

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM

Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

May 14, 2017 – Sunday of the

Samaritan Woman (5th Sunday of Pascha)

Today is the Fifth Sunday of Pascha. This season, which lasts from the bright resurrection of Christ until the Descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, continues for fifty days. The reason that it is longer than the forty days of Lent is to show the superiority of the feast of the Resurrection over the fast. As through Lent, we prepare for Pascha by fasting, vigils, prayers and the “training” in virtue, and after Pascha comes ease and enjoyment, so those who spend their lives in repentance and a life pleasing to God will delight in the joy of that age to come.

In today’s Gospel reading we heard Christ speaking to the Samaritan woman and telling her that he is the Messiah. He does not engage in conversation with her and then quickly tell her that he is the Messiah, but instead, as St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory Palamas note, it is with such care and love towards her that He gradually leads her along and reveals who He is.

Looking at today’s passage we see:

- that Jesus, being a Jew, sits at Jacob’s Well and asks the Samaritan woman, who is a Gentile, for some water. She sees him and knows that he is a Jew and that Jews do not have dealings with Gentiles.
- He veils who He is by saying that if she knew who He was, she would ask him for a drink, and He would give her living water (vs. 10).



- She then asks if He is greater than Jacob to whom she referred to as the father of the Samaritans, attributing honor to this geographic location and therefore to this well as though no better water could be found anywhere else.
- He does not respond directly but continues to speak of the living water that He gives after which no one ever thirsts and it wells up to everlasting life and in this statement he indicates that he is greater than Jacob (vs. 13-14)
- She answers with an open heart saying, “Give me this water,” and he continues to bring her along, closer to the truth.
- He then says to her to get her husband and through this, in another veiled way, reveals that he has a prophetic gift because he knows that she has five husbands. She meekly replies, “Sir, I perceive that Thou art a Prophet” (vs. 19).
- Moving from thirst to matters of doctrine, showing the ascent of her mind to greater things, the Samaritan woman shows her awareness of the five Books of Moses, noting the different places of worship between the Jews and the Samaritans (vs. 20). Christ responds saying, “The hour is coming, and now is,” (vs. 23) that these places of worship will be done away with and that those who will worship God will do so in spirit and in truth. About this “moment” in the exchange between Christ and the Samaritan woman, St. Gregory Palamas writes:

When the Samaritan woman heard these extraordinary and divine words from Christ, that God can be truly worshipped in His Spirit and His Truth, she, like the soul betrothed to God in the Song of Songs, was stirred up by the voice of the immortal bridegroom and made mention of Him for whom she waited and longed, and whose presence was still concealed. “I know,” she said, “that [the] Messiah comes, who is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things” (John 4:25). Do you see how ready she was to believe that the awaited one was already at hand, and how hopeful she was? Surely David’s words apply also to her, “My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready: I will sing and give praise in my glory” (Ps. 57:7 LXX).

- Christ then says to her, “I who speak to you am He” (vs. 26). What did she then do? She leaves her waterpot and does not go back to her house but instead to the whole town to tell people what just happened. Many believed her and others went to meet Him to find out for themselves, and they invited Him to stay with them.

Two things that become apparent about this interaction are the compassion that Christ shows towards this Gentile woman and the meek quality of her responses.

Both St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory Palamas, in their commentary on these verses, describe in detail how gently Christ brings her along, slowly revealing who He is to her; a bruised reed He shall not break and smoking flax shall he not quench (Matt. 12:20). He who desires the salvation of all men, whose mercy endures forever, is patient, answers her questions and assists her understanding.

Jesus is not this clear when he speaks to Nicodemus, “Israel’s teacher” (John 3:10), but instead speaks of being born again and about the wind blowing where it will. To Nathaniel, He prophesies saying that he saw him underneath the fig tree (John 1:48). The Jews question him saying, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” And He answers them, “I did tell you, but you do not believe” (John 10:24-25). St. John Chrysostom explains that the reason he spoke to Nathaniel and Nicodemus as he did was that they were men and versed in these matters; the Jews did not enquire to learn but to mock him. But she was more “fair-minded” than they. She was a poor, ignorant woman, unpracticed, in comparison, to these others.

But St. John also accentuates her meekness. Christ reproved the Jews with greater reproofs than this and they did not bear it patiently but responded with insults and ridicule. She is astonished, believing Him to be a prophet and her heart was softened, and she proceeded in wonder of Him.

In our own life, Christ waits on us, encourages us, answers our questions and strengthens us in multiple ways to overcome our trials. He is not our enemy but is longsuffering towards us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (cf. 2 Peter 3:9). In such a way does the Gospel begin to come to the Gentiles, through this sinful woman.

May we put down our water jug of worldly cares and turn to Him in meekness and drink the water that will become in us a fountain of immortality. (from *holycross-hermitage.com*)

Today’s Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 11:19-26, 29-30

In those days, those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and

had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 4:5-42

Jesus came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is

coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.” And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?” The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I *ever* did.” So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

April Treasurer’s Report

Christ is Risen! In deed He Is Risen! For the month of April our income/expenses were: Operating Income: \$14,646.46 | Operating Expenses: \$11,870.93 | Income Over/Under \$2,775.53

There were no major expenses for this month. We had 5 Sunday collection in April. Thank you for being good Stewards of God's House.

Kari David, Treasurer

A Word From the Holy Fathers

If the present life is a stadium, and its conduct therefrom deserves rewards, do not wonder that some of the righteous contend here with distress, but admire rather that some consider the time and place of their struggles and conflicts as the day of their crowns and the platform of their acclamation.

– St. Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Ep. 86* (to Theodorus, Metropolitan of Laodicea)

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 129: Partnering with God



“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
(Matthew 5:16 RSV)

Being a human is certainly a challenge. Being a Christian is yet even more daunting. But being an Orthodox Christian is the ultimate in demanding. God’s work is to be accomplished among us both individually and as a group, the Church. Each of us seeks to return to the state in which human beings were created. We have been endowed with the God-like image of Christ and have full potential to make that return. As well, our work is not limited to what we try to do for ourselves, but what we can accomplish as partners with God for all of His creation.

Speaking in classical stewardship terms, for example, God has not only required of us to give a portion of what we consider ours (the tithe?), He requires of us that all we have be used to His glory. *“...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”* (1 Corinthians 10:15 RSV). Consider the implications: there must be no waste of His goods on unnecessary luxuries; there is to be no waste of His goods on pride (like in dress, or the latest electronics, or the best luxury automobile). After all, it is God’s property that we are handling. The squandering of what is His deprives those who are in need of simple necessities like basic clothing, food and shelter.

St. Paul said it simply and clearly: *“...For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building”* (1 Corinthians 3:9 RSV). The Kingdom of God is like a large corporation that is full of goods and services of which human beings throughout the world are in need. The Owner and CEO of this corporation is God Himself. The Church is like the managers that partner with the Owner to care for all of those goods and services, and to distribute these goods and services as needed in the world. Each one of us, then, is a managing partner with God. As we rightfully and carefully manage the goods that the Owner wants distributed where needed, we ourselves work our way up closer and closer to what God wants us to be.

This illustration is to show what each of us who make up the Church are to be and to do. We are to be good, responsible partners with God for not only our own well-being (and salvation) but also for the well-being (and salvation) of the world. Nothing that we manage is our own. But as God’s partners and managers, we take what is already owned by God and we use it for the growth of the Kingdom. As we do so, we also grow into the kind of persons God wants us to be. (*from acrod.org*)

UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS

The Young Women's Encounter and the Altar Boy Retreat (ABR) are scheduled for 25-28 June. The ABR is open to our Altar Boys ages 8-18. More information will be coming out on this event in the near future.

YWE registration information is now available on the diocesan website. The 40th Anniversary Alumni Day will be held at Camp Nazareth on Saturday, May 20, 2017. Family Day will be held at Camp Nazareth on Sunday, June 11, 2017. For more information, navigate your way to www.campnazareth.org.

CAMP NAZARETH

Camp Nazareth is eagerly awaiting and preparing for the arrival of the Summer Camping Season, and registration is now open. Apostle Thomas campers will be attending Week 2, July 23-29, 2017. **May 15th** is the deadline for clergy and volunteer applications, **and is the last day** for registrants to receive the \$20 early bird discount. For more information, please visit the Camp website.

REGISTRATION FOR CAMP WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO BE DONE ONLINE THROUGH THE CAMP'S WEBSITE – CAMPNAZARETH.ORG.

ALSO COMMEMORATED TODAY: MARTYR ISIDORE OF CHIOS

The Holy Martyr Isidore lived during the 3rd century on the Island of Chios, and was a native of Alexandria. During the first year of rule of the emperor Decius (249-251) there was issued an edict to make a census of all those capable to serve in the armies of the Roman empire. Saint Isidore, tall and strong of body, was drafted into the regiment of the military-commander Numerius. Saint Isidore was a Christian, he led a life of temperance and abstinence, he was chaste and he shunned all the pagan customs. Another imperial edict then commanded that all the soldiers were to worship the Roman pagan gods and to offer them sacrifice. Not to obey the edict carried the penalty of torture and death.

The centurion reported to the military-commander Numerius that Isidore was a Christian. At the interrogation before Numerius, Saint Isidore without flinching confessed his faith in Christ the Savior and refused to offer sacrifice to idols. Numerius urged the saint not to expose himself to tortures and to obey the will of the emperor, but Saint Isidore answered that he would obey only the will of the eternal God, Christ the Savior, and never would he renounce Him. The saint was handed over to torture. During the time of torments he praised Christ God and denounced the pagan idols. The military-commander gave orders to cut out the tongue of the saint, but even after this the saint continued distinctly to give glory to Christ. Numerius in fright fell to the ground and himself lost the gift of speech. Getting up with the help of soldiers, by means of gestures he demanded a small

board and on it wrote an order – to cut off the head of Saint Isidore. Saint Isidore welcomed his death sentence with joy and said: "I glorify You, O my Master, that by Your mercy You have accepted me in Your Heavenly Habitation!" The death of the martyr occurred in the year 251. After execution his body was cast out without burial, but another saint, the secret Christian Ammonios, took up his body and committed it to earth. Later on Ammonios himself accepted a martyr's death in the city of Kyzikos (Comm. 4 September).

At the beginning of the 12th century the Russian pilgrim Daniel saw the relics of the holy Martyr Isidore on the Island of Chios. His relics were later transferred to Constantinople and placed in the church of Saint Irene.

(from holytrinityorthodox.com)

SerbFest DC's Biannual Spring Festival Celebrates Serbian Food, Culture & Entertainment

St. Luke Serbian Orthodox Church will host SerbFest DC's Spring 2017 Festival beginning Friday, May 19th through Sunday, May 21st once again bringing authentic Serbian food, drinks, musical and dance performances, boutique gift items and family-friendly activities to the greater Washington, DC area. SerbFest DC aims to bring attention to and educate the community on authentic Serbian cuisine, customs and culture with two three-day festivals each year—one held each Spring and Fall. This year's live music and entertainment schedule includes:

- Serbian music by DC Acoustic Band on Friday, May 19th from 6-9:00 p.m.
- Traditional tamburitza band Srpski Sinovi Orchestra on Saturday, May 20th from 2-5:00 p.m. and 6-9:00 p.m. and on Sunday, May 21st from 1-5:00 p.m.
- Folklore Ensemble Strazilovo from St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church (Toronto, Ontario) on Saturday, May 20th at 3:00 p.m.
- The Academy of Serbian Folk Dancing Association (Toronto, Ontario) on Sunday afternoon at 3:00 p.m.

Traditional Serbian menu items to include Burek (baked meat pie in phyllo dough), Zeljanica (baked spinach & cheese in phyllo dough) and Gibanica (baked cheese in phyllo dough), with additional items from the grill including Jagnjetina (spit-roasted lamb), Svinjetina (spit-roasted pig) and Čevapčići (grilled skinless ground meat sausages). Desserts to include Krofne (deep-fried donuts), Palačinke (crepes), and Serbian nut and poppy seed rolls. Authentic Serbian beers including Jelen, LAV, Nikšićko, BiP and Rakija, a Serbian brandy made from fruit will be available in addition to water and soda.

Admission and parking are free and an indoor setup has been arranged in case of inclement weather. All a la carte food item proceeds benefit Saint Luke Serbian Orthodox Church. An option to pre-order all food items in advance is available by visiting serbfestdc.com. Additional details regarding the event including live updates and giveaways can be found by following @SerbFestDC on Twitter and Facebook and online at www.serbfest.com.

SerbFest DC Spring 2017 Details: Dates: Friday, May 19th (11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.), Saturday, May 20th (11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.). Sunday, May 21st (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.) Location: Saint Luke Serbian Orthodox Church, 10660 River Road, Potomac, MD 20854 (Parking located in rear of St. Luke property and next door at Sts. Peter & Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church)

MOTHER'S DAY PRAYER

Lord our God, Jesus Christ on this day we are gathered to honor our mothers and first among them is your own holy mother, Mary the Virgin, the all holy and pure. We supplicate you to accept our supplications on behalf of all the mothers throughout the world. Give rest to those who are gone to your resting place. Grant those who are still with us joy in the remembrance of their accomplishments. Forgive us if we failed at any time in our life to offer them the honor & the respect as we ought to.

Help and support all mothers in their mission to always be a good role model to new mothers and to all people. Strengthen those who are single mothers, help those who have children of special needs, comfort the hearts and souls of those mothers who have lost their children. Be an aid to those who are unable to become mothers whatever the reason might be, be everything to everyone as they need you. Teach us that every day should be a special day to remember and honor our mothers and women who treat us with motherly like love. Accept our praises and thanksgivings offered to you as our true God, along with your eternal and unoriginated Father and your all holy and life giving Spirit. Amen.

Follow Our Diocese On-Line

Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org>

Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>

You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Grace Bishop GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Fr. Vincent Saverino, Presbyteria Katie Baker and family, Alicia Barosio and family, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Deanna Jarrett, Tucker Karl and family, Robert Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, Josh Moore, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Subdcn. Nectarios and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the newly departed servants of God Protopresbyter Ronald Hazuda and Father William George, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)