

CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, December 24, 2022/January 6, 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated Christmas Eve.

The celebration started in the morning of that day, at 9.15 a.m. from the Patriarchate, where the Israeli Police and the Boy Scouts came and delivered their wishes on the occasion.

Then the litany began, headed by our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, accompanied by the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, towards the Gate of David with the Scouts marching before them.

Then the escort boarded vehicles and headed towards the Monastery of the Prophet Elias via Hevron Street.

At the entrance of the Monastery, His Beatitude was received by the Commissioners of the cities of Beit Jala, Bethlehem and the Village of the Shepherds and the Israeli Civil Military Command, followed by short prayers in the Church and a reception in the hall.

Subsequently, the Patriarchal escort went out to Bethlehem, led by four Israeli mounted policemen, without the border control of Rachel's tomb.

From there, motorcyclists of the Palestinian Police preceded the Patriarchal Escort to the courtyard of the City Hall of the city of Bethlehem, a crowd of local people and pilgrims greeting from the right and left of the road and the Scouts marching.

In the hall of the City Hall, the Patriarchal Representative of Bethlehem His Eminence Metropolitan of the Diocecaesarea, Benedictos addressed the Beatitude and the Patriarchal

Entourage started chanting "Your Birth, Christ our God" and "The Virgin today..." and the procession entered the Basilica of the Nativity through its humble door.

At the entrance, His Beatitude was greeted by the Greek Consul General on the right and on the left by the Sacristan of Bethlehem, Archimandrite Polykarpos.

Afterwards, the Patriarchal entourage through the centre of the Basilica, which is a right only for the Orthodox and from the area in front of the iconostasion and through the chapel of Saint Nikolaos to the south, went to the Grotto of the Nativity for veneration.

The Royal Hours of Christmas 1st, 3rd and 6th followed, after the incense of the High Priests, His Beatitude read the Gospel of the 1st Hour and offered the incense of the 1st Hour in the centre of the Basilica, Vespers after incense and the Blessing of Bread and the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great.

At noon, His Eminence Metropolitan Benediktos of Diocaesarea, hosted a meal.

From Secretariat-General