16/12/2025

Musical event of the Rum Orthodox Community of Beit Jala



On the evening of Sunday, 1/14 December 2025, a musical event was held at the Church of Saint Nicholas in Beit Jala by the choir of the Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox Community of Beit Jala, in collaboration with the choir of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre under the direction of the chief cantor Deacon Efstathios. The event marked the centenary of the church's founding and coincided with the renovation of its lower chapel, dedicated to Saint Nicholas, a chapel that commemorates his traditional passage through the area.

At this event, Christmas hymns were chanted in both Greek and Arabic, bringing spiritual joy and exultation to the numerous faithful gathered from the Community of Beit Jala.

His Beatitude, our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos, honoured the event with His presence. Also in attendance were the Hegumen of Beit Jala and of the Monastery of the Shepherds, Archimandrite Ignatios, and the parish priests of the Church, the Presbyters Fr. Paul, Fr. Yousef, and Fr. Elias; the Church Wardens;

the Mayor of Beit Sahour, Mr. Elias Said; other representatives of the Palestinian Authority, including the Minister of Tourism Mr. Haik, and Mr. Jihad Her, representative of President of the Palestinian Ecclesiastical Committee Mr. Ramzi Khouri.

His Beatitude addressed the organisers and performers of the event as follows:

“I will sing unto the Lord all the days of my life; I will sing praise unto my God while I live; let my meditation be pleasing unto Him, and I will rejoice in the Lord” (Psalm 103:33-34), exclaims the psalmist.

Beloved brothers in Christ,
Honourable President and esteemed members of your Foundation,

In these critical days of trials and sufferings in the Holy Land, and especially in the place of the Nativity of our Saviour Christ, this event stands out; the presentation of ecclesiastical Christmas hymns, chanted by the choirs of our devout Rum Orthodox Community of Beit Jala, as well as by the choir of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

This event resonates with two messages: first, the hope in the rising Sun of Righteousness, Christ, as we hear the exhortation of the divine Paul: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame…” (Heb. 12:1-2). Second, the unity of the Spirit of Christ, by which “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

We proclaim this unity in Christ through the worship and divine Liturgy in the Holy Churches, where we praise and bless the name of the Holy Triune God, venerate His Saints, and glorify the Most Blessed and Ever-Virgin Theotokos, Mary.

According to the Prophet David, the life of the faithful must be a hymn of praise and thanksgiving unto God: “I will sing unto the Lord all the days of my life, I will sing praise unto my God while I live.” The divine Paul likewise commands: “…be filled with the Spirit; 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 in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father” (Eph. 5:18-20).

Psalmody, that is, the singing of God’s praise with melody, otherwise known as

Ecclesiastical or “Byzantine” music, moves us both to hymn the Creator of all creation and to draw all who worship into the sacrament. As the Great Athanasios teaches: “To chant the psalms with melody is not a pursuit of euphony, but evidence of the harmony of the thoughts in the soul. And measured reading is a symbol of the well-ordered and serene state of the intellect.” Simply put: “Measured recitation of the psalms is not an attempt at fine singing, but a demonstration of the harmony of the soul’s thoughts. Likewise, measured reading is a symbol of the harmonious and calm state of the mind.”

Thus we are called, following the exhortation of the inspired Paul, to sing psalms and spiritual songs, especially in these times of affliction, knowing that “tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope” (cf. Rom. 5:3-4).

As a spiritual Shepherd and Patriarch, “providing honourably, not only before the Lord but also before men” (2 Cor. 8:21), we rejoice with you in this initiative of psalmody and hymnody, and we commend you for every good work performed to the glory of God and His Church.

We pray for all who participate in this pious ecclesiastical occasion to receive divine enlightenment from above, that we may celebrate spiritually, not merely in worldly or material terms, the Mother of Festivals, the Nativity of our God and Saviour Christ, crying out with the holy Angels: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men” (Luke 2:14). Many peaceful and blessed returns, and a joyous Christmas. Amen.”

At the conclusion of the event, the Community of Beit Jala presented honorary plaques to His Beatitude and to others who contributed to the renovation of the chapel of Saint Nicholas.

From the General Secretariat

























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