

THE FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD AND THE COMMEMORATION OF SAINT BASIL AT THE PATRIARCHATE

Early at dawn on Thursday, 1/14 January 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the circumcision of the Lord in the flesh and the commemoration of Saint Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, with Matins and the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and a Procession as 'Parresia', according to the Status Quo.

The festivities were officiated by H.H.B. with Matins in the Catholicon of the Church of the Resurrection, and the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Sepulchre, with co-celebrants their Eminences; Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, and the Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Philoumenos of Pella and Aristovoulos of Madaba, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks with first in rank the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos. The Vigil was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras and only a few faithful, due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

After the Divine Liturgy, a procession with the relics of the right hand of Saint Basil was held, three times around the Sacred Edicule and around the Shrines.

At the end of the Vigil, the New Year Cake was cut at the Office of Geronda Sacristan.

In the morning, His Beatitude cut the New Year Cake for the Hagiotaphite Fathers at the Epitropikon, after the Divine Liturgy that was celebrated in the Monastic Church of Saints

Constantine and Helen. Then He went to the H. Monastery of Saint Basil for veneration, while the Divine Liturgy in honour of the Saint was still in progress.

From Secretariat

THE FEAST OF SAINT MELANI AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday. 31 December 2020/ 13 January 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of Saint Melanin the Roman.

On this feast, the whole Church and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates that Saint Melani lived in the 4th century and was born in a rich and noble family of Rome. When all her beloved ones died, he went to Egypt, where she fed thousands of starving Monks and Christians with her own belongings, and later on, she came to Jerusalem. She lived in strict asceticism, humility, poverty, and charity towards the poor, in the Mount of Olives and in a hermitage, which is located at the place of the chapel built in her honour, inside the Monastery of Megali Panagia. The Monastery was the first place of residence for the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and today it is a Nunnery with approximately twenty Nuns.

The feast of Saint Melani was celebrated in this chapel with Vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning, led by Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos, with the co-celebration of the Ministering Priest of the Monastery,

Archimandrite Makarios and Hierodeacon Simeon. The chanting was delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Aristovoulos of Madaba, and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos as the services were attended by the Monastery Nuns, and Nuns of the other Monasteries of the Patriarchate.

After the Divine Liturgy, the renovator of the Catholicon, and caretaker of the preservation of the icons, with the pilgrims' donations, Reverend Abbess Melani, offered a reception to all in the Hegoumeneion.

From Secretariat-General

CHRISTMAS AT THE H. ARCHDIOCESE OF QATAR

Christmas was celebrated in Doha of Qatar amidst the current pandemic.

On Thursday evening, 11/24 December 2020, Vespers was followed by Matins and then the Divine Liturgy in the Arabic and English languages.

On Friday morning, 12/25 December 2020, Matins and the Divine Liturgy were celebrated in the Arabic, Greek and Romanian languages, at the presence of the Ambassador of Moldavia in Doha, Mr Victor Tvirtsun, and the Defence Attache' of the Embassy of Greece, Colonel Kyriakos Dimitrakoulas. Due to covid-19, only one hundred and fifty faithful Christians are allowed to participate in the services inside the Holy Cathedral of Saint Isaac the Syriac. The other faithful who came and exceeded this number participated in the Matins and

the Divine Liturgy that was held by Priest Demetrios at the Chapel of the Dormition.

On Wednesday, 24 December 2020 / 6 January 2021, Matins was held, the Royal Hours were read, and then Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great were celebrated. Likewise, in the evening, Matins and the Divine Liturgy were celebrated in the Slavonic and Serbian languages, with the participation of the Ambassador of Serbia in Doha, Mr Yasminko Pozderatch, and many faithful.

The services were led by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Qatar, with the co-celebration of Priest Demetrios. The Christmas Message of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III was read in the languages the Divine Liturgy was held at each time, and the chanting of the choir was also delivered in the same languages.

From the H. Archdiocese of Qatar

SAINT STEPHEN'S FEAST AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, 27 December 2020/ 9 January 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the commemoration of the Holy First Martyr and Archdeacon Stephen.

On this feast, the Church commemorates the narrative according to the book of Acts of the Apostles (chapter 7), which reads that Stephen was one of the seven deacons elected by the Apostles, "to wait at the tables" (Acts 6:2). Stephen was full of Godly zeal, preaching Jesus to be the Christ when the Sanhedrin convened a meeting and summoned him for confession.

Then Stephen referred to the history of the Jews, concluding that he sees the Son of God sitting at the right side of the Creator. For this confession, Stephen was led to a place in Gethsemane and was stoned to death, while he was praying for those who stoned him; “and they laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul” (Acts 7).

In honour of Saint Stephen, at the beautiful Church which is built at the place of his stoning, Vespers was held in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning of the Feast. The Services were led by Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, with the co-celebration of Archimandrite Makarios, Fr Hader Baramki and Archdeacon Mark, as the chanting was delivered by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Epiphanius. At the end of the Liturgy, there was a supplication at the rock of Saint Stephen’s stoning. Only a few faithful attended the prayers, and everybody was offered a reception after dismissal, by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Epiphanius.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Friday, 26 December 2020/ 8 January 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Synaxis of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

As ‘synaxis’ we mean the gathering of the faithful in order to

honour especially the Mother of God, for her contribution to our salvation, which is the conception through the Holy Spirit, the incarnation and the nativity in the flesh of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

This feast was celebrated at the monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, with the Divine Liturgy by the ministering Priest Archimandrite Stephen, with the Patriarchal participation in prayer, at the chanting of the Byzantine choir leader Archimandrite Eusevios on the right and of the Typikon keeper Archimandrite Alexios on the left. Present at the service were the Hagiotaphite Fathers, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, representatives of the Patriarchate of Moscow and of the Patriarchate of Romania, but not any faithful due to the covid-19 restrictive measures.

A reception at the Patriarchate Hall followed the Divine Liturgy, where the Zion School students sang the Christmas carols.

From Secretariat-General

CRHISTMAS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, 25 December 2020 / 7 January 2021, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of the Nativity of Christ at the place of Christ's Nativity in the flesh, in Bethlehem, according to the Typikon Order of the Church and the Status Quo.

1. Christmas Eve

The Christmas celebration began of Christmas Eve, Wednesday 24

December 2020/ 6 January 2021.

On this day's morning, the Patriarchal Entourage marched from the Patriarchate Headquarters to Jaffa Gate. There, His Beatitude and the few members of His Entourage this year, due to the covid-19 measures, got on the vehicles and went to the Monastery of Prophet Elijah.

At the Monastery, the Caretaker Monk Achilios and the sisters under his obedience welcomed His Beatitude and hosted a reception at the Hegoumeneion, at the presence of the Mayor of Beit Jala, the Israeli Military Authorities and Mr Caesar Marjie.

From there the Patriarchal Entourage was escorted by five Israeli horsemen, who headed the procession until Rachel's tomb. From that point, the Palestinian motorcyclists escorted the Patriarchal Entourage until the square of the Basilica of the Nativity.

At the square, His Beatitude was welcomed by the Sacristan of the Shrine of Bethlehem, Archimandrite Polykarpos, on behalf of the Patriarchal Representative in Bethlehem, His Eminence Archbishop Theophylaktos of Jordan, delivering an address, along with representatives of the Palestinian Authority, the Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and the Arab-speaking clergy.

Consequently, the procession of the entrance of the Basilica began, under the chanting of the Christmas hymns. The Patriarchal Entourage stood at the middle of the Basilica, which is a right that belongs solely to the Orthodox, reached the Catholicon and from there went down to the God-receiving cave through the south gate for veneration, as the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras was standing on the right side of the entrance. The Service of the Royal Hours of Christmas followed Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, at the presence of only a

few faithful Christians, according to the restrictive covid-19 measures. The service finished at 3:30 pm according to the Status Quo.

A reception was offered by the Hegoumen, His Eminence Archbishop Theophylaktos of Jordan after the service.

2. Christmas Day Festivities

The celebration for Christmas day began at the night of the Christmas Eve.

At 22: 30 pm of Christmas Eve the officiating Metropolitan, Most Reverend Isychios of Kapitolias, came down from the Monastery through the entrance of the Baptism area and led Matins at the Catholicon, standing at the throne since the time of the Six Psalms.

Around the time of the Katavasie (11:30 pm), His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos came to the Holy Altar and gave the blessing to the Archbishops and the Priests to start the Service.

When all the clergy were dressed in their liturgical vestments, they started the litany, as His Beatitude had on His right side the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras. With the Christmas hymns being chanted they went down to the God-receiving Cave, where the Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ was born in the flesh, He who was immaterial before.

After the Gospel according to Saint Luke "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed..." (Luke 2:1-20), His Beatitude's Christmas message was read by His Eminence, Geronda Secretary-General, Aristarchos of Constantina in Greek (see video) and by the representative of the Patriarchate in the Arabic media Fr Issa Mousleh in Arabic.

After the veneration at the Star and the Manger, the procession began, three times around the five aisles of the Basilica interiorly, while the Canons of Christmas were chanted by Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the right in Greek, and by the Bethlehem community choir on the left in Arabic.

Matins continued after the procession with the 9th Ode, the Praises and the Doxology and after Matins, the Liturgy of Saint Chrysostom was led at the Holy Altar of Bethlehem by His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with co-celebrants their Eminences the Archbishops; Theophanes of Gerassa, Aristarchos of Constantina, Philoumenos of Pella and Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Deacons. The chanting was delivered by Hierodeacon Simeon and Mr Vasilios Gotsopoulos on the right in Greek, and by the Bethlehem community choir on the left in Arabic. The Service was attended by the Consul General of Greece and his relatives.

Simultaneously to the Divine Liturgy in the Catholicon, another Liturgy was celebrated at the Cave of the Lord's Nativity by His Eminence Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias.

After the Divine Liturgy, a modest reception was offered at the hegoumeneion.

From Secretariat-General

THE SERVICE OF THE HOLY UNCTION AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday afternoon, 23 December 2020 / 5 January 2021, the Sacrament of the Holy Unction was held at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen as a preparation for Christmas.

The service of the Sacrament of the Holy Unction was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with the co-celebration of six Archbishops, to form the number of seven officiating Archbishops, according to the Typikon of the Church.

From Secretariat-General

THE ROYAL HOURS OF CHRISTMAS AT THE MONASTIC CHURCH OF SAINTS CONSTANTINE AND HELEN

On Tuesday, 23 December 2020 /5 January 2021, the Royal Hours of Christmas were read at the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen of the Patriarchate.

The Royal Hours were read one day before Christmas Eve in order to ease the pilgrimage program of the Christmas Feast on Christmas Eve in Bethlehem.

The Royal Hours will be read according to the Status Quo on Christmas Eve in Bethlehem.

The Service of the Royal Hours at the Church of Saints Constantine and Helen was led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the participation in prayer of Hagiotaphite Archbishops and Monks.

From Secretariat-General

THE ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE HAGIOTAPHITE FATHERS

The established annual memorial service for the departed Fathers, memorable Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Archbishops, Hieromonks and Monks and Nuns was held on Sunday, 21 December 2020 / 3 January 2021, Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, after the Divine Liturgy at the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The service was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the presence of Monks and laity, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Vlioras and members of the Church of Jerusalem.

After the service, the Patriarchal Entourage returned to the Patriarchate Headquarters for the reception with boiled wheat.

From Secretariat-General

THE FEAST OF SAINT MODESTOS PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Thursday, 18/31 December 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of our Father among the Saints Modestos, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

On this feast, the Church, and especially the Church of Jerusalem commemorates that Saint Modestos was ordained Patriarch of Jerusalem right after the destruction of Palestine by the Persians in A.D. 614. During this Persian raid, Churches and Monasteries were destroyed and thousands of Monks and other Christians were slaughtered.

At this time of great calamity and hardship of the Church, Saint Modestos was sent as an Angel of comfort, and he renovated and rebuilt the destroyed Churches and Monasteries, as he also supported the suffering from the Persian raid Christians, both morally and materially. Saint Modestos is also the patron Saint and healer of the ill animals.

The commemoration of Saint Modestos was celebrated by the Patriarchate at the Monastery dedicated to him, where his tomb lies, along with that of Saint Prokopios, in Abu Tor hill, opposite the Holy Zion.

In this Church, which the Hagiotaphite Archimandrite Modestos started to renovate in the '70s, and is currently being refurbished by Monk Antiohos, the Caretaker of the Shrine, Vespers was held in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning of the Feast, by Archimandrite Makarios and Hierodeacon Marcellus. The chanting was delivered by the Byzantine choir leader of the Monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen, Archimandrite Eusevios. The Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Vlioras and only a few

faithful attended the services due to the covid-19 restrictive measures.

During the Divine Liturgy, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos and Hagiotaphite Fathers visited the Monastery for veneration.

The Patriarchal Entourage and all faithful were offered a reception by the good Caretaker of the Monastery Monk Antiohos, at the courtyard of the Monastery.

From Secretariat-General