THE FEAST OF SAINT MARY MAGDALENE & SAINT MARCELLA OF CHIOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Wednesday 22 July /4 August 2021, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of the Holy Glorious Mary Magdalene the myrrh-bearer and equal to the Apostles, and the commemoration of Saint Marcella of Chios.

The commemoration of Saint Mary Magdalene, who according to the Gospels was healed from evil spirits by the Lord, and who saw Him and preached His resurrection, was celebrated at the Russian Holy Nunnery bearing her name in Gethsemane, with the Divine Liturgy that was officiated by Metropolitan Mark of Berlin from ROCOR (Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia), which was called "Diaspora" before its union with Moscow Patriarchate.

During the Divine Liturgy His Eminence Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, accompanied by Hierodeacon Simeon, visited the Monastery. His Eminence read the greeting of H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, who is currently in Jordan; the greeting is below:

Greeting to the Community on the feast of Saint Mary Magdalene

Myrrh-bearer and Equal to the Apostles

at the Russian Church of Saint Mary Magdalene in Gethsemane

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

4 August 2021

Dear Archimandrite Roman,

Dear Mother Elizabeth,

Your Eminences,

Dear Fathers,

Beloved Monastics,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Today on this blessed and glorious feast of your patron saint, we are reminded of these words:

Praise be to the God of the Christians,

For he has raised up both men and women to serve His Holy Church.

Among the first of them was Mary, born in Magdala,

who walked upon this earth with the blessed Theotokos,

the venerable Apostles, and the pious myrrh-bearing women.

She hath shown us, through her marvellous transformation,

the life-changing power of Christ's compassion and deliverance.

Let us, therefore, hasten to her and declare:

Rejoice, Mary Magdalene, holy myrrh-bearer and first proclaimer of the Resurrection.

(The Akathist)

The Gospels are eloquent testimony to Saint Mary Magdalene as

a preacher of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. She was the first to the tomb on that first Easter morning, and the Good News of the resurrection was spread from her.

We who celebrate her festal memory today with such joy are the Church of the resurrection, and our mission is to be a witness to the resurrection in our own day. This mission is all the more urgent in our present time and circumstance when the pandemic has spread both death and the fear of death all around the world. Here in the Holy City of Jerusalem, it is incumbent upon us to whom the Holy Places have been entrusted by Divine Providence, to remain steadfast in our proclamation of the resurrection. We are to be champions of Christ's resurrection, holding high, for all to see, the bright torch of the light and hope that come from the Holy Tomb.

We have experienced in our community the sting of death during this pandemic; today's feast is our consolation, for Saint Magdalene reminds us through her own tears at the empty Tomb, that eternal life triumphs over death. As we read in the Gospel of Saint Mark:

The angel said to them, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. Look, see the place where they laid him.

(Mark 16:6)

Today, therefore, let us recommit ourselves to the message of the resurrection as we celebrate this joyous feast, and MAY Saint Mary Magdalene pray for us, that we MAY be faithful to our mission of proclaiming the resurrection.

Thank you.

The commemoration of Saint Magdalen was also celebrated at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with an All-night Vigil, led by His Eminence Archbishop Theophanes of Gerassa, and a procession with the holy relics of the Saint.

The feast was also celebrated in Magdala, the Saint’s hometown by Tiberias Sea, at the chapel of Moscow Patriarchate. The Liturgy was officiated by His Eminence Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, with the co-celebration of the Head of MISSIA, Archimandrite Alexander.

The commemoration of Saint Marcella was likewise celebrated at the chapel inside the Holy Church of Saint Spyridon in the Old City of Jerusalem, with the Divine Liturgy by the Hegoumen of the H. Monastery of Saint Nicodemus and ministering Priest of Megali Panagia, Archimandrite Makarios, with the hospitality of the Hegoumen Archimandrite Sergios.

From Secretariat-General