

THE PRESIDENT OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY VISITS THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY IN BETHLEHEM.

On Monday, 11th / 25th of October 2010, the President of the Palestinian Authority His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas – Abu Mazen visited the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem along with his colleagues. The President of the Palestinian Authority was received at the forecourt of the Church of the Nativity by the Superiors of this Church belonging to the Three Communities namely His Eminence Theophylactos Archbishop of Jordan of our Patriarchate, Father Stephanos of the Franciscans, and Father Hat of the Armenians. Inside the Church he was received by His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III as the representative of the Orthodox and Patriarch of the first Church in the Holy Land. The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem has the exclusive ownership and the right of worship in the Church of Nativity.

The reason for this visit of the President was the observation of the initiated restoration work on the roof of the Church which has been brought into fruition by the Palestinian Authority as the sovereign government of the region. This is since the Roman Catholics and the Armenians refused to allow the Orthodox their right to engage in the restoration process even though the Orthodox Church has most of the rights on the Church, if not all.

Since the 18th century, the Patriarchate accepts the solution of the repairs being done by the government in power at that time so as not to yield to the solution where the aforementioned other two Communities would partake on equal terms, as something that is unfair and unjust compared to its

(of the Patriarchate) centuries old inalienable rights on the Church of Nativity and resulting to the violation of the prevailing Status Quo.

After the visit of the President, His Beatitude and His escort attended a dinner offered by the Patriarchal Representative in Bethlehem, His Eminence Theophylactos Archbishop of Jordan.

Chief Secretary's Office.

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