

CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, December 24, 2023/January 6, 2024, the Christmas Feast was celebrated in the Patriarchate per the current Status Quo and the Typikon of the Church of Jerusalem as follows:

At 11.15 am the Patriarchal Escort from the Patriarchate accompanied by the Israeli Police moved towards Jaffa Gate, where the escort members boarded vehicles and went to the Holy Monastery of the Prophet Elias. There was a reception of His Beatitude, prayers in the Holy Church and a small reception by the good keeper of the Monastery, monk Achillios.

Then His Beatitude, followed by the Israeli Police, proceeded to the border checkpoint of Rachel's Tomb. This was held in the honourable presence of the representatives of the Israeli Political Administration and the Minister of the Interior of Israel, Mr Caesar Marjieh. From this point, accompanied by competent representatives of the Palestinian Authority, His Beatitude proceeded to the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. He was then addressed by the Patriarchal Commissioner of Bethlehem, His Eminence Metropolitan Benedictos of Diocecareia.

From the square of Bethlehem, the Patriarchal Continuity of the procession of vested Priests was directed to the Gate of the Basilica under the chanting "Christ is born, give ye glory" and "Thy Nativity, Christ our God, gave the world the light of knowledge".

His Beatitude entered the Basilica and to his right, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem, Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos, proceeded to the Catholicon, by right only of the Orthodox, He came to the room in front of the iconostasis

and then headed to the Grotto of the Nativity through its southern gate.

After the veneration at the Grotto of the Nativity, the Patriarchal Escort ascended from the north gate to the Catholicon of the Basilica in front of the iconostasis. In this place, the Great Vespers of Christmas was celebrated, presided over by His Beatitude, with the joint prayer of Priests and deacons. Vespers, following the Status Quo, was dismissed at 3.30 p.m. At the end of Vespers, a fasting meal was offered by the well-preserving and protective of our pilgrimage rights in Bethlehem, His Eminence Metropolitan Benedictos of Diocesarea. Everyone in praise and thanks to God went to rest and prepare for the All-night Vigil of Christmas Day.

From Secretariat-General