05/08/2024

Speech of His Beatitude Patriarch Theofilos III for the Feast of Saint Mary Mary Magdalene



Your Eminence Metropolitan Mark,

Dear Archimandrite Roman,

Dear Mother Abbess Elizabeth,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of this Sisterhood,

Sister and Brothers in Christ,

We greet you today in the joy of this holy feast of Sint Mary Magdalene, Equal to the Apostles, and we join her praise with the hymnographer:

Rejoice, thou who hast loved the heavenly sweetness of Jesus;

Rejoice, thou who hast found true life in Christ!

Rejoice, thou who by faith hast provided for us an image thereof;

Rejoice, thou who now dwellest in the joy of heaven forever!

Rejoice, thou who ever tastest of the food of paradise;

Rejoice, thou who kindled within thy heart the fire of love for God!

(From the Akathist Hymn)

Saint Mary Magdalene was committed to our Lord Jesus Christ to the last moments of his earthly life among us, and she continued in her devotion even after his burial. So she has become for us an example of the power of faith.

But she is not simply an example of the power of faith; she is an example to us of the power of faith in the most terrible of situations and circumstances. For even at the foot of the cross, even at the death of her Lord and Savior, even in the darkest hour, Saint Mary Magdalene remained constant and steadfast.

So she is an inspiration and guide to us who seek to be faithful in our own day. In this present time of conflicts, crises, and difficulties, it is our faith that keeps us and guides us in our mission. We remember the words pf our Lord Jesus Christ, who said, Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’and if you do not doubt in your heart but have faith that you say will come to pass, it will be down for you (Mark 11:23).

Just as Saint Mary Magdalene became a witness and a proclaimer of the resurrections, so too do we in our own time who claim to be faithful followers of Christ have the responsibility to be a witness to the hope and an encouragement to others. Like Saint Mary Magdalene, we are called to declare what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life (1 John 1:1).

We cannot ignore the circumstances of our lives or the difficulties or the terrible difficulties that we see in our world today. Yet even in the darkest days we are called by the Gospel to be witnesses to the greatest hope, the hope that has been

given to us in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. To this same hope was Saint Mary Magdalene also a witness.

May Saint Mary Magdalene pray for us, as we seek to follow her example of devotion, faith, and hope.”

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