

PASTORAL VISIT OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM IN MAFRAQ, JORDAN

On Saturday, the 30th of October/12th of November 2016, H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, crossed the bridge of the River Jordan to arrive at the Patriarchate's Bishopric in Amman, from where He left for the city of Mafraq, Northern Jordan.

The Patriarch was accompanied by the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Metropolitan Joachim of Zambia, Archimandrite Hieronimos, hegumen in Fhes, f. Issa Mousleh, and Hierodeacon Markos.

Nearing the city, His Beatitude was courteously greeted by a delegation of officials before being welcomed to the Church of the Dormition of Theotokos of the Mafrak Community, numbering approximately 120 families, by Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella, Archimandrite Hieronimos, some twenty priests of adjacent parishes, the members of the Church Board and a crowd of faithful.

The Patriarch went on to lead panegyric Vespers before inaugurating a hall built on the subvention of the Patriarchate, to host several events organized by the Rum Orthodox Community.

During dinner hosted in the inaugurated hall, His Beatitude addressed attendants in Arabic, see: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2016/11/12/25264> and offered financial aid amounting to ten thousand dinars.

Archbishop Philoumenos of Pella extended thanks for the aid and for the Patriarch's overall moral and material support, offering Him an enameled icon.

The following day, Sunday the 31st of October/13th of November 2016, a Joint Prelatic Liturgy was held in the aforementioned church, led by His Beatitude, who had as concelebrants: Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina and Philoumenos of Pella, Metropolitan Joachim of Zambia, local priests, Hierodeacon Markos and deacon Evangelos Psiaras. Attending the service was the Greek Ambassador to Jordan, Mr V. Bornovas. A choir of young men and women sang in Greek and Arabic for a large congregation.

Patriarch Theophilos preached the Word of God in Greek, referring to the wise and salvaging word of the Apostles, the Gospel of Christ's Love. "This is the light", the Patriarch said, "of Christ, the Sun of justice, we are called upon to put on, not the porphyry of the unjust rich man of today's Evangelical pericope, indulging in material goods and looking down on impoverished Lazaros who had wished to feed on crumbs falling from the rich man's table".

To explain the pericope, the Patriarch spoke of man's condition in this world and his condition in life after death, where his soul will be judged by the Son of God according to the testament of the Evangelist John: *"For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me"* (John 5, 26-30).

In Arabic, the sermon can be reached here: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2016/11/13/25262>

After the Apolysis, the pious congregation venerated the Holy Cross, held by His Beatitude, and received the *antidoron* and

an icon of Theotokos.

Patriarch Theophilos offered a Byzantine icon of Theotokos for the Church, and a pectoral cross for the priest, f. Demetrios Samai. An enameled icon of Theotokos was offered by the Community to His Beatitude.

During the reception that followed, the Patriarch offered financial blessings to the choir and to the Women's Association.

At noon, His Beatitude and Entourage sat at lunch hosted in his honour by the Community.

On the way to Amman, Patriarch Theophilos was toured by a Jordan archaeologist to the ruins of two recently excavated Byzantine churches with mosaics and Greek inscriptions, in the Irhab area. From there, He left for the Bishopric of Amman from where He returned to Jerusalem, praising God for this visit.

From the Secretariat-General

