

# **SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AT JACOB'S WELL**

The Sunday of the Samaritan Woman was celebrated on Sunday May 13/26, 2019 at Jacob's Well in Samaria in the city of Nablus. On this feast the Church commemorates the event of the conversation of the Samaritan Woman with our Lord Jesus by Jacob's well, in which according to St. John the Evangelist (ch. 4:42) He revealed to her that He is Christ the Messiah.

At this place of the Well, at the marvelous Church of St. Foteini, which the current Hegoumen Archimandrite Justin has constructed, 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 Most Reverend Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina and the Most Reverend Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Archimandrite Porfyrios and Archimandrite Ignatios, and Arab-speaking Priests. The chanting was delivered by Archimandrite Leontios the Hegoumen the Community of the Annunciation in Rafidia, on the right in Greek, and the Rafidia choir on the left in Arabic, while the service was attended by a noble congregation of local faithful, Greeks, Russians, Romanians, Serbians and of other nationalities.

His Beatitude delivered the following sermon to this congregation;

"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 with 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

Christ who is the living water and also gives the living water (John 4:10), has gathered us all at Jacob's well in the city of Samaria, in order to celebrate the feast of the Samaritan Woman in Eucharist.

The meeting and converse of our Lord Jesus Christ with the Samaritan Woman, evokes feelings of marvel with His prophetic teaching on the one hand, and on the other, He works miracles by which the people are convinced that He is the Messiah, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses: "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:25-26).

These miracles, or signs, are; that Christ reveals Himself to the Samaritan Woman and simultaneously reveals two things to her; first that He is "the living water". "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (John 4:10). Secondly, that God is a Spirit; "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

At this well, Christ "being wearied with his journey" (John 4:6), and being with the Samaritan Woman, He made known to the world His divine truth, which liberates man from the aridity of ignorance as the hymn writer of the Church says; "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, by may proclaim thy mighty acts, O Lord

Jesus”.

It should be noted that the philanthropist God, our Lord Jesus Christ, reveals for the first time the deepest purpose of His mission in the world to the Samaritan Woman the sinner, and not to His disciples. And the Samaritan Woman was not only baptized by Christ, the “living water”, but also became a preacher of the Gospel of Light, of Truth and of repentance.

It is precisely this my dear ones what is pleasing to God, Who wants all men to be saved, and receive the full knowledge of the truth through faith and repentance, as St. Paul preaches; “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).

Indeed, Christ is the “fountain of life”, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. 21:6), the Lord says. Christ offers this water in abundance to those who honestly search for it. “I am the living water” (John 4:10). And this “living water” is no other than the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of our Saviour Christ as He Himself confirms by saying: “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38).

Interpreting these words, St. Cyril of Alexandria says, that once the faithful man has drunk and satisfied his thirst in Christ, he also then becomes a fountain that satisfies the thirsty souls of other people, “so that he does not only fill his own mind with the river waters, but is also able to transmit the God-given good to the hearts of others and gush it out to those afar”.

This is exactly what happened with the Samaritan Woman, who became a fountain, namely the initiative for many of the Samaritan people to believe in Christ, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses; “And many of the Samaritans of that city

believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did" (John 4:39).

Both the witness of St. John the Evangelist – "for the saying of the woman" and the words of St. Luke the Evangelist in today's narrative from the Acts of the Apostles – "and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:21), "and much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts 11:24), through the Gospel preaching in Antioch, clearly express and confirm the historic reality, that the one who will enter the waters of the divine word of the Gospel of Christ, inevitably will have his mind illumined by the light of truth and will be liberated from the spirit of fallacy (1 John 4:6), "avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 6:20-21).

This annunciation of light and truth and righteousness is being ministered by our Holy Church of Christ throughout the world, calling all men "to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:2-3).

In other words, my dear brothers and sisters, the Church is the Divine-human body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who was crucified and resurrected for us. Outside the Church, namely, without our participation in the Divine-human body of the Church, which is the mystical body of Christ, our rebirth in Christ is simply impossible, as impossible is our progress towards the perfect knowledge of God, which the Samaritan Woman, St. Foteini, whom we honour festively today, accomplished, and became a faithful Apostle and martyr of the love of Christ.

Holy Martyr Foteini the Samaritan Woman calls us through the urging words of Apostle Barnabas to remain devoted and attached to our Lord Jesus Christ with all our soul, so that

we may be worthy of our Christian name, as well as of our joining in the mystical body of Christ, the Church, inside which and through which, our deification is made possible.

So let us say along with the hymn writer; "When thy Son destroyed all the might of death, O Virgin, as the mighty God, He exalted and deified us with Himself by His Resurrection. Wherefore we sing His praise unto the ages". Amen. Christ is risen!"

After Dismissal there was a procession and a lunch meal offered by Archimandrite Justin, while at the reception, His Beatitude awarded Mr. Jiries Khouri (Abu Khaled) for his contribution to the Rafidia Community and addressed him as follows;

"Dear Mr. Jiries Khouri, (Abu Khaled),

The Holy and Sacred Synod of the Church of Jerusalem, and we personally, recognizing the work of the good workers of the vineyard of the Church, have decided to award you with the Holy Cross of the Order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood, in recognition of your devotion to the Church and especially of your great contribution to our Rum Orthodox Community in Rafidia.

This honorary distinction refers not only to your contribution to the Church and the State, but mainly and primarily to your moral manner of living and the integrity of your personality.

The wise Apostle Paul expressed the importance of the honorary distinction in simplicity and precision by saying; "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. 2:5).

We wish the One Who was resurrected from the dead and gave the "living water" to the Samaritan Woman, may establish you a communicant of St. Paul's words who said; "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the

faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Axios! Christ is risen! Our warmest Patriarchal congratulations!"

During the awarding Mr. Yusef Nasser spoke (see video) and during the meal His Beatitude also addressed all present as follows;

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) the Lord says.

Reverend Hegoumen and renovator of the Holy Monastery of Jacob's Well, Father Justin,

Reverend Fathers and Brothers, Noble Christians and pilgrims.

We thank our Trinitarian God, Who deemed us worthy to celebrate again this year the commemoration of the meeting of the Samaritan Woman with God the Word, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Christ's answer to the Samaritan Woman's question "Where God should be worshiped?" – "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) is the founding principle of our Christian faith to the God of the incarnate love. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16) St. John the Evangelist teaches.

This Gospel preaching is being ministered throughout the centuries by the Roum Orthodox Church of Jerusalem. This Gospel truth is being witnessed by this Holy Shrine of Jacob's well in the blessed land of Palestine.

Needless to say that the fountain of water does not only

satisfy the natural thirst, but mainly and primarily the spiritual thirst, namely the thirst of the souls of those who come here from the ends of the world, from all religions, namely from the Abrahamic ones.

In other words, the preservation and the ministry of worship of this Holy Shrine by the primary Roum Orthodox Monastic Order of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood on the one hand, and the assurance of the free access of the pilgrims by the competent authorities of the Palestinian State on the other, promote the mutual respect and the peaceful co-existence of religions and civilizations.

We pray that the fountain of Wisdom and the Provider of the Holy Spirit, God the Father of all of us, may bedew, comfort and vivify the athirst souls of all children of God, while the Grace of the Holy Spirit, which has made the Samaritan Woman a martyr of the love of God, may transform, sanctify and deify those who worship God in spirit and truth.

Many Happy returns! Christ is Risen!"

Finally, Mr. Ganam spoke (see video).

**From Secretariat-General**