

Η ΠΑΡΑΜΟΝΗ ΤΗΣ ΕΟΡΤΗΣ ΤΩΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ

Ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Χριστουγέννων, ἡ Μητρόπολις τῶν ἑορτῶν κατὰ τοὺς Πατέρας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἑωρτάσθη ὑπὸ τοῦ Πατριαρχείου συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν ἀρχαιοτάτην παράδοσιν αὐτοῦ εἰς Βηθλεέμ καὶ εἰς τὸν τόπον τῆς κατὰ σάρκα Γεννήσεως Αὐτοῦ.

Α' τὴν Παραμονήν

Τὴν πρωΐαν τῆς Δευτέρας, 24ης Δεκεμβρίου 2019/ 6ης Ἰανουαρίου 2020, παραμονῆς τῶν Χριστουγέννων, ἐξεκίνησεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατριαρχείου ἡ Πατριαρχικὴ Ἀγιοταφίτικὴ συνοδεία καὶ ἀφίχθεῖσα εἰς τὴν Πύλιν τοῦ Δαυΐδ, τῶν κωδῶνων κρουομένων, ἐπεβιβάσθη ὀχημάτων, δι' ὧν ἔφθασεν εἰς τὴν μετὰξὺ Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ Βηθλεέμ κειμένην Ἱερὰν Μονὴν τοῦ Προφῆτου Ἡλιοῦ.

Ἐνταῦθα ἐγένετο ὑποδοχὴ τῆς Α.Θ.Μ. τοῦ Πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ Πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων κ.κ. Θεοφίλου ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡγουμένου τῆς Μονῆς Ἀρχιμανδρίτου Παΐσιου, ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰσραηλινῶν Στρατιωτικῶν Ἀρχῶν τῆς Πολιτικῆς Διοικήσεως / Political Civil Administration τῆς περιοχῆς Βηθλεέμ καὶ Χεβρώνος, ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκπροσώπων τῆς Παλαιστινιακῆς Ἀρχῆς καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκπροσώπων τοῦ ποιμνίου τοῦ Πατριαρχείου τῆς Βηθλεέμ, Χωρίου τῶν Ποιμένων καὶ Μπετζάλλας.

Μετὰ τὴν προσκύνησιν εἰς τὸν Ναὸν τῆς Μονῆς, τὴν δέησιν καὶ τὴν δεξίωσιν εἰς τὸ ἡγουμενεῖον, ἡ Πατριαρχικὴ Συνοδεία ἀνεχώρησεν τῇ προπορευτικῇ συνοδείᾳ πέντε Ἰσραηλινῶν ἱππέων ἕως τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ ἐλέγχου τοῦ Τάφου τῆς Ραχήλ.

Ἐντεῦθεν, τὴν Πατριαρχικὴν συνοδείαν παρέλαβον τιμητικῶς Παλαιστίνιοι μοτοσυκλετισταί, ἐν ᾧ δεξιά καὶ ἀριστερά τῆς ὁδοῦ πιστοί, γέροντες νέοι, παιδιὰ καὶ βρέφη ἀνέμεναν ζητοῦντες τὴν εὐλογίαν τοῦ Μακαριωτάτου. Ἡ Πατριαρχικὴ Συνοδεία ἀφίχθη εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τῆς πλατείας τῆς Βηθλεέμ, ἐδέχθη καλωσορισμὸν παρὰ τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Ἐπιτρόπου Σεβασμιωτάτου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἰορδάνου κ. Θεοφυλάκτου, τῶν Δημαρχιακῶν καὶ Νομαρχιακῶν ἐκπροσώπων τῆς πόλεως, ὑπὸ τῶν ἐνδεδυμένων Ἀγιοταφιτῶν Ἱερομονάχων καὶ τοῦ ἐγγάμου Ἀραβοφώνου κλήρου καὶ ὑπὸ πλήθους λαοῦ, ὑποδεχομένου ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ καὶ ἀλαλαγμῷ καὶ ἐν ψαλμῳδίᾳ τῶν Ἱεροψαλτῶν, τοῦ κ. Βασιλείου Γκοτσοπούλου δεξιά ἑλληνιστί καὶ τῆς χορωδίας ὑπὸ τὸν κ. Σαμούρ Λῶρενς ἀραβιστί ἀριστερά τοῦ τροπαρίου: «Ἡ Γέννησίς σου Χριστέ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν» ἔφθασαν εἰς τὴν ταπεινὴν καὶ ἀπέριττον θύραν τῆς Βασιλικῆς.

Εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὴν Βασιλικὴν ἐγένοντο δεκτοί ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἑλληνοῦ Γενικοῦ Προξένου δεξιά καὶ τοῦ Δημάρχου τῆς πόλεως ἀριστερά καὶ διήλθον διὰ μέσου τῆς Βασιλικῆς, ὅπερ μοναδικὸν δικαίωμα τῶν Ἑλληνορθόδοξων, καὶ ἀνελθοῦσα εἰς τὸν χῶρον πρὸ τοῦ εἰκονοστασίου, ἐστράφη δεξιά καὶ διὰ τοῦ παρεκκλησίου τοῦ ἁγίου Νικολάου κατῆλθεν εἰς τὸ θεοδέγμον Σπήλαιον καὶ προσεκύνησεν.

Ἄμα τῇ ἀνόδῳ ἐκ τῆς βορείου πύλης τοῦ Σπηλαίου, προεξάρχοντος τοῦ Μακαριωτάτου Πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ Πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων κ.κ. Θεοφίλου ἀνεγνώσθησαν εἰς τὸ Καθολικὸν αἱ ὕμναι μετὰ τοῦ θυμιάματος αὐτῶν καὶ ἠκολούθησεν ὁ Ἑσπερινὸς καὶ ἡ Λειτουργία τοῦ Μεγάλου Βασιλείου, ἀπολυθεῖσα

συφώνως τῷ καθεστῶτι τήν 3.30 μ.μ. ὥραν.

Ἠκολούθησεν ἡ ἀπό τῆς Πύλης τοῦ Βαπτιστηρίου ἄνοδος εἰς τό μοναστήριον καί ἐόρτιος νηστήσιμος τράπεζα.

Τό ἑσπέρας, περί ὥραν 6.00 μ.μ. ὁ Μακαριώτατος τῇ φιλοξενίᾳ τοῦ ἀνακαινιστοῦ τῆς Μονῆς Πατριαρχικοῦ Ἐπιτρόπου Σεβασμιωτάτου Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἰορδάνου κ. Θεοφυλάκτου παρέθεσε δεξίωσιν τῷ Προέδρῳ τῆς Παλαιστινιακῆς Αὐτονομίας κ. Μαχμούντ Ἀμπάς Ἀμποῦ – Μάζεν, τῷ ἐξοχωτάτῳ Ὑπουργῷ κ. Sami Dawood, ἐκπροσώπῳ τοῦ Μεγαλειοτάτου βασιλέως τῆς Ἰορδανίας Abdullah II καί ὑπευθύνου τοῦ προσκυνηματικοῦ καθεστῶτος διὰ τὰ Προσκυνήματα Χριστιανῶν καί Μουσουλμάνων, τῷ ἐξοχωτάτῳ Πρωθυπουργῷ τῆς Παλαιστινιακῆς Αὐτονομίας Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh, τῷ Dr. Ramzi Khouri Ὑπουργῷ τοῦ Παλαιστινιακοῦ Κράτους καί Προέδρῳ τῆς Ἀνωτάτης Προεδρικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς διὰ τὰς ἐκκλησιαστικές ὑποθέσεις καί πολλοῖς ἄλλοις ἐπισήμοις καί διπλωμάταις.

Ὁμοῦ μετὰ τῶν θερμοτάτων εὐχῶν δι' εὐλογημένα Χριστούγεννα καί Νέον Ἔτος 2020, ὁ Μακαριώτατος διεβεβαίωσεν αὐτούς ὅτι, ἐπιπροσθέτως τῷ ἐνεργῷ ρόλῳ τοῦ Πατριαρχείου καί ταῖς προπαθείαις αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἐξέλθῃ ἡ φωνή καί τό μήνυμα τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ εἰς τήν Οἰκουμένην, τό Rum Orthodox Πατριαρχεῖον τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ἐπεκτείνει τήν δρᾶσιν αὐτοῦ καί εἰς διεθνῇ ἐπίπεδον. Ὁ Μακαριώτατος ἐπεσήμανεν ὅτι θά πρέπει νά μᾶς ἀπασχολήσῃ τό γεγονός ὅτι ἡ δύναμις τῆς ἐνότητος τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων δηλοῖ τήν δύναμιν τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου πίστεως, ὡς καί ἡ ἀδυναμία ἐνότητος τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων ἀσθενεῖ τήν πίστιν αὐτῶν.

Ὁ Μακαριώτατος ἐπίσης ἀπένειμε δῶρα καί ἐξεφώνησε προσφώνησιν, ἔχουσιν οὕτως:

Mr. President Mahmoud Abbas,

Mr. Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh,

Representative of His Majesty King Abdullah II, Mr. Sami Dawood,

Chairman of the Supreme Presidential Committee for Church Affairs, Dr. Ramzi Khoury,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We gather today in the birthplace of Christ, the source of light that reached out to the world, the land of the Redeemer, to celebrate the birth of the Messenger of Love and Peace, in a land that longs for peace, and under a leadership of which the main concern is to achieve peace to ensure a bright future for its people. People that have long sacrificed for their dignity, freedom and the realization of their legitimate dream of independence and self-determination.

We believe that we are able to make peace and live up to its requirements, no matter how difficult it may be. This demands that we transcend ourselves above our own limits, so that we can look at others as God sees them, and accept others as God accepts them, so that we can realize and achieve righteousness and truth for us and others.

This year's Christmas comes, and the Middle East region is overwhelmed by

regional tensions and conflicts. In Lebanon, the Lebanese are protesting against the country's worsening economy, in Syria Christmas still holds hope that the country will see a way out of the current impasse, and hopefully this new year will be a year of security for Syrians of all political, ethnic and religious affiliations. Yemen continues its internal war, which we pray to end as soon as possible, and we pray to the Creator to give Iraq and Libya the stability they have lost years ago.

On the bright side, in the Holy Land, we celebrate the legal victory of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem in our battle for the defense of Jaffa Gate properties in the Holy City as part of the consecutive battles fought by the "Mother of All Churches" to preserve its heritage, and the authentic Christian presence in the Holy Land, especially in the city of Jerusalem, which God has blessed. In addition to practicing our duty in protecting the "pilgrim route" between the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Nativity, between the place of Christ's birth and the place of his crucifixion.

We are also celebrating the birth of Christ today as we have completed important housing projects in Bethlehem, Beit Sahour and Beit Jala. In 2020, we are looking forward to executing a project of 400 apartment and a commercial center in Beit Hanina, Jerusalem, where we have been working on obtaining the necessary licenses for years. This huge project will reduce immigration from the Holy City and contribute to strengthen the resolve of its people. In the same context, we are preparing this year for the restoration of St. Dimitri's School Building in the Old City, to provide a comfortable atmosphere for students and to preserve this historic building; in addition to dozens of charitable projects which our Patriarchate is implementing with the support of its flock in particular and the community in general. And the doors of the Patriarchate shall always remain open for the flock of our community and all the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples Christians be it or Muslim.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to our active local role, and efforts to relay the voice of Jerusalem to the world, the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem is exercising its historic role at the international Orthodox level as well. Our Patriarchate has opened its doors to host our brothers, the heads of the world's Orthodox churches, to meet at our second home in Amman under the Auspices of The Hashemite Custodian of Islamic and Christian Holy Places, your brother Mr. President, His Majesty King Abdullah II, to discuss issues of global Orthodox unity; that in its' strength we view a strengthening to our faith, and in its' weakness, a weakening of our faith.

Your Excellency Mr. President.

Ladies and gentlemen

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14), let us

rejoice and pray "This is a great mystery" (Ephesians 5:32) which appeared among us. The message of Christmas is a message of love, humility, peace and a meeting of hearts. Living the love and its consequences becomes permanent through a true relationship and reconciliation between man and God, between man and his/her fellow man, through a relationship of reconciliation and openness between man and himself/herself. This reconciliation in its three dimensions fills the human heart with peace, the peace of God coming from the highest, which helps people to deal with the daily living pressures and difficulties of life, and to meet the challenges with wisdom and love. The heavenly peace, which we all desire, enables believers, with the support of divine grace, to deal properly with economic, political and social difficulties.

Christmas is the feast of joy. Joy is to find power through forgiveness and love in tears, to reap success from failure, and to achieve ascension through humility and holiness. Christmas is the feast of joy built on the rock of faith.

Your Excellency,

In the name of the "Mother of all churches" and its community, we wish you a glorious Christmas filled with holiness and love, and a blessed new year full of goodness, blessings and peace; and we thank Your Excellency for your heartfelt Christmas message.

We lastly take this opportunity to give thanks to the Supreme Presidential Committee for Church Affairs and its' Chairman, His Excellency Minister Dr. Ramzi Khoury. As well as the Head of the Presidential Bureau Her Excellency Ms. Intisar Amarah, Presidential Protocol Department and the Heads, Generals and Officers of the different Palestinian Security bodies for their tireless efforts and contribution to the success of this year's Christmas processions.

Along with the angels, we pray to God, " Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth ..." (Luke 2:14).

Διὰ τούτων ἔληξεν ἡ ἑορτή τῆς Παραμονῆς τῶν Χριστουγέννων ἐν Βηθλεέμ.

Ἐκ τῆς Ἀρχιγραμματείας