

THE DIVINE LITURGY OF ST MARK AT THE TOMBS OF SAINTS GABRIEL AND KYRMIDOLIS

On the 18th of October, the commemoration of the Holy Glorious new martyrs Gabriel and Kyrmidolis, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, performed the ancient Divine Liturgy of the Apostle and Evangelist Mark, at the place of martyrdom and burial of the Saints, which is located in the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St. George in old Cairo.

This Divine Liturgy belongs to the ancient Alexandrian tradition and is inextricably linked to the history of the second-throne Patriarchate, with important Byzantine influences over time and its writing is attributed to the Apostle Mark.

Its connection with the name of the founder of the Alexandrian throne shows its origin and its reference to functional and cultural facts of Alexandria. It was written in Greek and is known from fragments of parchments and papyri of the 4th – 5th century, but the manuscripts that contain the entire text are of the 11th century onwards. Finally, from a theological point of view, studying the prayers, it should be mentioned that the Liturgy of the Apostle Mark fully reflects the Christology and Pneumatology of our Church, while the local cultural characteristics, such as the reference to the rural life of the Egyptians, the city of Alexandria and the waters of the Nile River, are of particular interest. It is worth mentioning that Saint Nektarios, Bishop of Pentapolis, was the one who saved from the ancient manuscripts the order of this really special Divine Liturgy.

Deeply moved, His Beatitude mentioned the following in his address:

'... Today you attended a different Divine Liturgy, our Divine Liturgy, the Liturgy written by our Apostle, Saint Mark. Cairo celebrates today. The Martyrs Gabriel and Kyrmidolis celebrate, the new martyrs from the Patriarchal tenure of Joachim Pany. Tradition says that the Liturgy was preserved by a great Patriarch, Meletios Pigas. This Liturgy was performed only here in Egypt, so you saw that I went to a place at the well and begged the waters, the waters of the Nile, to rise and irrigate the fields and orchards of Egypt. That is why we will make a procession to the Nile well'.

'... Your eyes will weep, since the prayer refers to the sick. I remembered all the sick from the pandemic and I prayed for the peace of God to come to the Land of the Nile. I bless you my children. Today I wore the chasuble as the first priests and hierarchs wore it. I hold this staff which is a copy of the shepherd's staff when he was herding the sheep and only the pope of Alexandria could have his head covered with this cover. This is what the Great Cyril of Alexandria always wore. This solid-gold pectoral medallion is early Christian. This is what the first bishops wore as an amulet. My children, you have the blessing of Christ. I thank the Holy Hierarchs Nicholas and Nicodemus who prayed so many times with their Holy Flock for you, our young children, who will be the clergy of tomorrow. God bless you '.

Finally, His Beatitude, after addressing words of edification to the young people, thanked holy hierarchs, His Eminence Nikolaos Metropolitan of Ermoupolis and His Eminence Nikodimos Metropolitan of Memphis, the Brotherhood of the Holy Monastery, as well as the Honorable Consul General of Greece in Cairo, Mrs. Maria Zisi.

After the end of the Divine Liturgy, the Litany of the Holy Icon and the relics of the Saints took place in the catacombs of the Monastery followed, by the blessing of the waters of the Nile.