

THE FEAST OF THOMAS SUNDAY IN KANA OF GALILEE

On Thomas Sunday, April 2/15, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated in Kana of Galilee the commemoration of the event that eight days after the Resurrection, Thomas put his fingers in the wounds of the nails on the Lord's body, according to the Gospel narrative (John 20:19-31).

In this town, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos was welcomed at the Gate by the Hegoumen of Kana Archimandrite Chrysostom, other Clergy, the Community Council and the Scouts. In this procession, His Beatitude reached the Monastery of the Patriarchate, in which the Church is dedicated to St. George.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated in this Church, in commemoration of the Lord's miracle at the wedding in Kana, and of the event with Apostle Thomas.

The Divine Liturgy was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks and pilgrims, the Hegoumens of the neighbouring Monasteries of Kana and the Arab-speaking Priests of Nazareth and Archdeacon Mark. The Kana choir delivered the hymns in Byzantine music in the Arabic language, and the service was attended by a large congregation.

His Beatitude's Sermon to this congregation follows below;

"Shine, shine O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord hath arisen upon thee; dance now and be glad, O Sion, and do thou exalt, O pure Theotokos, in the arising of Him Who thou didst bear", the hymn writer of the Church, St. John Damascene

proclaims.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims

The dawn of the glory of the Theotokos' Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Unwaning Light of the Resurrection, has gathered all of us in this sacred place of Kana in Galilee, so that we declare the salvation of the world, the Pascha of incorruption, in thanksgiving and doxology; as the hymn writer says, "When Thou hadst fallen asleep in the flesh as one mortal, O King and Lord, Thou didst rise again on the third day, raising up Adam from corruption, and abolishing death: O Pascha of incorruption! O Salvation of the world!"

Hearing Isaiah's words "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isaiah 60:1), St. John Damascene calls the Church of Christ, which is the New Jerusalem, to be enlightened with the light of the glory of Christ's Resurrection.

It is precisely this glory that Christ revealed at the wedding of His friend Simon, which took place here, by working the first of His miracles, the turning of water into wine, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Kana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him" (John 2:11).

Christ revealed the glory of His Resurrection to His disciples, and especially to Apostle Thomas, who was saying: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). This glory did Thomas himself preach to the nations when he saw Jesus' hands and put his finger into the print of the nails on Christ's side and cried out loud and said "My Lord and my God" (John 20:27-28).

The glory of the Lord that hath arisen upon Jerusalem, namely the Church, is no other than the glory of the God-man our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Head of the mystical body of His Church, of which [Church] we are members. And inside the Church of the Resurrected God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ we foretaste, or better say, the beginning of everlasting life, as St. John Damascene says clearly: "We celebrate the death of death, the destruction of Hades, the beginning of an everlasting life. And with leaps of joy we praise the Cause thereof, the only blest and most glorious God of our Fathers".

The grandeur of the feast of the new and mystical Pascha, my dear brothers, is owed to the fact that the day of the radiant resurrection is "the forerunner of the bright-beaming Day of the Resurrection, where on the Timeless Light in bodily form shone from the grave for all", according to St. John Damascene. And according to prophet Isaiah, Christ is the "great light" which has risen to "the people that walked in darkness...and dwell in the land of the shadow of death" (Mt. 4:16, Isaiah 9:2). "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:9).

For this reason, St. Peter advises the Christians by saying: You are a chosen nation, a priesthood with royal descend. You are a holy nation, dedicated to God, a chosen people who especially belong to God. And you have all these special characteristics in order to preach with your own example, the splendid and endless perfection of Him, Who has summoned you from the darkness of false beliefs and of sin into His new bright and wondrous spiritual life. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

In other words, the mission of the conscious and faithful members of the Church is to evangelize to their fellow-men

“all the words of life in the resurrected Christ” according to the Acts of the Apostles: “Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:20) and “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:26).

The Christians, and especially the members of the Church, should be obliged to consider themselves ministers of the gospel of love, reconciliation and freedom, righteousness and peace, according to the words of the resurrected Christ, our Lord and Saviour: “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

The Holy Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches, which has been founded by the redeeming blood of Christ, which came forth from His pierced side, has become the primary minister of the light of the resurrection, namely the truth in Christ. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:19-21) – says the Lord.

Today, as we also celebrate in great jubilation the great Pascha, which sanctifies all faithful who live the triumph of Christ’s victory of death against the death of corruption and sin, let us exclaim in gleefulness and exultation along with the hymn writer: “we celebrate the death of death, the destruction of Hades, the beginning of an everlasting life”.

Christ is risen!

At noon, the Hegoumen Archimandrite Chrysostom offered a meal for His Beatitude’s entourage and many members of the

congregation.

Later on, His Beatitude paid some pastoral visits in Kana for the strengthening of His congregation.

From Secretariat-General

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