

# **JOINT SERVICE BY THE HEADS OF THE PATRIARCHATES OF JERUSALEM AND ROMANIA ON THE OCCASION OF ST DEMETRIUS FEAST DAY**

On Monday, the 14<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> of October 2014, a Joint Patriarchal and Primatial Service was performed to commemorate St Demetrius the New, patron-saint of Bucharest, at the Cathedral of Sts Constantine and Helen and St Demetrius the New.

Leading the Joint Service, in accordance with the order of the Orthodox Church, was H.B. Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem. Co-officiating with Him was H.B. Patriarch Daniel of Romania, alongside fifty Primate – Metropolitans, Archbishops and Bishops of the Romanian Church – priests and eight deacons, amongst whom Archdeacon Evlogios and f. Michael of the Patriarchate of Romania.

During the Joint Service, the full communion in Christ between the two Churches – of Jerusalem and Romania – and among all Orthodox Churches across the world, was experienced as the leading Patriarchs and Archbishops were commemorated in the Diptychs.

Despite the cold weather, a crowd of faithful proceeded to venerate the holy relics and the Holy Cross brought from Jerusalem. After the recitation of the gospel, His Beatitude Theophilos preached the Word of God in English, see link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2014/10/27/9649>

His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of Theophilos spoke on the conclusion of the divine Liturgy, see link:

<http://patriarhia.ro/the-faithful-pilgrims-experience-the-merciful-love-of-god-and-of-the-saints-in-their-life-7642-en.html>

After His speech, Patriarch Daniel offered the Patriarch of Jerusalem a large, holy icon of the Saints of the Martyr Family of St Constantine Brâncoveanu, who suffered a martyr's death in 1750 in Constantinople, as well as the Patriarchate of Romania's medal of honour.

In His turn, Patriarch Theophilos offered Patriarch Daniel a holy icon of Panaghia Jerusalemite and a mother-of-pearl blessing cross, crafted in Bethlehem by Christians.

The service was followed by a processional exit from the Church, during which the faithful rushed to receive the blessing of the Patriarchs, and entry into to the Patriarchal Palace, where presents were offered to the retinue of Patriarch Theophilos.

At noon, lunch was hosted at the Marriot hotel, attended by the Romanian Prime-Minister, Mr Victor Ponta, and other government officials.

In the evening, Patriarch Theophilos paid a visit to Mr Ponta, who expressed his joy over the encounter between the two Churches, pointing out that the Orthodox majority in Romania coexists harmoniously with eighteen religious minorities, to which His Beatitude replied He was moved over the faith manifested by the Orthodox Romanian people, and also by the synergy between the Church and the State. Patriarch Theophilos went on to ask for Mr Ponta's support of Christians in the Middle East, now under threat and persecution.

To commemorate this visit, the Prime Minister offered His Beatitude a large blessing cross, the Romanian flag and a medal, whereas Patriarch Theophilos wished Mr Ponta success in the upcoming presidential elections.

From there, His Beatitude was escorted to Bucharest airport by

His Eminence Niphon, Archbishop of Tyrgobist; Protopresbyter f. Titsa; the Very Reverend Bishop Timotheos, former Head of the Romanian Church Delegation in Jerusalem; and the Greek ambassador to Romania, Mr Vassiloconstantakis.

At the airport, His Beatitude boarded a Tarom airlines plane, and landed safely in Tel Aviv.

**From the Secretariat-General**

