



This faith, which we have received from the Church, which we preserve carefully, because, through the action of the Spirit of God, like a deposit of great price enclosed in a pure vessel, it rejuvenates ceaselessly, and makes the vessel that contains it to be rejuvenated. It is to the Church herself that the gift of God has been imparted, as the breath had been to the created man, so that all the members may partake of it and be vivified thereby; it is in her that the communion with Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit has been deposited, the Earnest-money of incorruption, a confirmation of our faith, and the ladder of our ascent to God For where the Church is, there is also the Spirit of God and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace. And the Spirit is Truth.

Saint Irenaeus of Lyon



10 May 2015 is the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

Matins Gospel: John 20:1-10

Epistle: Acts 11:19-30

Gospel: John 4:5-42

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

Having learned the joyful proclamation of the Resurrection from the Angel, and having cast off the ancestral condemnation, the women disciples of the Lord spake to the Apostles exultantly: Death is despoiled and Christ God is risen, granting great mercy to the world.

Seasonal Kontakion

Though You went down into the tomb, You destroyed Hades' power, and You rose the victor, Christ God, saying to the myrrh-bearing women, "Hail!" and granting peace to Your disciples, You who raise up the fallen.



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

10 May 2015

A Spring of Living Water

Today the Church commemorates the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman. Saint John's Gospel tells us of the extraordinary conversation she had with Jesus at Jacob's Well in Samaria. Not only does Jesus break through accepted Jewish practices by meeting with a woman and a Samaritan, but He reveals that He knew exactly what had been going on in this woman's past.

More fundamentally, however, Jesus Christ reveals to this woman her own deepest desires, and her thirst for God. And, even more than that, He fulfills this thirst. He asks her for a drink of water, but she ends up realizing that He is the Living Water that she is longing for.

The Church gives us this Gospel account in the middle of the Easter season because we too are realizing our own thirst for the Living Water that only the Risen Christ can give us. This past Wednesday, on mid-Pentecost, we prayed: "Give to my thirsty soul to drink from the waters of true praise."

Like the Samaritan woman – whom the Church identifies as St Photini – we often do not realize our true need for God. We may even have become adept at lying about who we really are in the same way as she sought to cover up her shady past. A true encounter with the Risen Christ will involve acknowledging the truth of who we really are in order to be able to accept God's mercy and His overwhelming love.



Readings and saints for this week:

Monday: Acts 12:12-17; John 8:42-51

Cyril and Methodius; Renewal of Constantinople

Tuesday: Acts 12:25; 13:1-12; John 8:51-59

Epiphanius, Bp. Of Cyprus; Germanos, Abp. Of Constantinople

Wednesday: Acts 13:13-24; John 6:5-14

Martyr Glyceria; Sergios the Confessor

Thursday: Acts 14:20-28; 15:1-4; John 9:39-10:9

Martyr Isidore; Hieromartyr Therapontus

Friday: Acts 15:5-12; John 10:17-28

Pachomius the Great; Achillius, Abp. Of Larissa

Saturday: Acts 15:35-41; John 10:27-38

Theodore the Sanctified; Martyr Peter of Blachernae

He asks for water, who hung the earth upon the waters. He seeks water, who pours out springs and pools of water, as He wishes truly to draw her who is hunted by the warlike foe, and to quench with the water of life the thirst of her who is aflame with fowl desires, as He alone is compassionate and loves mankind.

From Small Vespers for the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

The Mystery of Repentance

A series on the meaning of Confession

We saw last week that repentance lies at the heart of Christian life, and that the Church gives us the Sacrament of Confession to help us on this road to repentance.



To repent does not simply mean to feel bad about something, or to wallow in feelings of guilt. Rather, it means to turn around and, more specifically, to turn towards God. It means turning away from sin and re-orientating ourselves towards God. And a life of repentance, which is what we are called to as Christians, means a life of constantly seeking to orientate ourselves towards God.

Jesus Christ gives us a pattern for repentance in the parable of the Prodigal Son. (Luke 15:11-32) In it, we see that sin involves a certain exile, for it alienates us from our true home, which is with God. The prodigal son finds himself far from home, having lost his fortune through riotous living. However, he realizes his folly and decides to return to his father, and in this return we see a model of true repentance.

- *“He came to himself.”* Repentance involves recognizing the truth about one’s situation and taking responsibility for it. It means acknowledging that *“I have sinned,”* rather than seeking to blame others or make excuses.
- *“He remembered...”* When he came to himself the prodigal son remembered his father’s house and he realized how much he missed it. To repent means to realize what we have lost through our sin, and to mourn for it.
- *“I will arise and go...”* Repentance involves making a decision, taking action, and turning around. It involves a determination to return to the Father from whom we have become alienated.
- *“Father, I have sinned...”* Repentance involves confessing what we have done, but also realizing that the Father is waiting for us and meets us with open arms.
- *“Who was dead is alive again.”* Repentance involves a spiritual rebirth, for it is the means whereby we receive God’s forgiveness and have our communion with Him restored.



The Samaritan woman whom we commemorate today is remembered in the Church as the Great Martyr Photini, Equal to the Apostles. She was baptized by the apostles and converted her five sisters and her two sons who became tireless in preaching the Gospel to the inhabitants of Samaria. After the martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul, Photini and her family travelled to Carthage to spread the Good News of Christ there. She was martyred under the persecution of Nero in 66 A.D.

Saint Athanasius on the Psalms

Since the beginning of the Church, the book of Psalms has formed an important part of Christian prayer. Saint Athanasius explains why the Psalter is so helpful to us in prayer.

The Psalter has this peculiar marvel of its own, that within it are represented and portrayed in all their great variety the movements of the human soul.

It is like a picture, in which you see yourself portrayed, and seeing, may understand and consequently form yourself upon the pattern given.

Elsewhere in the Bible you read only that the Law commands this or that to be done, you listen to the Prophets to learn about the Saviour’s coming, or you turn to the historical books to learn the doings of the kings and holy men.

But in the Psalter, besides all these things, you learn about yourself.

You find depicted in it all the movements of your soul, all its changes, its ups and downs, its failures and recoveries.

Moreover, whatever your particular need or trouble, from this same book you can select a form of words to fit it, so that you do not merely hear and then pass on, but learn the way to remedy your ill.

Prohibitions of evil-doing are plentiful in Scripture, but only the Psalter tells you how to obey these orders and abstain from sin.

Repentance, for example, is enjoined repeatedly; but to repent means to leave off sinning, and it is the Psalms that show you how to set about repenting and with what words your penitence may be expressed. ...

Or take the commandment, *“In everything give thanks”* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). The Psalms not only exhort us to be thankful, they also provide us with fitting words to say.

We are told, too, by other writers that all who would live godly in Christ must suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12); and here again the Psalms supply words with which both those who flee persecution and those who suffer under it may suitably address themselves to God, and it does the same for those who have been rescued from it.

We are bidden elsewhere in the Bible also to bless the Lord and to acknowledge Him: here in the Psalms we are shown the way to do it, and with what sort of words His majesty may meetly be confessed.

In fact, under all the circumstances of life, we shall find that these divine songs suit ourselves and meet our own souls’ need at every turn.



The Psalms are traditionally ascribed to the Prophet and King David.