

# THE FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, November 21/ December 4, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos at the Temple, at the Holy Nunnery of Megali Panagia which is adjacent to the Patriarchate.

On this feast the Church celebrates the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos in the Temple when she was three years old. She was brought to the Temple by her parents and entered into the Holy Altar of the Temple of Solomon, where she was prepared as a chosen vessel in order to contain within her the One whom nothing can contain and incarnate the -until then without flesh- Word of God.

For this feast there was Vespers in the evening and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in on the feast day, led by the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, with Hieromonks and deacons as co-celebrants. The chanting was delivered by Archimandrite Eusevios on the right and the Choir Leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Mr. Constantinos Spyropoulos and the Patriarchal School students on the left, while the services were attended by many monks, nuns, laity, pilgrims and local faithful.

His Eminence delivered a Sermon before the Holy Communion, underlining the virtues of the Holy Ancestors of God Joachim and Anna, who for many years endured silently the scorning of the Jews due to their being sterile, having steadfast faith in God. Moreover, he praised the character of Holy Prophet Zacharias, who having had the gift of prophesy and recognizing the future Mother of the Son of God, instead of keeping her in the girl's school near the Temple, he took her in the

forbidden sacred area of the Temple, the Holy of Holies, thus causing the rage of the Jews against him and putting himself into grave danger.

“We are able, therefore, to honour this great Feast of the Mother of God, imitating the great patience, the steadfast faith and the sacrifice of the Holy Ancestors of God, as well as the heroic character, which was manifested by the Holy Prophet Zacharias. And while they displayed such a virtue, living in the darkness of the Law and not knowing of the Resurrection of the Lord, we on the contrary, have the special blessing to live within the Church and with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, making only a small effort in order to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven”.

After the Divine Liturgy, the renovator of the Church of the Monastery and of its ancient icons, Reverend Nun Melanie, offered a reception to the Episcopal entourage and the congregation at the Hegoumeneion and the courtyard of the Church.

**From Secretariat-General**