

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday April 23/May 6, 2018, the Patriarchate celebrated the Sunday of the Samaritan woman at the shrine of Jacob's well in Nablus of Samaria. This feast commemorates the meeting of the Samaritan woman with the Lord and the revelation that "He is the Messiah, God is spirit and those who worship Him should do so in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:26-27). This revelation made her believe in the Lord, and consequently led to her martyrdom as well as that of her family, sons and brothers, and thus she is honoured by the Church as Foteini the Great Martyr.

In this shrine and in the quite big and beautiful Church of St. Foteini that has been built by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Ioustinos, the Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrants the Most Reverend Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the visiting from Moscow Patriarchate Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokomosk and the Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina. There were also Hagiotaphite Hieromonks with first in rank Archimandrite Makarios, Hegoumen of the Monastery of St. Nicodemus, Fr. Nikolaos from Moscow Patriarchate, the Head of the Russian Missia in Jerusalem Archimandrite Alexander, Archimandrite Martyrios, the Hegoumen of the Holy Monastery of the Annunciation in Rafidia Archimandrite Leontios and others, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Anastasios. The right choir was led by Archimandrite Aristovoulos who sang in Greek and Russian, and the left by the Rafidia Community who sang in Arabic, while the service was attended by Arabs, Greeks, Russians and Romanians.

His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon to this Congregation;

“When the Lord came unto the well, the Samaritan woman entreated Him Who is compassionate, saying: Grant me the water of faith, and I shall receive the streams of the font of baptism, unto exceeding gladness and the redemption. O Giver of Life, Lord, glory to Thee”.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians and Pilgrims

The Samaritan woman who saw Christ, the Saviour of our souls, has gathered us by the power of the Holy Spirit in this sacred place of Patriarch Jacob’s well, in order to celebrate her feast, namely of the Samaritan Woman, who became co-martyr of Christ’s blood.

Upon her meeting with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Samaritan Woman asks for “the Water of Faith” according to the witness of St. John the Evangelist; “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But 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. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw” (John 4:13-15).

This water of faith, which is given by Christ, is no other than the power of the Holy Spirit, and thus His active power, namely the Divine Grace, which can be rushing, like rushing waters at times. “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14) says the Lord. “To grant everlasting life” Zigavinos interprets. “It has the power to maintain everlasting life” St. Cyril of Alexandria says.

Indeed, my dear ones, the Holy Spirit is the One that grants everlasting life and maintains it. For this reason the Lord says to the Samaritan woman: “Ye, [the Samaritans] worship ye

not know what... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). And in more detail; Very soon the hour comes, and I am in the position to say that that hour has now come, when the true worshipers will worship the Father with newly-enlightened spiritual power, and in a worship that will be inspired by the full cognition of the truth. Because the Father [God] also wants those who worship Him to be likewise true worshipers. God is spirit, therefore He cannot be confided in places. And those who worship Him should venerate Him with their internal spiritual powers, in devotion of both heart and mind, but also in true cognition of God and of the worship befitting to Him.

It was precisely to this cause that the Samaritan woman approached, "the true worship of God", when she heard Jesus saying to her: "I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:26), namely the Messiah, the Christ (John 4:25). This true cognition of God highlighted the Prophets, the Apostles, the Martyrs and all the Righteous, meaning the Saints, as well as the Great Martyr George the Trophy-bearer whom we co-celebrate today, who have glorified the Name of God the Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The true cognition of God dawned in the mind and heart of Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who saw a great Light, namely the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, as the hymn writer says: "Thou didst appear to them that sat in darkness, O Lord, since Thou art the never-setting Light and the Life of all. Wherefore, when the assembly of the righteous beheld Thee, O Word, they leaped for joy and cried: Thou art come to set all loose from their bonds; we praise Thy dominion".

The unwaning Light and the Life of all is no other than the Water of Life, namely the Holy Spirit of our Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses very clearly: "Whosoever thirsteth, let him come unto Me and drink; he that believeth in Me, rivers of the water of life of the Divine Spirit shall flow forth from his belly" (John 7:37-38). Moreover, St. Paul calls the Holy Spirit "Living Water" saying: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).

In other words, my dear ones, the Lord's words: "But 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) are not addressed only to the Samaritan woman, but to all people, believers and non-believers.

And we say this, because the one that drinks the living water that comes from our Lord Jesus Christ, ensures by the power of the Holy Spirit the eternal blessing and satisfaction of the internal desires of his soul, relieving it from thirst and spiritual death.

The phenomenon of this spiritual death is characteristic of our contemporary era. This is noted among the religious people as well as among Christians, who are faithful only by name and not in essence.

Christ's Church, the source of the living worship, is the source of God's gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the food and drink of every man's soul, especially of those who have been watered in one Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, according to St. Paul (1 Cor. 12:13).

Come, my dear brothers, let us come to the source of Life, our God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by the intercessions of the Most Blessed Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and of the Holy Philoumenos the New Martyr, and say along with the hymn

writer; "Thou art the Water of Life, cried the Samaritan woman unto Christ. Give me to drink, therefore, who always thirst for Thy divine grace, O Word, that I may no longer be held by the drought of ignorance, but may proclaim Thy mighty acts, O Lord Jesus" and worship Thy Holy Resurrection. Amen.

Christ is risen!

After the Divine Liturgy the Hegoumen and renovator of the Monastery Archimandrite Ioustinos offered a reception and at lunch time a festal meal to the Patriarchal entourage and many of the faithful.

During the meal, the native Roman Orthodox young lawyer Haleel Abu Yanam addressed His Beatitude in Arabic as per the link below;

<http://www.jp-newsgate.net/ar/2018/05/06/38120>

From Secretariat-General

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