

NEW YEAR CAKE CUTTING AT THE PATRIARCHAL SCHOOL

On the evening of 4th /17th January 2017 the established interschool New Year Cake ceremony took place at the Priestly Patriarchal School on the hill of Holy Zion.

Present at the ceremony were, the President of the Schools Board Most Reverend Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis, Hagiotaphite Fathers, the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos, members of the Greek Community and the School teachers.

The Director of the School Mr. Nikolaos Souliotis gave a short address to His Beatitude in a welcoming gesture.

His Beatitude cut the New Year cake wishing spiritual and educational progress to the students, saying "have an auspicious, happy and peaceful New Year 2017" and distributed the pieces to the guests honouring the ceremony and to the students.

During the distribution the students sang the New Year carols, St. Basil's Apolytikion and that of the Circumcision of the Lord and other songs.

His Beatitude offered the Christmas presents of the School to the students, who overjoyed thanked Him in return and promised to live up to the expectations of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood.

From Secretariat-General

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VISIT OF THE MAYOR OF JERUSALEM AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday morning, 29th December 2016/11th January 2017, the Mayor of Jerusalem, Mr. Nir Barkat with a team of approximately twenty of his associates visited the Patriarchate on the occasion of the Feast of Christmas and the New Year.

The Mayor and his entourage were received by H.H.B our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with Hagiotaphite Fathers, among whom were the Patriarchal Vicar Most Reverend Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, Geronda Secretary-General Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos. At his visit, the Mayor of Jerusalem expressed his wishes for the Feast of Christmas to His Beatitude and assured him that the Mayoralty is doing the best in its power for the peaceful and seamless co-existence for all Jerusalem citizens and the Christians of the Holy Land.

His Beatitude thanked the Mayor for his wishes and visit, as well as for his concern for Jerusalem and the Christian pilgrims, and added that the Patriarchate wishes the preservation of the religious and spiritual character of Jerusalem and the peaceful cohabitation of the members of the religious parties in it.

The Mayor offered sweets to His Beatitude, while the latter offered Mr. Barkat a china vase with Jerusalem portraits.

From Secretariat-General

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FESTAL VISITS ON THE OCCASION OF CHRISTMAS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Monday 27th December 2016/ 9th January 2017, the other Christian Communities visited the Patriarchate on the occasion of Christmas in the following order:

1. At 9:18am the monastic community of the Franciscans of the Holy Land visited the Patriarchate, a team of approximately fifty monks headed by their Hegoumen Fr. Francesco Paton.

To their address to him, His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos answered in English as follows in the link

below:<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/01/09/29042>

2. At 10:00am the other Christian communities headed by their Leaders visited the Patriarchate, namely the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem, the Anglican Church, the Lutheran Church, the Coptic Church, the Ethiopian Church and other Christian teams with them. To their short addresses, His Beatitude answered as follows:<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/01/09/29038>

3. At 11:00am the Armenian Church in Jerusalem visited the

Patriarchate. To their address His Beatitude answered as follows in the link:<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2017/01/09/29035>

4. At 11:30am the Apostolic Delegate visited the Patriarchate.
5. At noon the Orthodox Communities of the Patriarchate visited His Beatitude.

From Secretariat-General

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**VISIT OF THE HAGIOTAPHITE
BROTHERHOOD TO THE FRANCISCAN
AND THE LATIN PATRIARCHATE ON**

THE OCCASION OF CHIRSTMAS

On Thursday morning of 16th/29th December 2016, the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood headed by its Hegoumen His Beatitude and our Father the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, visited on the occasion of Christmas the Franciscan Friars where Hegoumen is Fr. Francesco Paton and the Latin Patriarchate where Patriarch is the former Custodian Pierbattista Pizzaballa.

To the Franciscan Friars His Beatitude gave the following speech in English, follow the link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2016/12/29/28806>

For the His Beatitude's speech in English to the Latin Patriarchate follow the link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2016/12/29/28800>

From Secretarial General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM VISITS THE BASILICA OF BETHLEHEM

On the afternoon of Wednesday, the 8th/21st of December 2016, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, visited the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in order to inspect restoration works carried out there, particularly on the northern side of the Narthex where, at the expenses of the

Hieron Koinon, the Office and reception hall have been restored. His Beatitude was welcomed by the Patriarchal Commissioner in Bethlehem, Archbishop Theophylaktos of Jordan, and the city's Police Director, Muhammad Abu Rub. His Beatitude was accompanied by Archbishop Theophylaktos along the restored sites, then addressed by the Chief of Palestinian Police, Hazim Atallah and Bethlehem's Administrator, Ala Salabi. The Chief thanked the Patriarch for helping the police and pointed out their harmonious collaboration with Archbishop Theophylaktos for the good of the City, praising the work the latter carries out in Bethlehem with the Patriarch's blessings.

Patriarch Theophilos, on His turn, thanked Mr Atallah and Mr Salabi for their collaboration with the Patriarchate and especially for the help they provide to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. He then praised the Archbishop of Jordan for his initiative to restore the site and wished that the Police continue to work earnestly for the safety of the Church and the service of the pilgrims but above all for safeguarding the rights amongst the three Communities.

Finally, His Beatitude expressed satisfaction for the installation of an absorbent candelabrum at St Nicholas Church, intended to keep the Church clean from candle smoke.

From the Secretariat-General

**HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH
OF JERUSALEM DECORATES MR**

ALEXANDROS GENNIMATAS

On Tuesday, the 7th/20th of December 2016, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, bestowed upon Mr Alexandros-Andreas Gennimatas, Consul at the Greek Embassy in Tel Aviv, the honorary distinction of Crusader of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, in recognition of his contribution to the rights and interests of the Patriarchate in the Holy Land.

Mr Gennimatas thanked His Beatitude for the honour conferred upon him and for His valuable suggestions and instructions on the relations between Greece and the Patriarchate during his diplomatic tenure. He also pledged to remain a herald for the Patriarchate's pastoral, peacemaking and cultural work.

From the Secretariat-General

http://youtu.be/_uVTvCCTpP4



ISRAEL'S COORDINATOR IN THE TERRITORIES VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the morning of Monday, the 29th of November/12th of December 2016, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories, Major General Yoav (Poli) Mordechai, accompanied by Israeli military men from the Bethlehem region, i.e. Mr Dani Zandler and Mr Kfir, and Mr Cesar Margie, responsible for

the Division of Christian Affairs of the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs, visited the Patriarchate.

The Major General and his attendants were welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

During the visit, Mr Mordechai expressed his will to contribute to the preparations for a peaceful celebration of Christmas. His Beatitude extended thanks for facilitations provided to pilgrims and for permits issued by the Israeli army to members of the Arabic-speaking Communities of the Patriarchate from the occupied territories and to pilgrims from various Orthodox countries in order to reach Jerusalem, Bethlehem and the Jordan river for the Epiphany.

The ancient Monastery of St John the Baptist, by the Jordan river, has been renovated by the Patriarchate and awaits the approval of the Israeli army for electric power supply.

At the end of the meeting, Patriarch Theophilos offered Mr Mordechai a ceramic tray with a representation and a medal commemorating 2000 years of Christianity. Mr Morderchai offered the Patriarch an army medal.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/udUkhptj0oA>



HELLENIC AIR FORCE SQUADRON VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

Before noon on Saturday the 27th of November/10th of December 2016, a forty-member group of Squadrons 341 and 347 of the Hellenic Air Force, under squadron leader, Demetrios Gritzaliotis, and accompanied by the representative of the Greek Embassy in Israel, Mr Broumas, visited the Patriarchate.

The group was welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

His Beatitude praised the members of the group for their mission to defend their homeland and referred to the Patriarchate's own mission in the religious field, to proclaim the Gospel of Christ and to safeguard the Holy Shrines, as well as to its cultural and peacemaking mission vis-a-vis the as yet unresolved political situation in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Extending thanks, this select air force group received the Patriarch's blessings and went on to venerate at the Church of the Resurrection and the Holy Land.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/GxfepxqmD2E>

WCC GENERAL SECRETARY MEETS

WITH H.B. THEOPHILOS, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

On the morning of Wednesday, the 24th of November/7th of December 2016, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Mr Olav Fykse Tveit, accompanied by Ms Marianne Ejdersten, Director of Communications, and former Jordan MP and member of the Central Committee of the WCC, Mr Ode Kawas, was welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Theophylaktos of Jordan, and the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina.

An interesting discussion unfolded in the context of the meeting, on the Christian character of Jerusalem, the position of Christians in the Middle East and the possibilities for humanitarian aid in view of the problems facing Christians in the occupied areas of Palestine and elsewhere.

On this occasion, His Beatitude expressed the Patriarchate's interest in continuing to participate in and collaborating with the World Council of Churches.

On the conclusion of the meeting, the General Secretary of the WCC offered His Beatitude a cross and emblem of the WCC. The Patriarch reciprocated with icons of Theotokos to the three guests, as well as an icon of the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulchre.

From the Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE, THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM, VISITS SYRIAN REFUGEE CAMP IN JORDAN

On Tuesday, the 23rd of November/6th of December 2016, H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, demonstrating in practice His concern about refugees displaced from Syria, visited the Badia refugee camp in Jordan.

Ms Wafa Gousous, Rum Orthodox from Karak, and Director of the Patriarchate's Office in Amman, had already visited the camp to offer humanitarian help. During His visit, Patriarch Theophilos offered food, clothing and toys for the children.

Fully aware of the harsh conditions of living facing the members of the aforementioned camp, especially during winter, His Beatitude appealed to the International Community, persons and organizations, to supply practical aid through the Patriarchate's Office in Amman, so as to ease Jordan's financial burden.

From the Secretariat-General

<http://youtu.be/C5kJLQIqPkU>

