

THE ARMENIANS VISIT THE PATRIARCHATE ON THE OCCASION OF CHRISTMAS

At 11:00 am of Saturday the 27th of December 2015/9th of January 2016, the Armenian Church in Jerusalem visited the Patriarchate on the occasion of Christmas according to the Julian calendar.

The Armenian clerics, headed by Archbishop Aris Shirvanian, were welcomed by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of the visit, His Eminence Aris addressed the Patriarch saying that the light of the Nativity of Jesus Christ upon the world has illuminated the nations that went on to receive it and formulate the Church. However, to this day there are nations that do not accept the truth of Christ, hence why collaboration must be sought towards addressing such issues.

His Beatitude made a reply speech in English, see link:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2016/01/09/19736>

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/4tvwZSASg0I>



VISIT OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS TO THE PATRIARCHATE

A. Visit of the Franciscan Custody

At 9.15 a.m. of Saturday the 27th of December 2015/9th of January 2016, the Franciscan Custody visited the Patriarchate of Jerusalem on the occasion of Christmas.

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

The Custodian of the Holy Land, f. Pierre Batista Pizzaballa, went on to address the Patriarch, saying we praise God for this year's celebrations amidst problems and persecutions of Christians in the Holy Land and across the world. However, we do live in hope, as the Lord entered our life and our history in this very region and we have been given the privilege to live here and give testament to the world. His Beatitude replied to these words in English, see link:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2016/01/09/19740>

B. All Christian Communities visit the Patriarchate on the occasion of Christmas

At 10.00 a.m. of the same day, most of the Christian Communities in Jerusalem (with the exception of the Franciscans and the Armenians, who had called on the Patriarch at a different time), namely the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, the Syrians, the Copts, the Ethiopians, the Lutherans and the Anglicans visited the Patriarchate on the occasion of Christmas.

The Heads and members of the Communities were welcomed by His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers.

In the context of this meeting, the Heads of Churches wished the Patriarch and the Brotherhood He heads a blessed New Year by the grace of the Lord Incarnate. They also extended wishes for collaboration for the sake of Christian flocks in Jerusalem, hoping for peace and safety in the city.

The Patriarch made a reply speech in English, see link:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2016/01/09/19738>.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/GPBIwa1TsLQ>



RECEPTION IN HONOUR OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT

On Christmas Eve, namely the 24th of December 2015/6th of January 2016, at approximately 7:00 pm, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, hosted a reception in honour of the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas Abu Mazen and officials of the Palestinian government, as well as members of our flock.

During the reception, His Beatitude addressed Mr Abbas and offered him a Christmas present.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/SWB9sxI5CuE>



HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM SPEAKS AT THE CHIEF RABBINATE OF ISRAEL

On Monday the 8th/21st of December 2015, during a meeting of the Heads of Churches at the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem made an address in English , see link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2015/12/21/18978>

From the Secretariat-General

PATRIARCH THEOPHILOS OF JERUSALEM SPEAKS AT THE ISRAELI MINISTRY OF TOURISM

On Monday the 8th/21st of December 2015, during a meeting of Jerusalem's Heads of Churches, their attendants and other guests, organized by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism on the occasion of Christmas and the New Year, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, addressed guests in English , see link: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2015/12/21/18975>

From the Secretariat-General

HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM LIGHTS UP THE CHRISTMAS TREE IN NAZARETH

On the evening of Sunday, the 30th of November/13th of December 2015, His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, accompanied by the Most Reverend Joachim, Metropolitan of former Zambia, arrived in Nazareth, Galilee.

There, in the town square, Patriarch Theophilos lit up the Christmas tree, extending wishes for a happy New Year. Attending the ceremony were Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the town's priests, the Chairwoman of the Board of the Greek Orthodox Arabic-speaking Community, the Mayor, the Director of the Office of Christian Affairs at Israel's Ministry of Religious Affairs, representatives of other Churches and Community Services, and a crowd of approximately 10.000. The Patriarch addressed those present in Arabic.

From the Secretariat-General

PASTORAL VISIT OF HIS

BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM TO JORDAN

A. Visit to Fhes

On Friday the 28th of November/11th of December 2015, H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, crossed the Jordan River bridge near the site of the Baptismal of the Lord and arrived at the town of Fhes, a suburb of Amman, Jordan. He was accompanied by the Elder Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos; the Patriarchate's liaison with Arabic-speaking Media, f. Isla Musleh; and Archdeacon Evlogios.

There, on the conclusion of the d. Liturgy, the Patriarch officiated at the forty-day memorial for the late Elias Sues, dedicated servant of the Greek-Orthodox Community. Co-officiating were Archimandrite Ieronymos, hegoumen of the Community, and the Community's vicars. Relatives of the departed priest attended the ceremony.

In honour of Elias Sues, the Patriarch addressed the faithful in Arabic, see link:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2015/12/11/16843>

After distributing the *antidoron*, Patriarch Theophilos offered His condolences to the late priest's family.

B. Visit to Marka

On the afternoon of the same day, His Beatitude visited Marka quarter in Amman, particularly St Nicholas Church, to offer His moral support after the recent incident of arson against the church's bema. The church was built on land offered by the Jordan Government, by means of financial aid provided by the Patriarchate on the supervision of presbyter f. Issa Ayas.

C. Meeting with Advisory Committee

On the evening of the same day, His Beatitude and attendants met at the Bishopric in Amman with representatives of the Advisory Committee appointed by the Patriarch. The representatives presented issues of interest to the flock in Amman i.e. the inauguration of churches in Jordan, the event organized by UCLAN Cyprus for the benefit of Syrian refugees, financial aid for St Nicholas, Marka, the establishment of a student fund, the foundation of a school in Salt and other towns of Jordan, as well as the upcoming plenary meeting of the Advisory Committee.

From the Secretariat-General

THE ‘HALO TRUST’ LANDMINE CLEARANCE ORGANIZATION VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On the morning of Wednesday, the 26th of November/9th of December 2015, representatives of the ‘The Halo Trust’ mineclearance organization visited the Patriarchate to discuss the demining project in the Jordan river on the Baptismal Site of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The ‘Halo Trust’ representatives were welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of delegates of other Christian Churches in the Holy Land owning property on the site of the Lord’s Baptismal, i.e. the Franciscans, the Armenians, the Patriarchate of Romania and the Copts.

The 'Halo Trust' explained the Church representatives their positions, founded on humanitarian criteria, towards demining the aforementioned area so as to avoid the maiming or death of our fellow humans on account of mines.

His Beatitude and those present praised the initiative of the 'Halo Trust' and stated their willingness to contribute to its humanitarian work, after coming to an understanding with the military authorities of States having sovereignty in the region, namely Jordan, Israel and Palestine, as well as with sponsors required to cover the financial aspect of this costly project.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/UhiZ1luXYsU>



THE BRITISH CONSUL GENERAL TO JERUSALEM VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE

On Tuesday, the 25th of November/8th of December 2015, the British Consul General to Jerusalem, Mr Alastair McPhail, visited the Patriarchate. He was accompanied by two associates of his.

The British Consul General was welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the presence of Hagiotaphite Fathers. Mr McPhail wished the Patriarch on the approaching feast of Christmas though, he said, having previously served

in Russia, he knows that some Orthodox Churches, the Church of Jerusalem amongst them, celebrate Christmas at a later date, according to the Julian Calendar.

Discussed at the meeting was the position of Christians in the Holy Land, at times endangered because of recently intensified incidents of violence.

The British Consul also inquired about the status quo of the Holy Shrines, to which the Patriarch responded that as a rule it is being observed with a few exceptions, as was the case with the intervention of the Israeli Archaeological Service and the Israeli Police on the Aedicula of the Holy Sepulcher.

Patriarch Theophilos also referred to cases when the Mayor of Jerusalem proclaims property owned by the Patriarchate as a public space i.e. the Hill of St Sion where, over the last three years, the Patriarchate's School, Chapel and Cemetery have suffered arson, break and entry and damage.

In spite of this, His Beatitude said, the Patriarchate promotes dialogue as a means of resolving such problems and only where dialogue fails does it take legal action to protect its rights over its land and the Holy Shrines.

Extending thanks, Mr McPhail accepted the Patriarch's gifts of love and wished Him a peaceful and blessed Christmas.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/hHcD7S0vy0o>



THE PRIEST AND COUNCIL MEMBERS OF KUFR YASEEF COMMUNITY VISIT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Saturday, the 22nd of November/5th of December 2015, f. Theodosios Mahouli, Mr Basam, Chairman, and members of the Council of the Greek-Orthodox Arabic-Speaking Community of Kufr Yaseef in Northern Israel, visited the Patriarchate.

They were welcomed by H.B. Theophilos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and spoke with Him for issues and problems facing their Community. The Patriarch offered His advice and promised to provide help, both moral and tangible, towards having their needs met and their problems resolved.

From the Secretariat-General

<httpv://youtu.be/Ncsj-hzgBgQ>

