



Prophet Elias News

**News in the time of self –isolation for the Orthodox Church of
the Holy Prophet Elias in Devon
17th May 2020**



Sermon by Metropolitan Anthony on the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, 8th May 1988

The Holy Gospel has not given us the name of the Samaritan woman. But the Tradition of the Church remembers, and calls her in Greek, Photini, in Russian, Svetlana, in the Celtic languages, Fiona, in Western languages, Claire [or Lucy – *Ed.*] And all these names speak to us of one thing - of light.

Having met the Lord Jesus Christ she has become a light shining in the world, a light that enlightens those who meet her. Every Saint is offered us as an example; but we cannot always emulate the concrete ways in which a Saint lived, we cannot always repeat their way from earth to heaven. But we can learn from each of them two things. The one is that by the grace of God we can achieve what seems humanly impossible; that is, to become a person in the image and likeness of God, to be - in this world of darkness and tragedy which is in the power of lies - a word of truth, a sign of hope, the certainty that God can conquer if we only allow Him access to our souls. Because if the Kingdom of God is not established within us, if God is not enthroned in our minds and hearts, a fire that destroys everything unworthy of ourselves and of Him, we cannot spread God's light around.

And the second thing which the Saints can teach us is to understand the message which their names convey to us. And today's Samaritan woman speaks of light. Christ has said that He is the Light of the world, the light that enlightens all men; and we are called to give shelter within our souls, minds and hearts - indeed, within our whole self - to this light; so that the word spoken by Christ, "Let your light so shine before all men, that seeing your good deeds they may give glory to your Father who is in heaven", may be fulfilled and accomplished in and through us.

It is only through seeing our deeds, through seeing how we live that people can believe that the light is God's light; it is not in our words, unless they are words of truth and of power like those of the Apostles, or of Christ Himself indeed. And let us reflect, each of us, on the meaning of our name and on the way in which we can become what we are called.

The Samaritan woman came to the well without any spiritual purpose; she came, as she came daily, to fetch water - and she met Christ. Each of us may meet our God at any turn in our life, when we are about our most homely tasks, if our hearts are turned in the right direction, if we are prepared to receive a message, to listen; indeed - to ask questions! Because the Samaritan woman asked a question of Christ, and what she heard transcended her question in such a way that she recognised in Him a prophet, and later - the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

But the light must not be pushed under a bushel. Having discovered that the Light had come into the world, that the word of divine truth was resounding now amidst men, that God was among us, she left behind all concerns and ran to share the joy, the wonder of what she had discovered with others. She brought her fellow-citizens to Christ. She told them first why she believed; and when perhaps curiosity, or the convincing power of her words and the change that had occurred in her brought them to Christ, they saw for themselves and said to her: It is no longer because of what you say that we believe - we have seen, we have heard.

And this is what the Samaritan woman teaches all of us: to be open at every moment of life, while we are busy with the simplest things, to receive the divine word, to be illumined by the divine light, to be cleansed by His purity, to receive it in the depths of our souls, receive it with all our life, so that people seeing what we have become may believe that the light has come into the world.

Let us pray to the Samaritan woman to teach us, to guide us, to bring us to Christ in the way in which she came, and to serve Him in the way in which she served Him, being the salvation of all who were around her.

Letter from Father Peter

Dear parishioners and friends,

It is now over eight weeks that we have not been able to gather in our church for services, for the Divine Liturgy.

This must be very hard for many of us. We are so used to coming to church on a Sunday, to receive the life-giving Holy Gifts, the Body and Blood of our Saviour, for the remission of sins and for life everlasting.

I know that for many of us our coming together in the church is also a time of communion with each other. Over the fifty years of our parish life, many of us have formed close bonds, friendships, and for many of you our church is also a home away from home.

Our church is a place of comfort, a source of healing, a true home, the home of our Lord, where we are in the presence of our Saviour, His blessed Mother and all His saints.

We are now having to live like the desert fathers, alone in our cells. But this does not mean that we are alone. We can be together in love and in our thoughts, but above all in our prayers. I encourage you all to pray for one another.

Please rest assured that you are all in my prayers, and if you have any special requests for prayer, or if you have names of people you would like me to add to the list of those I remember at the Divine Liturgy, which together with Irina I celebrate every Sunday, please do write to me or call me.

If you need to contact me for any reason, please do not hesitate to do so.

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A reminder that three times a week the services which I take at home can also be seen on the parish Facebook page.

God willing, it may be possible, in the not too distant future, for us to gather together for prayer once again.

May God bless you all!

Father Peter

On the Rim of the Well

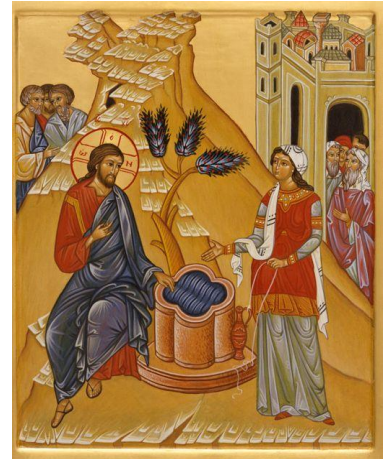
We must sit on the rim
of the well of darkness
and fish for fallen light
with patience.

Pablo Neruda

Texts for the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

When the compassionate Lord came unto the well, the Samaritan woman entreated Him, saying: 'Grant me the water of faith, and I shall receive the waters of the font of baptism unto rejoicing and redemption'.

By Jacob's Well, Jesus found the Samaritan woman. He that covereth the earth with clouds asked water of her. O wonder! He that rideth on the Cherubim speaketh with a harlot woman, asking for water. He Who hath suspended the earth upon the waters, He Who causeth springs and pools of waters to flow forth sought water, for He wished to draw to Himself her who was truly ensnared by the contending enemy, and to impart the water of life unto her who was sorely inflicted with unseemly deeds, for He alone is tenderly compassionate and the Lover of mankind.



Kontakion:

Having come to the Mid-feast of the Judaic Law, O Master and Creator of all things, Thou didst cry unto those present, O Christ God: 'Come hither and draw forth the water of immortality'.

Wherefore, we fall down before Thee and faithfully cry aloud: 'Grant unto us Thy compassion, for Thou art truly the Well-spring of our life'.

Ikos:

With the streams of Thy Blood water my soul, which is grown dry and barren because of my iniquities and offences, and show it forth to be fruitful in virtues. For Thou didst tell all to draw nigh to Thee, O all-holy Word of God, and to draw up the water of incorruption, which is living and which washeth away the sins of those who praise Thy glorious and divine resurrection. Unto those that know Thee as God, O Good One, grant from on high the strength of the Spirit, which in truth was borne by Thy disciples, for Thou art truly the Wellspring of life for all.

At the Mid-Feast:

At Mid-feast give Thou my thirsty soul to drink of the waters of piety; for Thou, O Saviour, didst cry out to all: 'Whosoever is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink'. Wherefore, O Well-spring of life, Christ our God, glory be to Thee.

21st May

Feast of Saints Constantine and Helena – Equal to the Apostles

Kontakion

Today Constantine and his mother Helen reveal the precious Cross, the weapon of the faithful against their enemies. For our sakes, it has been shown to be a great sign, and fearsome in battle.



Romanian Icon reverse-painted on glass

Christianity is the end of all religion

Christianity is in a profound sense the *end of all religion*. In the Gospel story of the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus made this clear.

“ ‘Sir,’ the woman said to him, ‘I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.’

Jesus saith unto her, ‘*Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him*’ ” (John 4:19-21, 23.) She asked him a question about cult, and in reply Jesus changed the whole perspective of the matter. *Nowhere in the New Testament, in fact, is Christianity presented as a cult or as a religion.*

Religion is needed where there is a wall of separation between God and man. But Christ who is both God and man has broken down the wall between man and God. *He has inaugurated a new life, not a new religion.* It was this freedom of the early church from “religion” in the usual, traditional sense of this word that led the pagans to accuse Christians of *atheism*.

Christians had no concern for any sacred geography, no temples, no cult that could be recognized as such by the generations fed with the solemnities of the mystery cults. There was no specific religious interest in the places where Jesus had lived. There were no pilgrimages. The old religion had its thousand sacred places and temples: for the Christians all this was past and gone. There was no need for temples built of stone: Christ’s Body, the Church itself, the new people gathered in Him, was the only real temple. “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up...*” (John 2:19.)

The Church itself was the new and heavenly Jerusalem: the Church *in* Jerusalem was by contrast unimportant. The fact that Christ *comes* and is *present* was far more significant than the places where He had been. The historical reality of Christ was of course the undisputed ground of the early Christians’ faith: yet they did not so much remember Him as know He was with them. And in Him was the end of “religion,” because He himself was the Answer to all religion, to all human hunger for God, because in Him the life that was lost by man — and which could only be symbolized, signified, asked for in religion — was restored to man.

From Fr Alexander Schmemmann: For the Life of the World

Livestreamed Service Times

Father Peter will normally livestream services regularly from his home on

**Wednesdays:
Vespers at 6.30pm**

**Saturdays:
Vespers at 6pm**

**Sundays:
Divine Liturgy at 9.30am**

These can be found on Facebook

@OrthodoxParishoftheHolyProphetElias

Wherever you are

Some people prefer solitude. They say their peace of mind depends on this.

Others say they would be better off in church. If you do well, you do well wherever you are. If you fail, you fail wherever you are.

Your surroundings don't matter. God is with you everywhere –
in the market place as well as in seclusion or in the church.

If you look for nothing but God, nothing or no one can disturb you.

God is not distracted by a multitude of things. Nor can we be.

Meister Eckhart