

## **Byzantine Choir Event of the Choir of the Beit Jala Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos and the students of the Zion School**



On the evening of December 2/15, 2024, a Byzantine music choir event took place at the Holy Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos with the performance of the School of Zion students under the lead of the Byzantine choir leader of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Secretary of the Holy Synod, Hierodeacon Simeon, and the Beit Jala Byzantine Choir, under the lead of the director of the Cultural Educational Center, Mr George Gaouale.

This event took place with the blessing and presence of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos and the attendance of Holy Sepulchre High Priests, the Hegoumen of Beit Jala Archimandrite Ignatios and other Holy Sepulchre Fathers, the Priests of Beit Jala, Paul, Youssef and Elias and the Mayor of the town Mr Issa Kassis and the stewards of the Beit Jala Community and other officials of the Palestinian Authority, as well as representatives and Priests of different

denominations and the representative of Mr Ramzi Hourri, Consul Mr Jihad Kher.

The members of this mixed choir of young people from Beit Jala sang Christmas hymns in Arabic and sometimes in Greek, with recitations of Biblical text excerpts. The Patriarchal School of Zion choir also participated under the direction of Hierodeacon Simeon and chanted Christmas hymns in Greek.

The cultural centre and the parish of Beit Jala offered honorary plaques to His Beatitude, the Hegoumen Fr Ignatios, the stewards, Mr Nicholas Khamis, and Mr Nasri Mousa.

The ceremony was sealed by His Beatitude's speech of thanks, in Greek as follows:

"I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord" (Ps. 104, 33, 34), the psalmist proclaims.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Mr President and respected members of your institution,

Reverend Fathers and brothers,

Today's presentation of church hymns and songs, performed and sung by the choirs of the Holy Foundation of the Rum Orthodox Community of Beit Jala and the Patriarchal School of Jerusalem echoes the unity in Christ, as expressed by Saint Paul saying: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

We perpetuate this unity in Christ during the performance of worship and Divine Liturgies in the Holy Temples, when we praise and bless the name of the Holy Triune God, honour his Saints and magnify the most blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

According to the prophet David, the whole life of the faithful person should be a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God: "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being"; and Saint Paul orders saying: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ", (Eph. 5, 19-20).

The chanting, that is, the praise of the Lord with music, or in other words, the Church music, known as "Byzantine", from one point of view, moves the creation

towards hymns of the Creator. On the other hand, it initiates the worshippers into a sacramental worship. In this case, we hear Athanasios the Great saying: The diligent recitation of the psalms is not a pursuit of a good voice, but a proof of the harmony of the thoughts of the soul. Similarly, singing is a symbol of the harmonious and calm state of the mind.

The 75th Canon of the Ecumenical Synod in Troullos is also noteworthy, which stipulates that “the chanters, should chant after much care and contemplation, without out of tune and inappropriate sounds.

As a spiritual Shepherd and Patriarch, “Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men” (2 Cor. 8, 21) according to Paul, we congratulate you on this initiative of chanting assembly and we praise you for every good work, performed in the glory of God and His Church.

We pray for all those who participate in this God-pleasing ecclesiastical event to receive divine illumination from above, so that we may celebrate spiritually and not worldly and materially the Metropolis of holidays, the Nativity of our God and Saviour Christ. Have a very peaceful and blessed Christmas. Amen”.

From the General Secretariat



th: 0px;

































[en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info](http://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info)