08/04/2022

THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS AT THE PATRIARCHATE



On Thursday, 25 March / 7 April 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Nazareth.

On this feast, the Church commemorates that Archangel Gabriel visited the Most Holy Mary in Nazareth and announced to her that she was going to conceive from the Holy Spirit and give birth to the Incarnate Son of God for the rebirth and salvation of the humankind. When Mary said the words: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38), then along with the bodiless voice of the Angel, the Bodiless One received a body, the Son and Word of God became incarnate and Mary became the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin.

For this feast the Divine Liturgy was celebrated:

At the Shrine of the Annunciation in Nazareth, led by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with their Eminences, the Metropolitans Kyriakos of Nazareth and Isychios of Kapitolias, the Archbishops, Aristarchos of

Constantina and Methodios of Tabor, Hagiotaphite Hieromonks, Arab-speaking Priests from the Holy Metropolis of Nazareth, the Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios. The chanting was delivered by the Nazareth Community Byzantine choir and the service was attended by Rum Orthodox Arab-speaking faithful from Galilee, Russian Orthodox Christians and some Greek pilgrims.
Before the Holy Communion His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14, Matt. 1:23) the Prophet Isaiah exclaims.

Beloved Brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians and pilgrims

The grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us all in this holy place, which has been sanctified by the body of our Lord, this city of Nazareth, to glorify in Eucharist the revelation of “the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:9), the Son of God and Son of the Virgin.

And this Virgin, who had been foretold by the Prophet Isaiah is no other than the one witnessed by Luke the Evangelist, “a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary” (Luke 1:27). Coming to her, the messenger of God Archangel Gabriel said: “Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women… And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus… The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:26-35).

Indeed, the Ever-Virgin Mary is what the hymnographer has said: “the capital of the salvation of the people”. And this is because “the mystery of Christ’s providence”, namely the faith in Christ, has become the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament, as the wise Paul preaches: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:4-5).

Interpreting the above words of Paul, Ecumenios on the one hand denotes: “he didn’t say through a woman… but by a woman, showing the conceived body of the

Lord in her essence, as He became the fruit of her womb". On the other hand, Eusebius says: "because sin was caused by a woman, it was by a woman that the Saviour came, namely Christ". That is why Saint Cyril of Alexandria also says in praise: "Rejoice Mary Theotokos, through Whom the unspeakable grace came forth, for which Saint Paul said: "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). Rejoice, Mary Mother of God, through whom the true Light our Lord Jesus Christ came forth, who says in the Gospels: "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12). Rejoice, Mary Theotokos, through whom the light shone to those sitting in the darkness and the shadow of death. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light" (Matt. 4:16). Who is that light, if not our Lord Jesus Christ, the true light, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). Rejoice, Mary the heirloom of the whole world".

Truly, my dear brethren, the Virgin from Nazareth became the heirloom of the whole world. And this, because the annunciation of the full of grace and blessed among women Mary (Luke 1:28), has provided "a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us" (Hebrews 10:20). In other words, the annunciation of the Mother of God has inaugurated the way of salvation, that is the cure of man from sin, namely the infirmity and the corruption of death. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26) the Lord says.

Referring to the resurrection, the wise Paul says: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15:13-14). This means that our resurrection in Christ necessarily predisposes the great mystery of the incarnation of God the Word and our Saviour Jesus Christ through the pure flesh of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. Without the power of our faith, it is impossible to reason with or comprehend the mystery of the divine providence in Christ. "Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded; but on whomsoever, it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (1 Peter 2:6-7, Matt. 21:44) the Lord says.

This is also phrased in his hymn by Saint John Damascene: “No tongue can speak of your wonderful childbearing, for the order of nature was overruled by God! You were revealed to be a mother above nature, for you remained a Virgin beyond reason and understanding! Your conception was most glorious, Theotokos! The manner of your giving birth was ineffable, Virgin! Knowing you to be the Mother of God, devoutly we pray to you: beseech Him to save our souls” (Octoechos, tone 7, Saturday Vespers Glory).

God’s unsearchable judgments and ways past finding out (ref. Romans 11:33), became known, according to Saint Paul “unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:10). And the Church of Christ claimed through the God-bearing Fathers who have been inspired by the Holy Spirit in the Ecumenical Synods, that the pure Virgin Mary should be called Theotokos (Mother of God). Let us hear the words of Saint Cyril of Alexandria: “it is, therefore, befitting to our correct and unchangeable confession of faith to say Theotokos and confess the Holy Theotokos… for the Holy Virgin did not give birth to divinity, but in flesh, she was in union with the Word of God… and it is thus true that the Virgin became Theotokos, giving birth paradoxically to Christ, making us also partakers of flesh and blood (ref. Hebrews 2:14), and of one essence for her and for us according to the flesh, as he is flesh from the Theotokos Mary”.

Behold, therefore, my dear brethren, why our Holy Church magnifies in praise the Theotokos, to whom the Angel of God Gabriel announced “Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God” (Luke 1:30).

And let us say along with the hymnographer: “All-Holy Virgin, thou art greater in honour than the glorious cherubim. Unable to endure the divine splendour, they veil their faces with their wings as they perform their ministry; but thou dost gaze with thine own eyes upon the incarnate Word. Without ceasing pray to him for our souls” (Triodion Monday of the 5th week, KathismaTheotokion 4), as well as for the ceasefire, for peace in our region and in the whole world. Many happy returns and a blessed Pascha! Amen”.

At noon, His Eminence the Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth hosted a meal for the Patriarchal Entourage, Mr Cezar Marjieh and others, where His Beatitude delivered the following address:

“And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Isaiah 40:5), the prophet Isaiah proclaims.

Your Eminence, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth,

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Your Excellency President Mr Bassim and respected members of the Ecclesiastical Council,

Dear associates,

Our Holy Church celebrates today the joyful and universal event of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, namely the appearance of “the salvation of God”, which took place in your historical and biblical city, Nazareth.

The presence of the Christians in the Holy Land throughout the centuries and of course in the city of Nazareth is proof that testifies to the sacred mission of the Church of Jerusalem which preaches love, peace and the righteousness of Christ. Moreover, it is proof that the Church as the body of Christ, while Christ is its head (ref. Eph. 1:22-23), is the blessed divine fruit of the womb of the pure full of grace Virgin Mary, which bestows the light of life and truth upon the world.

This true light of life and hope shines upon all the people, as another beacon in our historic world of the so-called “New World Order”, where war, disorder, lawlessness and disorder prevail. “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work” (James 3:16), Saint James the Brother of God and first Hierarch of Jerusalem preaches.

We say this to show the exceeding magnitude of the power of the Church and in particular, of the Church of Jerusalem, the Rum-Orthodox Patriarchate, which is the guarantee of the New Testament according to Saint Paul who says: “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament” (Hebrews 7:22), and in simple words, for as much as Christ became a High Priest, so much more He became a guarantor and broker of the high and eternal Testament.

As for us, my dear brethren, paying heed to the God-inspired voice of Saint Paul: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:12-13), we are called to remain faithful in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of which the Mother of God became also Mother of the Church of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Allow Us to announce the official approval of the funding of the renovation of the Holy Shrine of the Church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Nazareth by the known Russian Foundation. We hope to start working on this project as soon as possible by the will of God.

Many happy returns and blessed Pascha”.

At the Theotokos’ Tomb in Gethsemane. The Divine Liturgy was officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios of Sebastia, with the co-celebration of Archimandrite Klaudios, the ministering Priests of the Shrine, in the presence of the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr Evangelos Vlioras, to who we convey our wished for many happy returns on his Name Day.
The Episcopal Entourage and the congregation were offered a reception by the recently appointed Hegoumen, His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Helenoupolis, to whom we wish the intercession of the Most-Holy Theotokos.

From Secretariat-General


MORE THAN 780,000
PALESTINIANS WERE
FORCED OUT OF THEIR
HOMES AND LAND
©Heba Hrimat


Galaxy
BLU
©Heba Hrimat


©Heba Hrimat


©Heba Hrimat


©Heba Hrimat


©Heba Hrimat


©Heba Hrimat
GUCCI
Carrefour
GUESS


©Heba Hrimat


©Heba_Hrimat


©Heba_Hrimat


©Heba Hrimat


©Heba Hrimat


©Heba Hrimat


©Heba Hrimat









[Home]