17/05/2022

THE SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC MAN AT THE PATRIARCHATE

On Sunday, May 2/15, 2022, the Patriarchate celebrated the Sunday of the Paralytic Man, the 4th Sunday after Pascha according to the Book of Pentecostarion.

H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, after the welcoming reception by the Scouts, officiated the Divine Liturgy at the Community of Rhene, near the city of Nazareth.

Co-celebrants to His Beatitude were their Eminences, Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth, the Geronda Secretary-General, Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Elder Kamarasis Archimandrite Nectarios, Archimandrite Artemios, the Dean Priest of this community Priest Simeon, Priest Stephen from the Church of Greece, other Priests, Archdeacon Mark and Hierodeacon Eulogios.

The chanting was delivered by the Byzantine Choir of the Community in Arabic, and many local faithful Christians attended the Service.

Before the Holy Communion, His Beatitude delivered the following Sermon:

“At the sheep’s pool a man lay in sickness and when he saw Thee, O Lord, he cried: I have no man that when the water is troubled, he might put me threrein. And straightaway, taking compassion on him, the Saviour saith unto him; for thee I became man, for thee, I am clothed in flesh, and sayest thou: I have no man? Take up thy bed and walk” the hymnographer of the Church proclaims (Vespers, Entreaty, Glory).

Beloved brethren in Christ,

Noble Christians

Marvellous is our God, who has gathered us today in the faithful community of Rheine, to celebrate the Pascha of the Lord in gleefulness and joy, as we commemorate the miracle of the healing of the paralytic man who had been ill for thirty-eight years at the Sheep’s pool (ref. John 5, 5-9).

During His presence on earth, the Lord worked many signs in order to reveal His glory so that they might believe in Him, and to show His healing power to anyone who asked for it, which stemmed from the obedience and faith in Him, the Son and Word of God.

“And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool” (John 5,5-7).

Interpreting this verse from the Gospel, the Holy Fathers of the Church wonder why our Saviour chose this certain paralytic man? Because he was suffering from an incurable disease; “For what reason did Jesus pass by all other (ill people) and came to this man? To show both the power and the philanthropy; the power, because the illness had become incurable and had seized the man; and the philanthropy because Christ and guardian and philanthropist saw this man before all others as he was indeed worthy of mercy and benevolence”, Saint Chrysostom says.

To Christ’s demanding question, “Wilt thou be made whole?” (John 5,6) Saint Chrysostom says that as the healer of our bodies and souls, Christ referred to the double paralysis of both the sins and the body. In other words, when there is mention in the Holy Scriptures about sin, we should understand this as our infirmity

of both the soul and the body, which resulted in the death of corruption as Saint Paul preaches, having the Old Adam in mind: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5,12).

And Saint John the Baptist calls upon the words of Prophet Isaiah and says: “he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows” (Isaiah 53,4). Seeing “Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1,29). And the wise Paul says: “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15,3).

Moreover, according to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, the Lord came on earth “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2,14), and “to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins”. Let us hear the Holy Father saying: “wherever there is Christ, there salvation lies. And if he sees a publican sitting at the cashier, He makes him an apostle and an evangelist; and if He is buried with the dead, He makes them rise. And He makes the blind to see, the deaf to hear; and He visits the pools, not to see the buildings, but seeking to heal the sick”.

It is noteworthy that the paralytic man was healed not by the water of the pool, but by the working of the power of the word of our Saviour Christ, as the hymnographer says: “O Lord, not the pool, but Thy word healed and renewed the paralytic; nor was he hindered by his sickness of many years; for the power of Thy voice proved to be more effectual. And he cast off the weight that was grievous to bear and carried the burden of his bed as a testimony to the multitude of Thy compassions. Glory be to Thee”(Matins, Glory of praises).

The paralytic man became healthy instantly when he heard the Lord’s words “Take up thy bed and walk” (John 5,8-9). And the swift healing power of the Lord’s voice is no other than the overshadowing of the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. And we say this, because the Church is the pool, namely the healing place of our souls and bodies, while the Holy Sacraments, which are being held by the power of the Holy Spirit are the medicine that lead to the cure. According to Saint Chrysostom, the manner of treatment is common and the medicine is available for all. However, healing is not common for all, but it is achieved by the goodwill of those who use it.

Celebrating the Lord’s Pascha, my dear brethren, let us hear the divine voice of the Resurrected Christ: “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen”

(Matt. 28,20).

And let us say along with the hymnographer; “Having risen from the dead, Thou didst raise us also from the passions by Thy Resurrection, O Lord: And Thou didst destroy all the might of death, O Saviour, for this cause we cry out in faith: Remember us also in Thy Kingdom” (Sunday of the Paralytic, at the Liturgy, Troparion 2).

Christ is risen! Many happy and blessed returns!”

At noon the Community hosted a meal and among the celebrating guests were the Mayor of the city and the Sheikh.

His Beatitude addressed all present at the meal as follows:

“The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down” (Psalm 145,14), the psalmist says.

Reverend Holy Fathers and Brethren,

Your Excellency President and respected members of the Ecclesiastical Committee,

Noble Christians,

The light of the Resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ which has filled both the earth and the heavens, as well as the parts below the earth, has gathered us all here so that along with the hymnographer Saint John of Damascus we may say: “Willingly becoming poor with Adam’s poverty, O Christ God, Thou camest upon the earth, incarnate of a Virgin. And Thou didst accept the Cross that Thou mightiest free us from slavery to the enemy. O Lord, glory to Thee”(Wednesday after the Myrrh-bearing women, Matins, 1st Troparion of praises, of the Crucifixion).

And we wonder, who is the enemy of the slavery of man? The devil, namely the lord of this world (ref. Eph. 6,12) has put men under tyranny. Form this tyranny of the devil did Christ liberate us through His Resurrection, as Luke the Evangelist says in the Acts of the Apostles: “ye know… Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10,37-38).

Through the pure flesh of the Ever-Virgin and Theotokos Mary, in the Holy Spirit, the Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ became incarnate and took the same form of us men, so that He may transform the body of our humility to become of the same form with the body of His glory (ref. Phil. 3,21), that is, the

body of His Resurrection.

In other words, my dear brethren, Christ conquered the death of corruption and sin and in more detail, the death of the body and soul's paralysis, through His own death. And this happened, according to Saint Athanasius the Great, "so that the conciliation of God toward man may also be freedom of the whole humankind through man in the form of the new image of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord".

We, my dear brethren, being members of the body of Christ, have the Holy Church of Christ as our "Sheep's pool", where the healer of our bodies and souls is always present, both visibly and invisibly. God has granted us this great and unique beneficial and philanthropic Providence.

This Divine Providence is no other than our Mother and natural feeder, the Church of Jerusalem, the Venerable Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which throughout the centuries has remained a beacon and steadfast keeper of the truth in Christ, the faith in Christ, a guardian of the fatherly morals and an enemy of every newly-appearing seemingly religion, such as the Globalization and the New Order.

Christ and only Christ and His Church is the pool of life and the harbour of our recourse. Let us not turn our eyes and attention anywhere else, but only toward Christ, Who is the leader and founder of the faith and makes us perfect in it, as Saint Paul preaches: "…Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12,2)

Christ is risen! Many happy returns, blessed in the freedom of Christ!"

From Secretariat-General