

THE FEAST OF THE SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY APOSTLES IN TIBERIAS (2017)

On Thursday, 30th June/13th July 2017, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles at the Holy Monastery with their name in the town of Tiberias, and at the west bank of the sea of Tiberias.

Vespers in the evening was held by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, while the Divine Liturgy on the day of the Feast was led by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Aristarchos of Constantina and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and Hierodeacons, at the singing of Archimandrite Philotheos and the Acre choir in Arabic and Greek, and with the participation of the noble congregation to which His Beatitude preached the Divine Word as follows:

“Thou Who art Light that existed ere all ages, when Thou didst vouchsafe to come to me, the lowly man, through Thine ineffable love for man, and to become flesh in Thy great goodness, O Saviour of the world, Thine Apostles and disciples didst Thou then reveal as second lights brightly glittering with the resplendence and the dread lightning that flashed forth from Thee; and being sent forth, they illumined all of creation with Thy light divine, O Lord. And they ever beseech Thee to enlighten and to save our souls” the hymn writer of the Church proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims,

We have come in this sacred place of "the Sea of Tiberias" in order to celebrate in thanksgiving the feast of the venerable Synaxis of Christ's Holy and most wise all-glorious and all-praised twelve Apostles.

Indeed the Apostles and disciples of Christ were "second lights of the brightness/glory" of Christ. And this is so because they were called to the service of the salvific word of the gospel not by the people but from the Lord, as Marc the Evangelist witnesses: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Marc 16:15). "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Marc 16:20).

The Holy Apostles are those, who not only enlightened all creation with Christ's light through the preaching of the gospel, but also established Churches for which Prophet Isaiah said: "Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands" (Isaiah 42:12). For this reason the Apostles are recognized as founding stones of the Church in the world, which has been established on the corner stone, namely Christ, as St. Paul clearly teaches: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephes. 2:13), "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephes. 2:20-22).

In other words, the Apostles who were appointed in the establishment of the Church as well as the preaching, namely their teaching, are the trestle and pedestal of the Church, as Zigavinos says. Hence the Church as the mystical body of Christ and therefore the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, unites us with our Lord Jesus Christ and with the other

members of it. This is accomplished according to St. Gregory the Theologian "by the architecture of the Holy Spirit".

The twelve Holy Apostles with Peter and Paul among them as their leaders, being vessels and organs of the Holy Spirit, became the architects of the primary authentic structure of the Church, for both its local and ecumenical, or better say, catholic structure.

Our One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church has kept its integrity, namely its faith, undistorted, and its managerial character steadfast, as St. Paul says: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). [In detailed explanation; for this, since through the faith in Christ, we have received a kingdom that can never be moved, but remains eternal – and this is the kingdom that Christ established through the Church – let us rend God thanksgiving]. All this has been accomplished thanks to the power of the sacred and spiritual apostolic tradition – as St Paul orders – "therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thes. 2:15).

The mighty and unexplained event of the Holy Pentecost, namely the descending of the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire on Christ's disciples – as the book of Acts witnesses – "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:3-4), is the indelible seal of the special characteristic of the institution of the Church, namely its Apostolicity. Let us hear the hymn writer saying: "When the splendour of the Spirit appeared to you in deed and verity, O wise Apostles, ye all took the fullness of it into yourselves, initiated into lofty teachings in the upper room; and now as is meet, ye are counted blessed".

Needless to say that the Holy Apostles are the common fathers of the New Testament, that is, the foretold by the Old Testament Prophets building of the fallen tabernacle of David, by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Prophet Amos witnesses: "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15:16-17/Amos 9:11-12).

The prophetic words of Amos were mentioned by the Holy Apostle James the brother of God in the Synod of the Apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-21). This underlines most clearly that the Divine-Human institution of the Church is impossible to be clarified and interpreted outside the boundaries of the Holy History, namely the order of the Holy Bible, which was revealed to Prophet Moses in Mount Sinai, through the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit unites and brings together the whole institution of the Church. That is why the decisions of the Apostles and their descendants are taken through the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, as witnessed in the Acts of the Apostles, ch.15: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us the Apostles, being assembled in one accord" (Acts 15: 22,25,28).

Therefore we, succeeding this sacred consignment of the Holy glorious and all-praised Apostles who were filled with the Divine vision, beseech them, together with the intercessions of the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, to intercede for the salvation of our souls and the peace in our region and the whole world. Amen."

For the Sermon in Arabic please follow the link below:

<https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/ar/2017/07/13/31801>

After the Divine Liturgy there was a reception at the

Hegoumeneion and afterwards a fish meal was offered by the Hegoumen Hieromonk Dionysios, whom His Beatitude appointed Archimandrite with the occasion of the feast.

We wish him a good service and many happy returns.

From Secretariat-General

[httpv://youtu.be/PqBAyA18HrU](http://youtu.be/PqBAyA18HrU)

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