

THE FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On the day after Christmas, Wednesday the 26th of December 2013/8th of January 2014, the feast of the Synaxis of Theotokos was celebrated by the Patriarchate.

At the Patriarchate

In the early hours of the day, His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, led the festive Matins Service of Christmas and the Divine Liturgy, with co-officiating Hagiotaphite Primates, Hieromonks and monks. All gathered to honour Theotokos as the first and foremost among humans to serve the mystery of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which God prepared our salvation.

The Divine Liturgy in the Monastic Church of Sts Constantine and Helena was followed by the kissing of the hand of His Beatitude and embraces among brothers.

In the Village of the Shepherds

In this town, where Shepherds residing in the fields were urged by heavenly angels to go to Bethlehem and see the infant Christ lying in the manger, there is a Church dedicated to the Synaxis of Theotokos, built by the departed Hegoumen of St Savvas Monastery, Archimandrite Seraphim.

In this Church, His Eminence Theophanes, Archbishop of Gerassa, led the Vespers in the presence of a great crowd of Orthodox faithful. Co-officiating were the Hegoumen of the Monastery of the Shepherds, Archimandrite f. Ignatios, Sabbaites Hieromonk Efrosynos, and Arab-speaking priests from the town of the Shepherds-Beit Sahour, while a great crowd of faithful piously attended the service.

To the faithful, Presbyter f. Issah Musleh was assigned by His Eminence to preach the Divine Word on God's philanthropy, expressed through the incarnation of His Son through a Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, honoured for Her contribution to the human gender with a gathering of the faithful on the 26th of December.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a memorial supplication for the repose of Archimandrite Seraphim, proprietor of the Church of the Synaxis of Theotokos, who slept in peace eleven years ago. A procession then took place towards the Cavern of the Shepherds, where stands the ancient chapel commemorating them.

After the procession, Hegoumen Ignatios hosted the Prelatic retinue and the entire congregation to a reception, followed by lunch at the hotel of Mr Evangelos Sideras.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/0aKPFqIKqBk>

