgrimage since the early days of Christianity, as attested by the writings of various visitors to the Holy Land: the Spanish nun Aetheria, Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, Hieronymus, and Theodosius, the pilgrim. During the Middle Age, the church of St. Lazarus in Larnaca enjoyed a comparable reputation. In their testimonies, scores of travellers provide valuable information on the monument and its functions.

According to the Eastern tradition, when Lazarus and his sisters fled Bethany they came to Cyprus, where he was ordained Bishop of Kition and stayed there until the time of his

second death. Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia, informs us that St. Lazarus lived in Cyprus for another thirty years.

The Constantinople Synaxarion, i.e. the biographies of saints, says that the Saint was buried in a marble *larnax*, i.e. a sarcophagus, bearing the inscription “Lazarus of the four days and friend of Christ”. The *larnax* was later placed in a small church.

With regard to the Saint’s presence in Cyprus, there is a significant 8<sup>th</sup> century testimony attributed to St. John of Euboea, corroborated by later sources such as the Catecheses of St. Theodore the Studite, the writings of a German traveller of 1142, and the Constantinople Synaxarion of the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century, which refers to Saint’s ordainment by Apostle Peter as Bishop of Kition. According to the Byzantine tradition of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, around 899-900 Emperor Leo VI the Wise ordered that the holy relics of St. Lazarus be translated from Kition to Constantinople. The translation was described in detail by Arethas, Metropolitan of Caesarea, in two speeches he delivered in the presence of the emperor. Damaskinos Stouditis and some Cypriot and Athonian manuscripts dating from the Ottoman occupation preserve a tradition according to which Lazarus invited Virgin Mary to Cyprus. She was accompanied by John the Evangelist. A storm drove their vessel to Mount Athos. After a brief stay there, they finally reached Larnaca, where the Virgin offered Lazarus an *omophorion* and a pair of *epimanikia* (i.e. embroidered cuffs and a vestment corresponding to the Western *pallium*).

Again according to the Constantinople Synaxarion, the saint is associated with the Salt Lake of Larnaca. Witnessing a dispute between two brothers over a lake, he prayed and the lake was turned into the present-day Salt Lake. Towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, traveller Francesco Suriano transmits another version of that tradition stating that one day, the saint felt thirsty and asked a lady who owned a vineyard to give him some grapes to quench his thirst. She refused, and he turned the vineyard to a salt lake. One of the best known traditions associated with St. Lazarus says that one day the Saint was strolling through a market and saw a peasant stealing a clay pot. Pausing, he smiled and said, “The clay steals the clay.”

Following their visit to Cyprus in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, certain West European travellers, such as Villamont, Pococke and Baillet, expressed misgivings regarding the existence of St. Lazarus’s tomb in Larnaca. They claimed that his reputation was already widespread in

France and particularly in Marseilles, and pointed out that his grave and his relics were already in that city.

Thus, according to the tradition prevailing in the West, the Jews set Lazarus and his sisters in a boat without sails or oars and put them out to sea. After much wandering, they landed in the shores of Provence and from there they went to Marseilles, converting people to Christianity. It is also said that Lazarus died as a martyr during the persecutions of Claudius (41–54) or Domitian (81–96) and that he was buried in what is known today as “St. Lazarus’s prison”, a subterranean crypt over which the church of St. Victor was erected in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, his body was translated first to the Autun cathedral and then to the church of St. Lazarus in Avallon, whereas his head and a part of his ulna were kept at the church of St. Victor, where they are still venerated to this day.

Contemporary scientific research has led to the conclusion that this tradition is not grounded in historical facts and that it was concocted in order to render an aura of prestige to the city of Autun and the monastery of St. Magdalene. The monastery was built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and claimed to hold the relics of St. Mary Magdalene, which however were presented as those of St. Lazarus’s sister.

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church distinguished between the two saints named Lazarus, commemorating the 5<sup>th</sup> century bishop on 31 August in accordance with the Marseilles Martyrology, and St. Lazarus of the four days on 17 October, date of the translation of his relics to Constantinople. St. Lazarus has been identified with the nether world, hence the funerary character of many churches and chapels dedicated to him, such as the no longer extant church built in Constantinople by Leo VI to keep the holy relics, and the impressive church in the French city of Avallon.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a Russian monk from the Monastery of Pskov visited St. Lazarus’s tomb in Larnaca and took with him a small piece of the relics. Perhaps that piece led to the erection of the St. Lazarus chapel at the Pskov Monastery, where it is kept today.

The impressive church near the port of Larnaca dedicated to St. Lazarus of the four days is considered the oldest and most beautiful monument built in honour of the Saint. It is a source of great pride not only for the city, but for Orthodoxy as a whole. The existing

church, which underwent various expansions and modifications through the ages, is an edifice of the Middle-Byzantine Period, i.e. around the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

Archaeological excavations conducted on the occasion of the fire that broke out in 1970 have shown that two earlier churches existed on the same site. The oldest one, which constitutes the first phase, was a three-aisled basilica of approximately the same size as the current edifice. Given the tripartite layout of its sanctuary –Prothesis, Bema/Altar and Diaconicon/Vestry– it cannot be dated prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

It seems that the church was destroyed during the Arab raids. The extent of the damages sustained by the church and the dire financial situation prevailing on the island at the time prevented the inhabitants of Kition from building a new church. As a consequence, a smaller one was built on the site now taken up by the existing tripartite sanctuary.

According to the Constantinople Synaxarion, after the construction of the church of St. Lazarus in Constantinople Emperor Leo VI the Wise (886–912) sent his emissaries to Larnaca, to the site of that small church. Tradition has it that Leo sponsored the building of the existing church in return for the translation of the holy relics to Constantinople.

Let us now examine the church in greater detail. It is a three-aisled barrel-vaulted basilica with three domes – a rather rare architectural type, although we come across it in two other churches in Salamis. Its interior length is 31.5 m, including the apse, whereas its width is 14.5 m. We know that it was built on the ruins of an earlier building, which in turn had been built over a Hellenistic-Roman cemetery.

As mentioned before, the architecture of the church underwent various modifications associated with Cyprus's historical fortunes. In addition to being an important place of worship, the compound also functioned as a monastery with a large enclosure and outbuildings that still stood in 1999. According to the testimonies of travellers who visited the area, the monastery cells were rented out to sailors and traders who arrived at the port, whilst for some time during the Ottoman occupation those cells also served as a women's prison.

It is believed that in the course of the Latin rule in Cyprus (1192–1571), the church came under Catholic ownership. The Jerusalem Cross, an emblem of the Latin Church of Cyprus, can still be seen above the northern entrance. According to travellers Martin von

Baumgarten (1508) and Jacques Le Saige (1518), during the Venetian rule both the Orthodox and the Catholics held services in the church. The Orthodox used the central aisle and the Catholics the northern one, where the Latin altar still stands. A marble pulpit subsequently converted into a font also survived from the same period and is now displayed at the ecclesiastical museum.

The most significant modification was the loss of the domes, probably caused by an earthquake at some indeterminate point of time. Traveller Alessandro Rinuccini, who visited Larnaca in 1474, states that the church was in a ruinous state but still preserved its arches, columns and the three domes. Conrad Grünenberg seems to have seen the domes in 1486. A Venetian document dated 26 January 1559 preserves a petition by Sebastian Venier, Proveditor-General of Cyprus, to the Venetian Senate whereby he requested financing for the repairs of the monument because it had sustained extensive damages, and the domes and a lateral wall had collapsed. The Doge granted the request and the work was done by Venier's successor in Cyprus, Andrea Duodo.

There is no evidence confirming whether in the course of those repairs the domes were restored or simply covered as they are today. The testimony of Dutch traveller Johann van Kootwyck, or Ioannes Cotovicus, who in 1589 mentions "an ancient building, with a roof composed of several round domes", leads to the assumption that perhaps the domes were reconstructed. It is certain, however, that in 1727, when Russian monk Basil Barsky visited the church and made a drawing, there were no domes.

Various additions or reconstructions caused extensive changes to the original layout of the building.

A cloister was added to the south side consisting of pointed arches and pillars which support seven the cross vaults. Both the northern and western walls underwent various modifications. On the east side, there are three apses. The central one is five-sided externally and semi-circular internally. The north and south apses are three-sided externally and semi-circular internally.

After the 1970 fire referred to earlier, which resulted in the partial destruction of the iconostasis, systematic searches revealed useful evidence which facilitated the restoration of the monument to its original state. The plaster covering the pillars, walls and domes of

the church was removed and the original oblong and fairly low windows were discovered. The form of these windows is a common feature of Middle-Byzantine churches in Constantinople, but is totally unknown in Cyprus.

In its original state, the church had three entrances on the western side. The central entrance was refitted and widened, whereas the side ones were walled up. It seems that the side entrances were reopened during the Frankish rule. During the same period, in all likelihood in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the existing windows with the low arches were opened in the north and south walls of the church. The masonry of the edifice consists mainly of limestone blocks measuring around 1 m in thickness. Of the original marble inlay flooring consisting of multicoloured tiles –square, rhomboid or triangular– only one section survived in the arched passages between the pillars of the church.

The church was probably decorated with murals, however none has survived.

The sculpted decoration is also noteworthy. It belonged to the earlier basilica and consists of early-Christian capitals which today are built into the corners of the pillars. Two facts indicate that the capitals had been recycled: first, they were meant for columns and not pilasters, and second, they were somewhat carelessly and yet symmetrically inserted into the corners of the pillars.

The wood-carved iconostasis of the church is a piece of magnificent craftsmanship. It was created by wood-carver Hadjisavvas Taliadorou around 1773–1782 and was gilded a few years later, between 1793 and 1797, and again in 1972–1974. It comprises eight episcopal icons, a two-tier architrave with icons depicting the *Dodecaorton* (i.e. the Feast cycle consisting of major scenes from the life of Christ and one devoted to the Virgin), the *Great Deesis* (i.e. a representation of Christ flanked by the figures of the Virgin and St. John the Baptist interceding on behalf of humanity), and the *Lypera* (i.e. icons of the Virgin and St. John the Theologian standing on either side of the crucified Christ). Some of those icons were painted by Michael Proskynetes of Marathasa in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Eight bishops, including St. Lazarus, are depicted on the Beautiful Gate (i.e. the holy doors), which is crowned with an image of the Holy Mandylion, whereas local saints are depicted on the deacon's doors. The frieze below the episcopal icons is artfully carved. It bears scenes from the Old Testament (Adam and Eve, Abraham's Sacrifice, and Hospitality) and the New Testament (Christ's Birth and Baptism, *Noli me tangere* – Touch me not, and the Raising of

Lazarus). The bases of the iconostasis colonnettes are just as artfully carved with standing angels. The wood-carved ciborium over the altar is decorated in a similar style.

In the church there are other icons as well, of which the most important is a 16<sup>th</sup> century image of St. Lazarus, on the north wall near the iconostasis. An icon depicting the “Raising of Lazarus” dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, whereas equally important is the icon of St. George on horseback, a 1717 work by Cretan icon painter Iacovos Moskos.

A sizable volume of heirlooms is preserved in the church. Among them is the wood-carved pulpit, decorated with the symbols of the Evangelists and sculpted angels. According to the inscription carved in relief on the scroll held by the eagle, the pulpit dates from 1734. The episcopal throne, the carved reliquary containing the head and relics of St. Lazarus, as well as the two icon stands are equally impressive. The south stand contains an icon depicting the martyrdom of Apostle Andrew, and the north one a silver-covered replica of the Russian icon of Kazan.

The bell tower of the church is an admirable structure. During the Ottoman occupation it was strictly forbidden to ring church bells, and almost all medieval bell towers were demolished. In 1856, the famous Hatt-i Humayun lifted the ban. Hence, most bell towers are later additions to the churches to which they are attached. Immediately the authorities' permission was granted, bells were purchased for the church of St. Lazarus, probably from Trieste, and temporarily placed on a wooden pedestal, in the area where the bell tower was subsequently erected. The construction of impressive neo-gothic tower with the sculpted ornamentation started in January 1857 and was completed within 10 months. The names of all those who worked for its completion were recorded in a document of that year. Let us take a closer look.

The tower-like structure is a mixture of neo-gothic and neo-classical styles. It comprises three superimposed cubes crowned by a conical roof. The lowest cube is the result of a refit of the superstructure of the Vestry which had been dressed with stone blocks. Each side of the middle and top cubes has three windows, of which the lateral ones are blind. The blind windows of the lowest cube resemble metal doors with knockers, whereas those of the top cube are ornamented with palmettes. All windows have pointed arches, with palmettes at the top. The tympana of the middle-level windows are decorated with small palmettes, whereas the tympanum of the middle window of the top cube features a two-headed eagle

and the lateral ones a cross flanked by lions. The east side of the bell tower above the level of the roof of the Vestry apse is ornamented by a circular rosette reminiscent of the gothic architectural elements and similar to the one above the sanctuary roof.

Let us now examine the outbuildings which were still in place until the beginning of the century and, as mentioned earlier, were part of the enclosure. Today only the south cloister and the west building are preserved.

The cells on the east side of the church were rented out to traders and sailors, bringing in a substantial income for the church. The other wings were meant for the priests and the sexton. As from 1854, the sexton's room was converted into a meeting room for the church council. Nowadays, some of the cells function as the church museum, housing icons, incunabula, crosses and various heirlooms mainly from the church itself. Many of the heirlooms from the old iconostasis had been transferred to the District Museum of Larnaca in 1948 and were looted during the inter-community riots of 1963. Some of the cells of the western enclosure of the church had been reconstructed in 1758 and functioned as the priest's office and as an official reception area.

Some outbuildings survive on the west side of the church: the building of the old monitorial school, which now functions as an events venue, and the Protestant cemetery. The church council had expressed its strong interest in education, contributing financially already since 1830 to the operation of two monitorial schools established in Scala and Larnaca. According to reports from that period, each priest was responsible for the supervision of several children over a period of at least seven years, teaching them reading and writing. The wing of the St. Lazarus enclosure houses a Sunday school with a special section for the Russian Orthodox. Over the centuries, many important personalities have addressed the congregation from the pulpit of the church, among them the teacher Dimitrios Themistokleous, a disciple of Konstantinos Oikonomos o ex Oikonomon, a well-known scholar and cleric.

In December 1856, the church council decided to fund the establishment and maintenance of a monitorial public school in the church enclosure. That school, which operated from January 1858 to 1910, survives to date. In 1935, the same building housed the local Larnaca Museum. Now the building has been restored and equipped with modern audio-visual systems. It functions as a venue for cultural and religious events, and also for the

lectures of the Larnaca Zenonion Free University, an institution supported and promoted by the University of Cyprus, the Municipality of Larnaca, the Ministry of Education and the Larnaca Progressive Movement.

The Protestant Cemetery is situated next to the school. In 1688, Dutch physician and writer Olfert Dapper reported that funeral services were held in the northern aisle of St. Lazarus for sailors who died during their voyages and were buried there. We do not now know whether there were also Catholics entombed there. The inscriptions on the gravestones and sarcophagi found in the cemetery date from 1685 to 1849, indicating that the cemetery was perhaps solely for Protestants, and in particular Anglicans. Apparently, this has to do with the establishment of the British consulate in the city and the gradual power it acquired as well as with the need to create a Protestant cemetery, given that Catholics could also be buried in the Terra Santa monastery in Larnaca. This is also confirmed by travellers' testimonies making reference to a cemetery for English merchants. The cemetery preserves the headstones of British consuls George Barton, Michael de Vezin and Dr. James Lilburn, and of Captain Peter Dare, Commander of the ship *Scipio*, as well as the tombstones to the memory of some of the first American missionaries and members of their families, who came to Larnaca at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Starting at the south side of the bell tower and of the cloister, we pass the shop selling icons and other ecclesiastical items, the store room, and the room of the Sexton, i.e. the church and museum warden. All revenues from the shop are given to the Parish Welfare. Next we pass the church office that houses the secretariat and the accounting section, and the meeting room of the church council. On the west side, starting from the left, we pass the Ecclesiastical Museum, the priest's office, the *Synodikon*, i.e. the official reception room, the lecture room which in the past housed the monitorial school, and finally we come to the cemetery.

Let us now examine the most important Cypriot customs and traditions associated with St. Lazarus.

The Saint's worship in Cyprus is deeply rooted in time, as confirmed by the feast of Lazarus, which harks back to the ancient Greek festival of "Adonia" celebrated in Alexandria. On Lazarus Saturday, the bishop accompanied by priests and laymen would go to the *Synodikon*, where council members had decked out a young boy, the "Son of

Lazarus”, in wreaths and garlands made with yellow daisies, gladioli and red poppies. With the accompaniment of laments and funeral hymns, they would lay the boy on a flower-decked rug and when the bishop, reading the gospel, said “Lazarus, come forth”, the young boy would stand up and the people would sprinkle him with rose petals and rosewater. Joyous melodies sounded in the church enclosure and council members would distribute *kolyva* (boiled wheat) and bread shaped like birds, turtles, dolls, crabs or snakes. Then, children holding palm fronds, commonly called “vayia”, carried the “Son of Lazarus” in a procession through Larnaca and repeated the happening, whilst the ladies of the houses would emulate one another in the decoration of the “bed” of Lazarus. Priests accompanying the procession sang the hymns for the raising of “Lazarus”, and the children would sing the “Lazarus carols” while home-owners would give them eggs, sweets and money.

The charity work carried out by the church’s “Parish Welfare” not only in the parish itself, but also in the city of Larnaca as a whole, is remarkable. Just as important is the financial contribution of the St. Lazarus council to schools, hospitals and charitable establishments in Larnaca.

School groups, soldiers, etc, visiting Larnaca occasionally stay at the renovated *Archontariki*, or guesthouse, of the parish. There is also a guesthouse solely for priests and monks.

The church of St. Lazarus is also very active in the ecclesiastical-liturgical field. Harking to the needs of the working population and responding to the ever-increasing presence of young people in the church, the priests conduct a second Christmas Service and a second Service of Salutations to the Theotokos.

One of the basic priorities of the church council is the maintenance and constant enrichment of the Museum of the church, where rare ecclesiastical heirlooms are kept.

A series of cultural events are held in the church courtyard within the framework of the Larnaca Municipality Festival. Traditional music concerts are organized on Bright Tuesday, on 29<sup>th</sup> May (anniversary of the Fall of Constantinople), and on 9<sup>th</sup> July. Moreover, again in collaboration with the Municipality, a programme entitled “Byzantine Days” is organized during Easter holidays offering exhibitions and performances by Cypriot and foreign Byzantine choirs.

With the Larnaca youth in mind, the St. Lazarus church council is planning to operate a multifunction cultural centre opposite the church. The centre will comprise a library, an Internet café, and an events and reception hall.

We shall now proceed to the Ecclesiastical Museum.

To facilitate visitors, reference will be made to the page of the guide containing the corresponding photo of each item displayed. The illustrated guide is entitled “St. Lazarus of Larnaca”, by Charalambos G. Hotzakoglou, and is available at the entrance to the Museum.

## ST. LAZARUS ECCLESIASTICAL MUSEUM

The museum used to be housed in the Larnaca medieval castle. Unfortunately, however, a number of heirlooms were stolen during the inter-community upheaval of 1963. Those that were saved were transferred to the outbuildings around the church of St. Lazarus and today adorn the restored and upgraded ecclesiastical museum in the 1856 edifice. In addition to the restoration of the building, thanks to the donations of the Metropolis of Kition the museum was enriched with heirlooms from various churches in the city. Museologist Marios Hadjikyriakou supervised the organization of the museum, the placement of the display cases, the lighting, the temperature adjustment and the creation of the explanatory labels. The museum was inaugurated on 16 April 1990. It comprises five halls.

### Hall 1

A wood-carved icon stand of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century takes up the centre of the hall. The icon displayed on it is a 1646 depiction of St. Onuphrius, who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. His memory is honoured on 12 June.

Starting on the right, the first significant item we see is an 1830 *Antimension*. The word derives from the Greek “*anti*” (meaning “instead of”) and the Latin “*mensa*” (meaning “table”). In ecclesiastical terminology, an antimimension is a cloth bearing various sacred representations and symbols. The Eucharist is celebrated on it when there is no consecrated *Holy Table*, i.e. altar, or when it is forbidden to use the altar, especially when holding two consecutive Divine Liturgies. This mobile altar was devised and used when the Liturgy had to be celebrated outside consecrated churches for pastoral reasons.

Next we see an *Aër* of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a Cross and Angels. The relevant photo is on page 86 of the guide. The “*Aër*” is a veil worn on the priest’s back during the procession leading to the “Great Entrance”. When the Creed is read, the priest in the sanctuary shakes the veil over the chalice placed on the altar.

After the *Aër* we come to a large canvas on a wooden easel. The painting is entitled ECCE HOMO and dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is a depiction of the scene where Pontius Pilate addressing the hostile crowd said, “Ecce Homo”, i.e. “Behold the Man”, presenting a scourged Jesus, bound and crowned with thorns, shortly before the Crucifixion.

On the west side of the hall there are some icons dating between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The 1859 icon of St. Averkios stands out. It is included on page 73 of the guide. St. Averkios lived in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century and was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia. He was given the title “equal to the apostles” because he travelled and preached just like the disciples of Jesus. He died peacefully at the age of 72. His memory is celebrated on 22 October.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century icon of St. Barbara, which is divided vertically in two pieces, is a valuable heirloom. St. Barbara embraced Christianity when Maximilian was Emperor of Rome. She was condemned to death and executed by her own pagan father. There are divergent opinions regarding the time and place of her martyrdom. Some scholars suggest that the Saint died in 210 in Nicomedia, in the Roman province of Bithynia, i.e. in present-day Izmit in Turkey. Others claim that her martyrdom took place in Heliopolis, modern Baalbek, in Lebanon, in 360, whereas Catholics suggest she died in some city in Tuscany. Her memory is celebrated on 4 December.

Next is a series of 18<sup>th</sup> century gospels. Two of them are particularly noteworthy: an 18<sup>th</sup> century gospel in Arabic and the 1780 gospel in a silver-gilt jacket which was used at the church on the Feast of St. Lazarus.

Further down the hall we come upon a group of liturgical writings: a letter sent by an Apostle which is read before the Gospel; the text is in Arabic and dates between the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century; two gospels of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; and two 18<sup>th</sup> century *Menaia*, i.e. texts read at the beginning of each month. The particular texts refer to the months of August and September.

Then there are various letters of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries addressed to the church council. Three of those letters are in Greek, one in French and the fifth one, dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is in Arabic.

The display cases on the south side contain collections of vestments. In the first case, two *epitrachils*, worn by priests and bishops, and two *epigonatia*, worn by bishops and archimandrites, stand out. The second case contains cruciform embroideries which are sewn onto vestments. You can see their images on page 87 of the guide. In the centre there is a 19<sup>th</sup> century *Aër* decorated with raised embroidery (page 86). Finally, there is a bishop's *omophorion* of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with embroidered floral ornamentation in silk golden and multicoloured threads (page 84).

Between the display cases there is an old metal safe of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is 60 cm high and has three locks. On the upper part of its face there is an inscription in relief with the particulars of the manufacturer: Breveté – MAGAUD DE CHARF– MARSEILLE.

## Hall 2

We now continue our tour to the second museum hall, where the first important heirloom we see is a grandfather clock in a wooden case flush against the left-hand wall. It bears the maker's brand: Ericon à Marseille.

On the right, there is a wood-carved Epitaph of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It symbolizes the Entombment of the Lord and on Good Friday it is decked out in flowers, mainly white and yellow.

On the upper part of the next display case we see some silver oil lamps, and below them there is a cherubim set of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The set accompanies the priest during the procession leading to the Great Entrance.

To the west we see a silver-plated censer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Next we see metal buckles of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, pictured on page 89 of the guide, and then some pieces of the wooden box found on 23 November 1972, containing a part of the St. Lazarus's holy relics. The box was inside a marble larnax, in a crypt underneath the sanctuary.

The next display case contains a series of silver coins of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, three silver asterisks (or star-covers) of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century (pictured on page 78 of the guide), and the silver-plated spoons of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century used for the preparation of the Holy Communion (photo on page 80). Also on display is a series of encolpia and pectoral crosses, among which a small wooden encolpion of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century commands attention (photo is on page 90 of the guide). In the upper left part of the display case there is a 20<sup>th</sup> century greek incense burner and below, three silver halos of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a silver-gilt halo of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a mother-of-pearl encolpion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century depicting the Theotokos.

Metal ecclesiastical utensils are displayed in the next case: a series of chalices of the period 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century, and two reliquaries. The reliquary on the left side bears sculpted decoration and dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whereas the other one on the right with the silver laminae is a 19<sup>th</sup> century item.

On the south side of the hall we can feast our eyes on the large 17<sup>th</sup> century icon depicting the Raising of St. Lazarus. Next we see the wooden painted quadrant of the 20<sup>th</sup> century depicting the Nativity of Jesus. The next display case contains 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century archbishops' crosiers ornamented with ivory (see photo on page 92 of the guide). A glass-inlaid section of the floor allows us to see a part of an older floor preserved beneath it. In the middle of the wall we see some old Archbishop's vestments, donated by the Holy Monastery of Kykkos. Next to the grandfather clock there are two display cases with 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century icons of saints.

### Hall 3

A narrow door and a mild rap lead into the third hall.

The 16<sup>th</sup> century Venetian marble font attracts the gaze in the centre of this small hall. Initially the font was a pulpit bearing Venetian coats-of-arms which, according to travellers, were hacked away. There is a photo of the font on page 81 of the guide.

### Hall 4

A narrow staircase with 14 steps leads to the upper floor and the fourth hall. It is a corridor-like room with icons hanging on both sides.

The *Lypera* attract the visitor's attention, on the wall at the end of the hall: the Crucified Christ crowing the iconostasis flanked by the icons of the Virgin and St. John the Theologian. They are all carved in wood and gilded. The relevant photos can be seen on pages 70-71 of the guide.

On the left wall there are the icons of St. John the Theologian, of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century, and of St. George the Dragon-slayer, of 1694. On the right wall, the 1699 icon of St. John the Prodromos is exceptionally interesting.

## Hall 5

A narrow door and a single step lead down to the fifth and last hall of the museum, a small square room.

Small icons hang all around on the walls. The last group of icons on the right, all of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, are of particular interest:

The first is an icon of St. Thomas – one of the 12 Apostles, a disciple of Jesus. St. Thomas was a Jew and a fisherman, just like other disciples. He gave up his work and followed Christ when asked to do so. He was one of the most zealous followers, but was skeptical about the Resurrection of Christ and only after he touched the marks of the nails did he believe that Christ had truly risen from the dead. The Orthodox Church celebrates the Saint's memory on 6 October.

The second icon is that of St. Bartholomew, also one of the twelve Disciples of Christ. He was from Cana of Galilee. He is identified with Nathanael, as the synoptic gospels always mention Philip with Bartholomew, never making any reference to Nathanael, whereas in John's gospel Philip is always mentioned together with Nathanael, without any reference to Bartholomew. The Orthodox Church honours his memory of 11 June and the translation of his holy relics on 25 August, whilst the Catholic Church honours his memory on 24 August.

Lastly, the icon of the Assembly of the *Asomati* (the "bodiless ones", the holy angels) depicts 18 angels holding the young Christ, in a circular medallion. The Satan (or Lucifer) once boasted that he would make his throne higher than the clouds over the earth and resemble God. However, he fell from the sky and with him fell his battalion of like-minded angels who, according to Prophet Elias and Apostle Luke, became dark demons.

Witnessing this incident, Archangel Michael showed his humility and declared his allegiance to God, thus safeguarding the glory granted him by God, but also the glory of the other angels. God made him the leader of the angelic battalions. Archangel Michael united all angels, who sang a hymn to the Lord: "*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua*" (i.e. Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory). The Assembly of Archangels and of Heavenly Bodies constitutes an ancient tradition of the Orthodox Church and the Church honours it on 8 November. With regard to this feast, the word *Assembly* denotes attention, concord and unity.