

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

A. In Beit Jala

The Nativity of Theotokos, customarily celebrated on the 8th/21st of September each year, this year was observed on Sunday the 7th/20th of September at the Church of the Nativity of Theotokos, of the Greek Orthodox Arabic-speaking Community of the town of Beit Jala, near Bethlehem.

The Patriarchal Commissioner, the Most Reverend Isychios, Metropolitan of Kapitolias, led the divine liturgy, with Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Archimandrites Ieronymos and Stephanos, the Community's Arabic-speaking Presbyters, and deacon Markos as concelebrants. The parish choir sang in the Byzantine style, as a dense crowd of Orthodox flock participated in piety.

During Communion, the pastoral speech of Patriarch Theophilos was read.

On the conclusion of the service, a reception was given at the Events Hall which is adjacent to the Church.

B. At the Most Holy Tomb of the Mother of God

On Monday, the 8th/21st of September 2015, the Patriarchate celebrated the Nativity of Theotokos in the holy Shrine of Gethsemane, at the Tomb of the Mother of God.

On this day the Church commemorates the fact that from the just and childless Joachim and Anna, Maria was born by divine power and according to the laws of nature, and went on to receive the blessing of the Father within the Holy Spirit and become the Mother of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Through the birth of Theotokos "Joachim and Anna were liberated from the

indignity of childlessness, as were Adam and Eve from the attrition of death”.

The divine liturgy on the Tomb of the Mother of God was led by Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, with Archimandrite Sergios and the vicars at Gethsemane, Archimandrites Meletios and Parthenios, and Hierodeacons Markos and Dionysios as concelebrants. Archimandrite Aristovoulos sang in the presence of a congregation of monks, nuns, pilgrims from Greece, Russia and Romania, and local Arabic-speaking faithful. After the divine liturgy, Archimandrite Nektarios, hegoumen at the Shrine, hosted the Prelatic retinue at the hegoumeneion.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgTKktqYNJY>

