03/06/2024

The Sunday of the Samaritan Woman at the Patriarchate



On Saturday, May 19/June 1, 2024, the feast of Sunday of the Samaritan woman was celebrated with a transfer by the Patriarchate at Jacob’s well in Samaria, Nablus.

On this holiday, the whole Church of Jerusalem commemorates following the Evangelist John () that the Samaritan woman, coming to draw water, drew the gift of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, from the Well of Patriarch Jacob in Nablus. There the Lord revealed to her everything about her life and that He is the expected Messiah, the one who speaks with her.

Since then, the Samaritan woman abandoned her previous sinful life and even martyred and is honoured as a martyr, as well as other members of her family, sons and brothers.

There, by Jacob's Well and within the surrounding Church, which was erected by the active Hegoumen Archimandrite Ioustinos, H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, celebrated the Divine Liturgy with the co-celebration of their Eminences, Metropolitan Isychios of Kapitolias, the Metropolitan Epiphanios of Lydra and Hegoumen of the H. Monastery of Machaira, the Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archimandrite Christodoulos, priests of the region of Samaria, the Hegoumen Rafidia Archimandrite Leontios, Archdeacon Markos and Hierodeacon Dositheos. The chanting was delivered by the Hegoumen of Rafidia Archimandrite Leontios in Greek and the Nablus Byzantine choir in Arabic. The service was attended by the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Dimitrios Angelosopoulos and the local congregation.

His Beatitude delivered the following sermon before the Holy Communion:

"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" (John 4, 13-14).

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

The Grace of the Holy Spirit brought us all together today in this holy place of the Well of the Patriarch Jacob, to celebrate the feast of the Samaritan woman, of the Holy martyr Foteini.

In His next dialogue with the Samaritan woman, Jesus says to her: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4, 14). Interpreting these words of the Lord, Saint Cyril of Alexandria says: we must know that the Saviour here calls "water" the Grace of the Holy Spirit. If someone is to become a sharer of this Grace, then he will have the provision of divine knowledge, originating from himself, so that they no longer need the admonition of others. Instead, they will be sufficient and able to exhort/encourage with ease those who thirst for the divine and heavenly word. These were the Saints, the prophets and the Apostles during their earthly life, but also the heirs of their service/ministry, about whom it is written: " Therefore with joy shall ye draw water

out of the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12, 3).

Interpreting again the words of the Prophet Isaiah, Saint Cyril says: “He calls water the life-giving word of God, while He calls springs the Holy Apostles, Evangelists and Prophets. Salvation He calls Christ. Indeed, by the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit the Holy Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists wrote the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Scriptures are those who nourish the saving faith in Christ through their knowledge, as Paul says to his disciple Timothy: ” And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. 3, 15-17).

In other words, the water that Christ offered to the Samaritan woman was the gift of the Holy Spirit, who leads the man with a pure heart to his divinity, that is, to eternal life. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” says the Lord (Matthew 5, 8).

It is noteworthy that Jesus in his dialogue with the Samaritan woman, on the one hand, teaches that “God is a Spirit and those who worship Him in Spirit and in truth worship him” (John 4, 24), on the other hand when the Samaritan woman said: “I saw that the so-called Christ is coming; when he comes, he will tell us everything” (John 4, 25), because he is the Messiah”, He reveals to her ” I that speak unto thee am he” (John 4:26).

Commenting on the above words of Jesus, Saint Theophilaktos says: Many give spiritual worship to God, that is, with their mind, but they are outside the redeeming truth. The Holy Father of the Church says this because the purity of life and the correctness of doctrines constitute God’s true and saving worship.

And St. Cyril of Alexandria says: Christ does not reveal himself simply and only to souls who are uneducated and completely unlearned (like the Samaritan woman), but in those souls he shines and is seen, who have prepared themselves to learn something and within them, they have born faith and “toward the most perfect knowledge they hasten”, that is, they hurry to learn the most perfect mysteries. This is exactly what the Samaritan is distinguished for, in the search for the knowledge of the most perfect faith, which faith is distinguished into introductory and complete.

Saint Cyril of Alexandria comments: “Christ stops the dialogue after the Samaritan

woman, when His disciples came and marveled that He spoke with that woman", (John 4:27) [So Christ is silent, says the Scripture. Since He planted the warm spark of faith in the Samaritan woman, Christ allows during the passage of time that this spark will grow into a great flame. This is how you will have to understand what He said: " I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" (Luke 12:49).

This divine and warm spark, implanted in the innocent heart of the Samaritan woman, made her a great martyr and an apostle of the Gospel of Christ, for this reason, our Holy Church especially honours her in her own homeland, Samaria, as the hymnographer: "Thou camest to Samaria, my Saviour, Thou Almighty Lord, and speaking there with a woman, Thou didst entreat her for water, Who for the Hebrews broughtest forth fresh water from a flinty rock; and her Thou broughtest unto faith in Thee, and now she enjoyeth life in the Heavens forever" (Matins, Exaposteilarion).

It should be noted that this "The Hot spark of the word of life" anointed the disciples of Christ "Christians", as the Evangelist Luke reports in the book of the Acts of the Apostles: " Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught many people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11, 25-26).

With this name, the first called Christians expressed the expectation to inherit the Lord's Kingdom in heaven; to become "heirs of God" and "joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8,17). This name was adopted and honoured by the Samaritan woman with her martyr's blood, who was born as a co-heir of Christ, "the one who told the people; look, come to see a man, who told me everything I did", (Cf. John 4, 28-29).

We, my dear brothers, also received this priceless inheritance, that is, the name "Christian", upon our baptism, having been incorporated into the body of the Church. However, this name implies conformity to our Christ-like way of life. " What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price", (1 Cor. 6, 19-20), Saint Paul preaches. Indeed, we no longer belong to ourselves, because we have been bought with the holy Blood of our Crucified and Resurrected Saviour Christ. We are now members of the secret Body of Christ, that is, of His Church.

We, my beloved, who today honour the memory of the holy Samaritan, beseech the merciful Lord with her, saying: "Grant me the water of faith, and I shall receive

the streams of the font of baptism, unto exceeding gladness and redemption. O Giver of Life, Lord, glory to thee” (Vespers, stichera, 9).

Christ is Risen. Many and peaceful returns.”

After the Divine Liturgy, a litany of three processions took place around the Holy Church. Before exiting the Holy Church, His Beatitude gladly heard the hymn “Christ is risen” in Greek and Arabic, as well as other religious hymns by a group of students from the Catechetical school of Zababde, under the lead of the Rum-Orthodox faithful Daoud, who studied theology in Cyprus.

Afterwards, there was a reception and a solemn meal hosted by the Hegoumen Archimandrite Ioustinos.

From the General Secretariat

















































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