

THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF MARY CELEBRATED AT THE PATRIARCHATE.

The feast of The Presentation of Mary was celebrated at the Central Monastery's Church of Saints Constantine and Helen on Saturday, the 21st of November / the 4th of December 2010. According to the order, the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre celebrated this feast with His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III presiding at the Matins and the Holy Liturgy. His Beatitude commenced the chants with "Christ is born, glorify . . ." as He stood in the centre of this august Monastic Church.

This feast, which signifies for us "the preamble of the triumph of God and the proclamation of the salvation of humans", was also panegyrically celebrated at the Holy Convent named 'Megali Panagia' – Grand Mary, situated adjacent to the Central Monastery of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

It is in the area of this Holy Convent that the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre first settled descending from Mount Zion, at the time of the late Patriarch of Jerusalem Elias, in 516 AD. The Church of this Monastery is named in honour of The Presentation of Mary, consisting also of the chapel of St. Melanie the Roman, where the sacred relics of Saints as well as an ancient liturgical manuscript of the Gospel are kept.

Presently, some twenty nuns live at 'Megali Panagia' Monastery. The feast of The Presentation of Mary was celebrated at the Convent's Church named in honour of this sacred event, with Vespers been performed in the evening and Matins along with the Holy Liturgy in the morning of the feast day. Presiding was His Eminence Dorotheos Archbishop of Avila concelebrating with Monks and Deacons, with the participation

of numerous nuns from the celebrating Convent and from other Monasteries of the Patriarchate. Pious Greek speaking, Arabic speaking and Russian speaking Orthodox believers from Jerusalem also participated at the devout and solemn panegyric Holy Liturgy.

During the Holy Liturgy, and after the service at the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III escorted by members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, arrived to this Monastery's Church to venerate and participate at the Holy Liturgy until the -'Apolysis' – the end. The Superior of the Monastery nun Nymphodora offered a lenten reception to His Beatitude and the celebrating Archbishop together with the Patriarchal escort and the believers, at the abbey's quarters.

Celebrating the feast of The Presentation of Mary reminds us again, that the Mother of Lord with her Presentation and stay for three years in the Temple "announces Christ to all" and constitutes "the fulfillment of Creator's economy – Oikonomia" and "the sacred treasure accumulation of God's glory".

Chief Secretary's Office.

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