

# THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION AT THE PATRIARCHATE (2016)

On Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup> of May/9<sup>th</sup> of June 2016, the Patriarchate observed, on the Mount of Olives, the Despotic feast of the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The feast commemorates in joined joy and sorrow the fact that, forty days after His resurrection and His many appearances, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heavens before the eyes of His disciples, and sat on the right of the Father, carrying within Him the human nature He had acquired during His incarnation.

The Ascension was observed on the very site where it had taken place, namely on top of the Mount of Olives in the direction of Bethphage.

On the eve of the feast, Vespers was held after the blessing of the water upon the Holy Altar installed outdoors, near the mosque that includes the footprint of the Ascended Lord. The service was led by Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias who had as concelebrants Hagiotaphite Hieromonks headed by the Elder Kamarasis, Archimandrite Nektarios, and Archimandrites Epiphanius, Claudios, Parthenios, Stephanos and Sergios, father Bartholomew as master of ceremonies, and Arabic-speaking priests of St James Cathedral. Archimandrite Aristovoulos sang in Greek on the right, with Mr George Kamar singing in Arabic on the left. Members of the Arabic-speaking flock in Jerusalem, as well as monks and pilgrims, attended the service.

Vespers was followed by procession from the Shrine to the Monastery of Viri Galilaei, where the First Eothinon Gospel was read by the leading Primate, and where the Patriarch blessed participants in the procession.

On the morning of feast-day, the divine Liturgy was led by Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, having as concelebrants Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, headed by Archimandrite Nektarios, Arabic-speaking presbyters and priests visiting from Orthodox Churches. Archimandrite Aristovoulos sang with students from the Patriarchal School of Sion in Greek, as Mr George Kamar sang in Arabic with St James Choir. The service was attended by pilgrims from Galilee, Greece, Russia, Ukraine and Romania.

During the divine Liturgy, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, arrived with members of the Holy Synod to venerate before visiting the adjacent mosque.

Patriarch Theophilos went on to visit the Monastery of the Ascension, headed by Monk Achillios, the nearby Monastery of the Ascension of the Russian Church, as well as the Monastery of Viri Galilaei, headed by Archimandrite Anthimos.

This completed the celebration of this Despotic feast on the site of the Lord's Ascension, imbued with divine Grace. The feast demonstrated once more the possibility for man to become in the likeness of God, deified within Him.

### **From the Secretariat-General**

<httpv://youtu.be/eka9pWyeQVY>

<httpv://youtu.be/5Jzkvw4qo2c>

<httpv://youtu.be/fA7RcUxHPWY>

