

# THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE



On Thursday, September 8/21, 2023, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos.

On this feast, the Church commemorates that God released the bonds of the barrenness of Joachim and Anna and gave them Mary as the fruit of Anna's womb, from whom came forth Christ the Saviour of the world through the Holy Spirit.

That is why the Church joyfully chants: "Joachim and Anna were freed from the reproach of childlessness, and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death, O immaculate one, by thy holy nativity, which thy people, redeemed from the guilt of offences, celebrate by crying unto thee: the barren woman giveth birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our life" (Kontakion).

The Patriarchate celebrated this feast at the town Sahnin of northern Israel, in the Holy Metropolis of Acre-Ptolemais, at the newly-built marvellous Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos, which was built by the community and the help of the Patriarchate and was inaugurated two years ago.

The Divine Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth, Isychios of Capitolias, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, local Priests, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Simeon. The service was attended by faithful Orthodox Christians of the community and the local authorities, donors and pilgrims, with the honourable presence of Mr Cesar Marjeh and Mr Iriad Shirhan.

Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered a sermon. After the Divine Liturgy, there was a litany around the Church thrice. Then, His Beatitude awarded Mr Elias Gantous with the medal of the Cross-bearer of the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, as a reward for his quite important educational, ecclesiastical and social work.

At noon there was a meal honouring the Patriarchal entourage and many others.

2. Likewise, the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos was celebrated at the Holy Shrine of the Tomb of the Theotokos in Gethsemane with vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning, presided over by His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa. The service was attended by pious pilgrims and local faithful Christians. After the Liturgy the Hegoumen, His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenopolis hosted a reception at the rectory.

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From Secretariat-General