

# THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS CELEBRATED AT THE VILLAGE OF THE SHEPHERDS

On Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> of December 2015, the Feast of the Holy Forefathers was observed at the Church dedicated to them in Beit Sahour, namely the Village of the Shepherds, where the shepherds “living out in the fields”, urged by angels, were the first among human beings to witness the Nativity of Christ (Luke 2, 8-20).

At this Church, which is the centre of worship for the Patriarchate’s Greek Orthodox Community, the memory of the Forefathers, according to the flesh, of our Lord Jesus Christ, was observed, those who lived before the Law and under the Law, Abraham the Patriarch being the first amongst them. The Community numbers approximately 10.000 members.

The feast was led by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem. The Patriarch was welcomed at the Church’s gate by clerics, the Mayor of the town and the faithful. Co-officiating at Matins, the Breaking of Bread and the divine Liturgy were Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Methodios of Tabor and Makarios of Qatar, Patriarchal Commissioner in Qatar; the Hegoumen n Fhes, Archimandrite Ieronymos, the spiritual father of St Savva Monastery, Archimandrite Evdokimos, the Hegoumen at the Shepherds Shrine, Archimandrite Ignatios, parish priests, fathers Ibrahim, Savvas, Issa and Ioannis; Archdeacon Evlogios, and deacon Markos. The town’s choir sang in the Byzantine style in this church that includes a stone templon, a stone Throne, a stone ciborium above the Altar, a masterfully sculpted stone panarium and wooden-carved bema gates.

To the pious congregation His Beatitude preached the Word of

God in Greek.

His words were followed by the Holy Communion for atonement and eternal life.

On the conclusion of the divine Liturgy, the Patriarch distributed icons to all the members of the congregation.

The Apolysis was followed by a reception at a hall adjacent to the Church.

There, His Beatitude addressed those present in Arabic. Addressing the Patriarch were priests and distinguished members of the Community, i.e. the Patriarchate's liaison with Arabic-speaking Mass Media, vicar Issa Mousleh, and the town's Mayor.

At noon, the Community hosted the Patriarchal Entourage to lunch at a town restaurant.

**From the Secretariat-General**

<httpv://youtu.be/xzv1cPAYQ1w>

<httpv://youtu.be/eJgr2x1p4Vo>

<httpv://youtu.be/jTH5h5DCpBI>

