

# THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE IN THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

On the evening of Thursday the 6<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> of December 2013, the lighting of the Christmas tree ceremony took place within the New Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem.

The event had been prepared days ago by the Christian Inter-confessional Youth of Old Jerusalem, who had established a ten-meter tall tree on the roof of a building near the New Gate.

The ceremony attracted approximately three thousand spectators, mostly young people, following the Heads of Churches or their representatives, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Latin Patriarchate, the Franciscans, the Armenians, the Lutheran Bishop, the Syrian Bishop and delegates of the Palestinian Autonomy, Mr Hanne Amire, Chairman of the Committee of Christian Affairs, the Governor of Jerusalem, Mr Adnan Husayni, Ambassadors and Consuls of States, the representative of the Bible Society, Mr Nasat Philoumenos, and the Advisor to President Abu Mazen, Mr Ahmed Ruedi.

During this public event, which highlighted the Christian presence in the Old City of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, lighted the tree, illuminating its electrical light bulbs. The ceremony marked a joyful and cheerful opening of the feast of Christmas and the New Year.

After the lighting of the tree, the crowd walked to Notre-Dame hotel, opposite the New Gate, where, at the events hall, Christmas songs were sang and speeches were made thanking God

for the peace and delight which stems from Christmas. The pericope of the Nativity according to Luke was read out, while His Beatitude Theophilos addressed those present in Arabic.

**From the Secretariat-General**

<httpv://youtu.be/8umSI3MFicc>

