



His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos Visits Gorny Convent on the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist



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On 7th July 2026, the Feast of the Nativity of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John, in accordance with a tradition established about 150 years ago by Archimandrite Antonin (Kapustin), Head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, the Icon of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos returned to Jerusalem after spending, in imitation of the Most Holy Virgin herself, three months in “the hill country” – the Gorny Convent.

On the feast day, Metropolitan Isyhios of Capitolias, with the blessing of His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of the Holy City of Jerusalem and All Palestine, officiated at the Divine Liturgy in the Cathedral of All Saints Who Shone Forth in the Russian Land in the Gorny Convent in Ein Karem.

Concelebrating with His Eminence were: Archimandrite Vassian (Zmeyev), Head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem; Elder Dragoman Archimandrite Mattheos (who is in charge of external relations of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem); clergy of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission; Patriarchal Archdeacon Mark; and ordained pilgrims from Russia. The Liturgy was celebrated in prayerful presence of His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem; Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Secretary-General of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem; Hegumenia Yekaterina (Chernysheva), Abbess of the Gorny Convent: as well as sisters of the abode and numerous pilgrims.

On 6th July, the eve of the feast, the Mission clergy had celebrated the All-Night Vigil in the Cathedral of All Saints of the Gorny Convent.

The Divine Liturgy on the feast day was celebrated in the Church Slavonic, Greek and Arabic languages.

After the dismissal, Archimandrite Vassian (Zmeyev) expressed gratitude to His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos and the clergy of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem for the joint prayer and extended to all those present his festive greetings. His Beatitude, in his turn, thanked Archimandrite Vassian and Mother Yekaterina, Abbess of the Gorny Convent, for the warm welcome and also greeted the worshippers on the occasion of the feast day.

After the divine service, a solemn procession took place, during which the Icon of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God was carried to the Kazan Church of the Gorny Convent. Taking part in the procession were His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos, the hierarchs of the Church of Jerusalem, Archimandrite Vassian and clerics of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission, as well as sisters of the Gorny Convent and pilgrims. In the Kazan Church, the hierarchs, clergy and the faithful venerated the revered Kazan Icon of the Mother of God.

A festal repast followed. During the meal, a choir of the Gorny Convent sisters performed spiritual hymns in honour of St. John the Baptist and the Most Holy Mother of God, website of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission **reports**.

After the repast, Metropolitan Isyhios led a procession with the Holy Annunciation Icon to Mary's Spring in Ein Karem. From there, the icon was brought to the Holy Trinity Cathedral of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. In the Trinity Cathedral, Archimandrite Vassian and the Mission clergy met the revered icon and returned it to its permanent place. That concluded the "Visitation" celebrations commemorating the meeting of the Holy Righteous Elizabeth and the Most Holy Virgin Mary.
