

# **HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM VISITS THE BASILICA OF BETHLEHEM**

On the afternoon of Wednesday, the 8<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> of December 2016, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, visited the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in order to inspect restoration works carried out there, particularly on the northern side of the Narthex where, at the expenses of the Hieron Koinon, the Office and reception hall have been restored. His Beatitude was welcomed by the Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem, Archbishop Theophylaktos of Jordan, and the city's Police Director, Muhammad Abu Rub. His Beatitude was accompanied by Archbishop Theophylaktos along the restored sites, then addressed by the Chief of Palestinian Police, Hazim Atallah and Bethlehem's Administrator, Ala Salabi. The Chief thanked the Patriarch for helping the police and pointed out their harmonious collaboration with Archbishop Theophylaktos for the good of the City, praising the work the latter carries out in Bethlehem with the Patriarch's blessings.

Patriarch Theophilos, on His turn, thanked Mr Atallah and Mr Salabi for their collaboration with the Patriarchate and especially for the help they provide to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. He then praised the Archbishop of Jordan for his initiative to restore the site and wished that the Police continue to work earnestly for the safety of the Church and the service of the pilgrims but above all for safeguarding the rights amongst the three Communities.

Finally, His Beatitude expressed satisfaction for the installation of an absorbent candelabrum at St Nicholas Church, intended to keep the Church clean from candle smoke.

**From the Secretariat-General**