THE FOREFEAST OF THEOPHANY AT THE PATRIARCHATE

The Forefeast of Theophany was celebrated by the Patriarchate according to the Typikon order of the Church and the Status Quo of the Patriarchate, on Thursday January 5/18, 2018.

After the Service of Matins at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen on the morning of the aforementioned day, the Service of Royal Hours of Theophany followed, officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos.

The Services continued with the Great Vespers of Theophany and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, at the presence of His Beatitude. At the end of the Divine Liturgy the choir started chanting the troparia for the Blessing of the Waters "The voice of the Lord upon the waters" and His Beatitude led the Small Service of the Blessing of the Waters according to the order of the Euchologion and blessed the Fathers and the Congregation.

Having finished the Service in the Church, still dressed in their liturgical vestments and continuing the chanting, His Beatitude the Archbishops and Priests went to the Patriarchate, where they blessed the premises with the Holy Water and the Fathers sang the Polychronion to His Beatitude.

A while later, the Greek Orthodox Community from St. James' Cathedral came to the Patriarchate singing hymns, with the Most Reverend Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastiya, who had celebrated the Divine Liturgy and held the Service of the Blessing of the Waters there. His Eminence paid his respect to His Beatitude and blessed Him and the hall.

After a short rest, escorted by Hagiotaphite Fathers, His Beatitude left Jerusalem and arrived at the very old and currently under refurbishment Monastery of St. John the Forerunner, at the West Bank of the River Jordan.

There, His Beatitude was warmly received by the Priests who were dressed in their liturgical vestments, Archimandrite Bartholomew who is responsible for the Monastery, and large crowds of faithful as well as visitors. There were also present Israeli Military Officials, the Coordinator of the Activities in the Territories, Mr. Yoav Mordehai, the Head of the Civil Administration in Jericho Mr.Azhar Ganam, Mr. Ceasar Martjieh from the Ministry of Interior, and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos.

The 9th Hour was read inside the renovated Church, followed by a procession which was led by His Beatitude. The choir was led by the choir leader of the All-holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos, who had the help of the left choir singer of the Church of the Resurrection Mr. George Alvanos and others, while they were chanting all the way towards the West Bank of the River Jordan.

There, on the platform of the Patriarchate, His Beatitude led Vespers and the Small Service of the Blessing of Waters and immersed the Cross in the River Jordan, singing "when Thou wast baptized in the Jordan O Lord".

Having blessed as many faithful as possible from the large congregation of pilgrims — locals, Greeks, Russians and Romanians — His Beatitude headed for the Monastery of St. John the Forerunner, where a festal meal was provided.

From Secretariat-General

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