Sunday, May 10, 2026 | Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

DIAKONIA

A National Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

REFLECTIONS FROM TODAY'S READING – *John 4:5-42*

Fr. George Parsenios

From Pascha until Pentecost, the Sunday Gospel readings refer repeatedly to water. Jesus heals the Paralytic in water at the pool of Bethesda. He sends the Blind Man to wash in water at the pool of Siloam. He speaks of the Holy Spirit rising up like a river from within believers. And in today's Gospel passage, Jesus speaks about living water with the Samaritan Woman. Water, water everywhere—but what does the water mean? A pilgrim named Egeria answered this question by describing what she saw in her travels to the Holy Land in the 4th century. She says that Pascha was a chief time for new believers to be baptized. The reason for this is obvious: Pascha celebrates the gift of new life in Christ, and being baptized is our gateway into this new life. When our Sunday Gospel readings refer to water, they evoke the waters of baptism, following the longstanding tradition of people being baptized during this season. Notice as well that the Sunday Gospel readings are almost all taken from the Gospel according to John. This is because John describes the Resurrection more fully than the other Gospels. Mark and Matthew tell us very little about Jesus after he rises from the dead, and Luke offers only a bit more information. But John provides two full chapters about the Resurrected Jesus. Interestingly, Egeria tells us that John's Gospel was read during and after Pascha in the 4th century as well. As Egeria describes it, when the bishop would gather with the newly baptized Christians during the Paschal season, their Gospel readings were taken from John. Our worship in the 21st century, therefore, follows the pattern of Christians from the earliest centuries, and along with the Christians of every time and place we sing: ***Χριστός Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen!***

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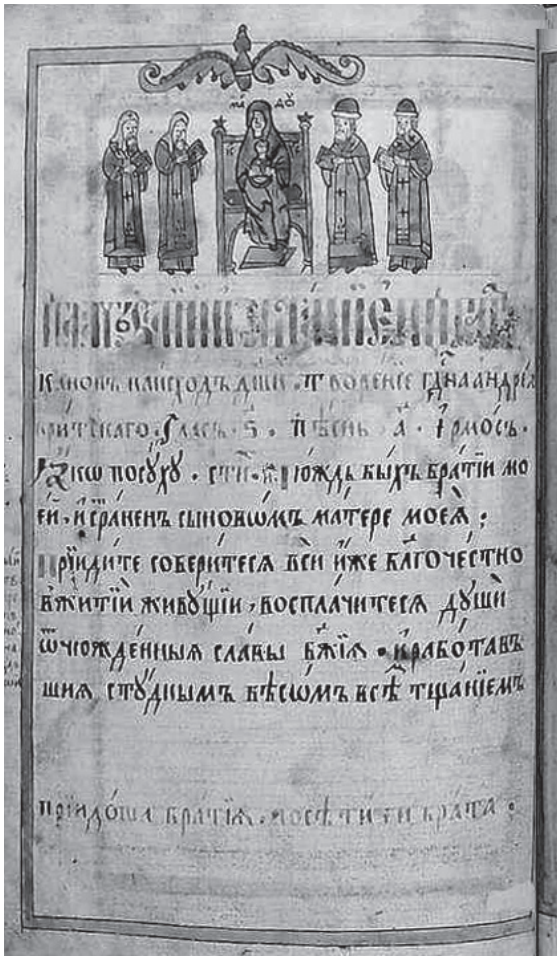
FROM THE ORIGINAL GREEK: Metropolis (Μητρόπολις)

What is "Metropolis?"

Fr. George Parsenios

The word ***Μητρόπολις/ Metropolis*** refers to any large city, and the area around that city is a metropolitan area. Likewise, a major city in the Church hierarchy is called a Metropolis, and the bishop in such a city is called a Metropolitan. "Metro" comes from the Greek word ***μητήρ/meter***, which means "Mother," while "polis" is the Greek word for city. A Metropolis, therefore, is a Mother City. The origin of this word lies in the 8th century BC, when Greek explorers began establishing trading colonies across the Mediterranean Sea, even as far away as Italy and France. Most famous of all, the city of Megara created a colony near the Black Sea called Byzantium, named after the colony's leader, Byzas. This city would eventually be renamed Constantinople, when it became the imperial capital of Saint Constantine the Great. Such colonies always maintained religious and economic ties to their founding city. They therefore referred to this founding city as their "Mother City," the one who "gave birth" to the colony. The term now, of course, applies to any major city that plays a dominant or authoritative role in its region, as we see also in the life of the Church.



THIS WEEK'S LOOK AT CHURCH HISTORY

Saints Cyril and Methodius: Bringing Christianity to the Slavs

In the 800s, Prince Rastislav of Moravia wanted his people to learn the Christian faith in a language they could understand. At the time, missionaries were using Latin. Rastislav asked the Byzantine Empire to send teachers able to preach and worship in the Slavic language. Emperor Michael III and Patriarch Photius the Great chose two brothers, Constantine (later named Cyril) and Methodius, for this mission. They were from Thessalonica, where many Slavic people lived, and knew the Slavic language. Constantine created Glagolithic, the first Slavic Language alphabet. They translated the Bible and church services into Slavic, (Old Church Slavonic). They taught people to read, worshiped in the local language, helping the Church to grow among the Slavs. A second alphabet was later developed for Slavonic, with letters mostly adapted from Greek, which is easier to read. This alphabet was named Cyrillic in honor of St Cyril and continues to be used today in the nations of Bulgaria, Serbia, Russia, Ukraine, and Byelorussia. Saints Cyril and Methodios are commemorated on May 11.

Cyrilic text of the Canon of Andrew of Crete for the Departure of the Soul **[part of a Synodik/Book of Needs]. Second quarter of the 18th century. (Titov Collection 520) [Manuscript Division of the Russian National Library]. Public domain.**

THE SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

"...whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst"

The fifth Sunday after Holy Pascha is known in the Orthodox Church as the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman. On this day, we remember the meeting between Jesus Christ and a Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well, as told in Gospel According to Saint John (4:5–42).

Jacob's Well was located near the ancient city of Shechem, also called Sychar, at the foot of Mount Gerazim. This place was rich in the history of God's people. Abraham first came here when he entered the Promised Land. Jacob later bought land there and built the well, which he passed on to his son Joseph. Many important events in Israel's history happened in this area, making it a meaningful setting for Christ's encounter with the Samaritan woman.

When Jesus arrived at the well around midday, He was tired from His journey and sat down to rest. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus spoke with her. This was surprising, because Jews and Samaritans did not associate with one another. During their conversation, Jesus revealed personal truths about her life and spoke to her about "living water," pointing to the gift of eternal life. Moved by His words, the woman believed in Him and went to tell others. Because of her witness, many Samaritans came to believe that Jesus was the Savior.

The Samaritans were a mixed people, both ethnically and religiously, and were rejected by the Jews. Yet Jesus did not turn away from the Samaritan woman. He offered her dignity, truth, and new life. After Pentecost, she was baptized, became a bold preacher of the Gospel, and later died as a martyr for Christ. The Church honors her as Saint Photini.

The icon of this feast shows Christ seated at the well, blessing the woman, while she reaches toward Him in faith and readiness to share what she has received.

YOUR FAITH IN ACTION

Each day, make time to meet Jesus at the well. Pause for prayer. Invite Jesus to speak to your heart, revealing what needs healing, change, or renewal. Speak with kindness to a person you would normally avoid. Listen without judgment. Offer patience instead of irritation.

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Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

Just For Kids!

(...and the young at heart)

In the **Gospel** from the **Book of John**, Jesus meets a **Samaritan** woman at **Jacob's Well** in **Samaria**. Jesus asks her for a drink. Jesus tells her about **living water**, that gives eternal life and removes all **thirst**. She thinks He is a prophet. Jesus tells her that true worship is in spirit and truth, and He reveals that He is the Christ. The **woman**, later known as **Photini**, leaves her water jar and runs to the city to tell others about Jesus. Many people come, listen, and believe. Jesus stays with them, and many accept Him as the Savior of the world. The Church honors Photini as a **saint** and **martyr**, because she boldly shared her faith in **Christ**.

Find These Words:

LIVINGWATER
MARTYR
JACOBSWELL
CHRIST
BOOKOFJOHN
THIRST
SAMARITAN
GOSPEL
PHOTINI
WOMAN
SAMARIA
SAINT

H	B	P	N	Y	C	F	N	G	S	I	S	F	X	Y
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Answer Key:

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