

Speech of His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III for the feast of Saint Mary Magdalene



His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, visited the Convent of Saint Mary Magdalene today, August 4, with accompanying delegation of members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher, to celebrate the Feast of Patron Saint, where His Beatitude delivered the following address,

“Dear Archimandrite Roman,

Dear Mother Abbess Elizabeth,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Beloved Members of this Sisterhood,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Once again we rejoice that we are able to join with you in this blessed celebration of Saint Mary Magdalene, Equal to the Apostles, in this holy convent. As we keep

this great feast, we sing these words:

You were shown to be a radiant star
shedding your light upon our sinful world,
O Mary Magdalene, when,
after the glorious ascension of the Saviour,
you went about the cities and villages,
proclaiming the word of the Gospel everywhere,
and laying the easy yoke of Christ upon many.

(Ikos XI from the Akathist to Saint Mary Magdalene)

Among our Lord's followers during his healthy life and ministry, Saint Mary Magdalene displayed a unique commitment. Her faith was firm and unshakable, even in the face of terrible threat. She was with our Lord throughout his ministry, and remained with him in the darkest hours of his passion and death on the cross. And it was she who was the first to come to the tomb after the Sabbath, and so she became the first witness to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But she did not keep this revelation to herself. She proclaimed it first to the disciples, and then to the world, and so she became a "radiant star" a herald of the Gospel. Even in our own day, in a world of confusion and crisis, conflict and chaos, inhumanity and indifference, Saint Mary Magdalene remains for us a powerful witness that the darkness of the world cannot master us, because, like her, we contain within ourselves the spark of light that is the reflection of the true Light that has come into the world. Saint Mary Magdalene is an example to imitate.

Our mission in the Holy Land is to serve and guard the Holy Places, which are the undisputed testimony of the resurrection. And we cannot forget that by spreading the good news of the resurrection, Saint Mary Magdalene fostered a deeper unity among the followers of Christ. Her bold proclamation brought back together the disciples who had been scattered in fear by our Lord's crucifixion.

Our unity also has its fruits, which is the salvation of all. Our unity guarantees the way and the means of salvation, and, as Saint Paul says to Saint Timothy, it is by a healthy faith that the way of salvation is opened to us. As Saint Mary Magdalene

showed us by the rest of her life a a missionary to others, our mission here is not for ourselves alone, but for the sake of the whole world, both Christians and non-Christians. We share a common human life and a common human destiny, and Jerusalem keeps this light of hope, a light that Saint Mary Magdalene also displayed undimmed.



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