

THEOPHANY EVE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

I. In Jerusalem

On Saturday, the 5th/18th of January 2014, namely the eve of Theophany, His Beatitude Theophilos, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, led the Matins, the divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom and the procession of the Lesser Blessing of the Waters at the monastic Church of Sts Constantine and Helen. Praying with Him were Hagiotaphite Prelates and Hieromonks, with participating novices at the Patriarchal School of the Holy Sion, pilgrims and locals, all receiving the grace of the blessed water.

At the conclusion of the holy water rite, the Patriarch, putting on a mantle, followed chanting priests to the Hall of the Throne. After Him came the vicar of the Church of St James the Brother of God, with His Eminence Theodosios, Archbishop of Sevastia, who had led the procession at the Church.

II In the Jordan River

Subsequently, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, accompanied by the Patriarchal Commissioner, the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias, and the Elder Secretary-General, His Eminence Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina, and Archdeacon f. Evlogios, left for the holy water rite in the Jordan river, Jericho, where our Lord Jesus Christ was baptized.

His Beatitude made a stop at the Hegoumen's Quarters in the Monastery of the Prophet Elisha, where he was hosted to a reception by the Hegoumen, Archimandrite Philoumenos, before arriving at Jericho Municipality, where He was addressed by the Mayor with wishes for the resolution of the political

problem and for the celebration of Theophany. His Beatitude made His reply speech in Arabic.

He then proceeded eastward, to the terminal at the border. Through the iron gate, His Beatitude arrived at the Holy Monastery of St John the Baptist, on the West Bank of the River Jordan. The monastery, damaged because of the 1967 war and a series of earthquakes, is now in the process of conservation.

There, His Beatitude was warmly received by the Israeli Military Administration of Jericho, the Boy Scouts of Jericho, priests in festive attire and a great crowd.

Putting on a mantle, His Beatitude entered the Church of John the Baptist, where the 9th Hour of the Epiphany was read out.

This was followed by a procession on foot to the West Bank of the River Jordan, in the presence of the Greek Consul-General to Jerusalem, Mr Georgios Zacharoudiakis, and Mr Alexandar Vulin, the Serbian Minister without portfolio.

There, on a platform, the Lesser Blessing of the Epiphany was performed by His Beatitude. Co-officiating were priests and a great crowd of pious faithful, the latter participating with occasional cheering.

After having performed the Holy Water Rite, His Beatitude proceeded to the bank of the River Jordan, where he immersed the cross thrice in the water, chanting: "When you were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord...", blessing as many of the attendants as possible.

After the holy water rite, His Beatitude proceeded to the Holy Monastery of Abba Gerasimus of the Jordan, where He and His retinue, as well as a great crowd, were hosted to meatless lunch by the Hegoumen, Archimandrite Chrysostomos.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/Y3QXWE3s1TM>

