

THE FEAST OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN SUNDAY AT THE PATRIARCHATE (2017)

On Sunday, 1st/14th May 2017, the Samaritan woman Sunday, according to the book of Pentecostarion, the Jerusalem Patriarchate celebrated the memory of the meeting of the Samaritan woman with the Lord, at the town of Sychar in the Samaria district, at the place of that meeting, Jacob's well, and her conversation with the Lord, with the revelation that was made to her that He is the Christ, and the water He would give her is the water that brings eternal life, and whoever drinks it will never thirst in the ages to come, according to the vivid narrative of the Evangelist John (John 4:4-42).

At this well and at the marvellous huge and magnificent Church named after St. Foteini the Samaritan woman, which praiseworthy the Hegoumen of the Shrine Archimandrite Ioustinos has built, the Festal Divine Liturgy was celebrated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with concelebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, and the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Archimandrites, Klaudios the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of the Sacred Cross, Ignatios, Hegoumen of the H. Monastery of the Shepherds, Stephen, Hegoumen of the H. Monastery of St. Katherine, Archdeacon Mark, Deacon Agapios, with the participation in prayer of Archimandrite Chrysostom Hegoumen of the H. Monastery of St. Gerasimos and Arab speaking Presbyters. Singing were the Choir Leader of the Most Holy Church of the Resurrection Archimandrite Aristovoulos in Greek, Russian and Romanian on the right, and Archimandrite Leontios with the parish choirs of the neighbouring parishes

on the left, in Arabic, at the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos and a large crowd of local faithful and pilgrims from the nearby areas, from Greece, Russia, Romania and Cyprus, monks and nuns.

To this congregation His Beatitude preached the Divine word as follows:

“Let Heaven and earth radiantly rejoice today, for Christ hath appeared incarnate as man, that He might deliver the whole race of Adam from the curse; and when He came to Samaria, He was made marvelous miracles. He that is compassed about by the waters of the clouds standeth nigh unto a woman and seeketh water. Wherefore, let us the faithful all worship Him, Who of His own will became poor for our sake in His compassionate counsel.” The Hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

The fountain of the beginning of life, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, gathered us all in this sacred place of the Patriarch Jacob’s well, in order to celebrate on the one hand the feast of the Samaritan woman; and on the other hand, the fact that “Christ has become manifest, being incarnate as human, so that He may save the whole of (the old) Adam”, as the hymn writer says.

Indeed, the Son of God “has become manifest being incarnate as human” by Jacob’s well, at the conversation with the Samaritan woman, who said unto Him “I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things” (John 4:25). And Jesus said unto her: “I that speak unto thee am he” (John 4:26).

Commenting on this confession that Jesus made to the Samaritan woman, St. Chrysostom says: “Everything the Samaritan woman was saying, she was saying in an unbiased and simple mind...and she listened and believed and mesmerized others with these

words”.

In other words, the Samaritan woman had never seen the Lord before and had not had the chance to watch His teaching and miracles which would have convinced her on Who was the One that worked them and spoke with her. This means that Christ was very nigh to the Samaritan woman at the moment that she wished to know Him, as the hymn writer says: “O Lord, when the Samaritan woman asked water of Thee, Thou didst grant her knowledge of Thy power; wherefore, she thirsteth not unto the ages singing Thy praise”.

It is precisely this “knowledge of His power” namely Christ’s power, that made the Samaritan woman a preacher and equal to the Apostles, and also a witness of the salvific Christian faith. The Samaritan woman’s realization that “This is the Christ” (John, 4:29), namely the Messiah to come, enlightened her mind and understood Christ’s word that “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

This denotes that God is restricted not in place nor in time, because He is Spirit, and thus the All-Holy Spirit, which like the wind “thou canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth” (John 3:8). For this reason St. Paul advices us saying: Since through faith we have received a kingdom in Christ, which can never be shaken but remains eternal – and this kingdom is the one that Christ founded through His Church – let us give thanks to God; and by the gratitude that we convey through this thanksgiving, let us worship God pleasantly in respect and reverence. And we should worship Him in fear and piety, because our God is a fire which burns and destroys every irreverent and impious man. “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28-29).

This kingdom that cannot be moved, did the Samaritan woman

receive, who now worships God in Heaven in respect and piety, just as she worshiped Him on earth. In other words, not only did the Samaritan woman believe in Christ, but she also wanted to drink of the living and spiritual water, of which Christ told her: "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). And this water that springs forth is no other but the full and true knowledge of God, which our Holy Church of Christ possesses.

The wise Apostle of the nations Paul, referring to the arrogance of those who refuse to believe in the true God says: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity" (Romans 1:28-29).

In other words, those who did not find it good and did not wish to possess the full and true knowledge of God, were abandoned by God and delivered to a mind unable to discern the truth and the right thing, and the result of this was that they performed ungodly and immoral works.

While we, my brothers and sisters, who eat the bread of our Lord Jesus Christ's body and drink the blood of His sacred side, are called to live in communion of the Holy Spirit as the hymn writer advises us: "Let us cleanse the secret places of our minds and illuminate the lamps of our souls, and we shall behold Christ our Life coming to the temple, in the excess of His goodness, that He might triumph over the enemy and save our race, through the Passion of the Cross and the Resurrection."

Our Holy Church, my dear ones, projects its Saints, and especially today, the Samaritan woman who was named Foteini by

Christ, who having received the crown of the martyrdom by the Emperor Nero, has become a prototype of faith, spiritual struggle, victory against the temptations and sin but also of repentance. An imitator of the virtues of St. Foteini's life in Christ was the new-martyr Philoumenos the Hagiotaphite, following her traces and missionary work, on the unwaning light of the resurrection of our God and Saviour Christ.

Let us therefore my beloved brothers glorify Christ our God, who appeared as human, through the Ever-Virgin and Theotokos Mary, and with the hymn writer say: "Since Thou art the Fountain of Life, O Lord, Thou gavest the water of life and forgiveness and knowledge unto the Samaritan woman who once asked for it; wherefore, we praise Thine unspeakable compassions."

Amen. Christ is risen!"

For the Sermon in Arabic please follow the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2017/05/14/30448>

After the Divine Liturgy there was a Holy Procession around the Church, followed by a reception to all, and after that, a meal was offered to His Beatitude, His Entourage and many of the congregation by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Ioustinos.

From Secretariat-General

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