



*Sunday Bulletin May 6, 2018*  
*Greek Orthodox Church of the*  
*Annunciation*

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**Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis, Presiding Priest-**  
**Proistamenos**

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## **Epistle Reading**

**The reading is from Acts of the Apostles 11:19-30**

In those days, those apostles who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord. News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a large company was added to the Lord. So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church, and taught a large company of people; and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians. Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabos stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world; and this took place in the days of Claudius. And the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea, and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

## **Gospel Reading    John 4:5-42**

At that time, Jesus came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and so Jesus, wearied as he was with his journey, sat down beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying 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 do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone

who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal 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 him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly." The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and you say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks 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 the Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he." Just then his disciples came. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but none said, "What do you wish?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" They went out of the city and were coming to him. Meanwhile the disciples besought him, saying "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him food?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony. "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard ourselves, and we know that this is indeed Christ the Savior of the world."

*Message from Fr. Michael....*

Dear Beloved Faithful in the risen Lord:

Christ is Risen! Christos Anesti! I greet you in peace and love. The story of the Samaritan woman, St. Photini, inspires all to come to Church and drink of the Well of Living Water of Christ.

In today's Gospel lesson, we recall how St. Photini came to find Christ. She was a Samaritan woman and Samaritans were descendants of Jews who had intermarried with idolitars and pagans. While Jews, of that time, kept the letter of the Law, they rejected the spirit of the Law. This is why they were unable to recognize the messianic nature of our Lord. In contrast, the Samaritans rejected the letter of the Law. However, some Samaritans were not stubborn and were conscientious to the spirit of the Law and found themselves receptive to the Word of God, and thereby receptive to our Lord Jesus as Savior and Messiah.

In the gospel reading of today, we heard the story of the Samaritan woman. Our Lord opened her eyes to the faith. Her heart was opened to receive the true Well of Living Water which is the Lord Jesus Himself and not the well which she using buckets to draw water from. As the Lord's own people, the Jews, rejected Him, the Samaritans kept Him in Samaria for two days. Many believed in Him! Even when Jesus returned to Judea from Samaria, the Lord said "a prophet has no honor in his own country."

We commemorate the Samaritan Woman today as this is a Sunday after Mid-Pentecost which was the feast that served as the half-way point between Pascha and Pentecost. On Pascha, great and magnificent truths of the Church are revealed: that Jesus Christ is both God and man. To many, these truths may seem vague or still confusing until the feast Pentecost arrives and the inner meaning of these truths are revealed and what significance they have in our everyday lives. The arrival of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost allow these truths to become living. Thereby, we worship our Lord Jesus Christ in spirit and in truth. Scripture tells us that "the hour is coming when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth." This is precisely why the world perseveres today and life on earth continues. Thank God for the monastics and ascetics who shelter themselves in a recluse lifestyle for the purpose of prayer. They are praying for you and me! If it was not for them and others who are "true worshippers" (the Orthodox faithful) dedicating their lives to nothing but prayer and fasting, the world would have ended eons ago. For as long as there are "new Samaritans" and new people who hear the Truth, the world will continue to not only exist but to prosper in spirit.

For the Samaritan woman, who later became known as St. Photini, brought others to the Church, to the Word of God, to the Logos, as she testified to the Divinity of our Lord. May we follow her example and meet Christ. May we drink from the "Well of Living Water" and never thirst again. Let our only thirst be for Christ! May we continue to love one another!

Prayerfully yours, through the intercession of St. Photini, in the risen Lord,

+Fr. Michael

# Sunday of the Samaritan Woman



One of the most ancient cities of the Promised Land was Shechem, also called Sikima, located at the foot of Mount Gerazim. There the Israelites had heard the blessings in the days of Moses and Jesus of Navi. Near to this town, Jacob, who had come from Mesopotamia in the nineteenth century before Christ, bought a piece of land where there was a well. This well, preserved even until the time of Christ, was known as Jacob's Well. Later, before he died in Egypt, he left that piece of land as a special inheritance to his son Joseph (Gen. 49:22). This town, before it was taken into possession by Samaria, was also the leading city of the kingdom of the ten tribes. In the time of the

Romans it was called Neapolis, and at present Nablus. It was the first city in Canaan visited by the Patriarch Abraham. Here also, Jesus of Navi (Joshua) addressed the tribes of Israel for the last time. Almost three hundred years later, all Israel assembled there to make Roboam (Rehoboam) king.

When our Lord Jesus Christ, then, came at midday to this city, which is also called Sychar (John 4:5), He was wearied from the journey and the heat, and He sat down at this well. After a little while the Samaritan woman mentioned in today's Gospel passage came to draw water. As she conversed at some length with the Lord and heard from Him secret things concerning herself, she believed in Him; through her many other Samaritans also believed.

Concerning the Samaritans we know the following: In the year 721 before Christ, Salmanasar (Shalmaneser), King of the Assyrians, took the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel into captivity, and relocated all these people to Babylon and the land of the Medes. From there he gathered various nations and sent them to Samaria. These nations had been idolaters from before. Although they were later instructed in the Jewish faith and believed in the one God, they worshipped the idols also. Furthermore, they accepted only the Pentateuch of Moses, and rejected the other books of Holy Scripture. Nonetheless, they thought themselves to be descendants of Abraham and Jacob. Therefore, the pious Jews named these Judaizing and idolatrous peoples Samaritans, since they lived in Samaria, the former leading city of the Israelites, as well as in the other towns thereabout. The Jews rejected them as heathen and foreigners, and had no communion with them at all, as the Samaritan woman observed, "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9). Therefore, the name Samaritan is used derisively many times in the Gospel narrations. After the Ascension of the Lord, and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the woman of Samaria was baptized by the holy Apostles and became a great preacher and Martyr of Christ; she was called Photine, and her feast is kept on February 26.

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Lilly Kashou, Issam Kashou, Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon, and Presbyteria Magdalena Michalopoulos. Please notify Fr. Michael if you have anyone else who should be included for special prayers. May they be under the grace and tender watch of our Lord.

We, as a church community, would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the Binghamton State University of New York students of the Hellenic Cultural Society (HCS) for their very generous donation of \$2,300 to our beloved Annunciation Church. These students were engaged in fundraising activities for the purpose of donating these funds to the church. Some of the students, from the HCS, are in attendance in church today. Please greet and express your appreciation to them for their monetary gift to our beloved church. May God continue to bless and guide them in all their endeavors.

#### MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND:

We will have SATURDAY OF SOULS DIVINE LITURGY at 10 am Saturday, MAY 26, 2018 at RIVERHURST CEMETERY (weather permitting, if it rains or threatens to rain, services will be held at our Annunciation Church). Please bring your list of names of the departed souls and lawn chairs to sit on. Names of the departed will be commemorated at the Memorial service at the conclusion of the Liturgy.

PLEASE REMEMBER, IN THE ORTHODOX FAITH, SATURDAY IS ALWAYS THE DAY DESIGNATED TO HONOR AND REMEMBER THE DEPARTED SOULS. MEMORIAL DAY MONDAY IS AN AMERICAN HOLIDAY DESIGNED TO REMEMBER OUR BELOVED DEPARTED VETERANS, ESPECIALLY THE ONES WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF OUR GREAT NATION. SINCE OUR ORTHODOX SATURDAY OF SOULS FALLS ON THIS UPCOMING MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND, SERVICES WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY AT THE CEMETERY (AS INDICATED ABOVE) AND THERE WILL BE NO SERVICES ON MEMORIAL DAY MONDAY AT THE CEMETERY. IF NAMES ARE PROVIDED, OUR DEPARTED VETERANS WILL BE COMMEMORATED DURING SATURDAY'S DIVINE LITURGY AND MEMORIAL SERVICES. See you there!!!!

Hellenic Dancers needed for the Festival: If anyone would like to Greek Dance at the festival this year (ages 6 and up) please contact Louisa Anastos at (607) 343-3165. Thank you!

Cashiers needed for the Festival: If anyone would like to volunteer to work a cash register station at the festival this year please contact Pamela Yacalis at (607) 348-5782. Thank you!

Whether you are an Orthodox Christian, or this is your first visit to an Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us. Although Holy Communion is reserved for baptized and chrismated (confirmed) Orthodox Christians, all are invited to receive the "ANTIDORON" (blessed bread) which is not a sacrament, but is a reminder of the "agape feast" that followed worship in the early Church. After the Divine Liturgy this morning, please join us in the Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. We hope that you will return often to worship with us, to grow in Christ and in our Orthodox Faith. For any spiritual, religious, or sacramental matters, please contact Fr. Michael (607) 795-1474. For any building, facility or church property issues, please contact the Parish Council President or a member of the council. **Deadline for suggestions for the bulletin is 12:00 noon on Thursday.**