



*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,  
 a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

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*Please join us for prayer and fellowship.*

**Upcoming Services:**  
**Saturday, May 6, 13**  
**Great Vespers: 5pm**

**Sunday of the Paralytic**  
**May 7**

**Sunday, May 7, 14**  
**Divine Liturgy: 10am**

**Coffee and fellowship will  
 follow the service**

*The above services are at  
 St. Olympia Church  
 34 North Main Street  
 Norwood, NY, 13668*

*Mailing Address  
 St. Olympia Orthodox  
 Church PO Box 122  
 Canton, NY13617*



**Sunday of the Samaritan Woman**  
**May 14**

*The Samaritan Woman came to the well in faith;  
 She saw You, the Water of Wisdom, and drank abundantly  
 She inherited the Kingdom on High and is ever glorified!*

**Kontakion, Sunday of the Samaritan Woman**

**The Feast of Mid-Pentecost**  
**From the Orthodox Faith Series, Volume II – Worship**  
**by Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko**  
**May 10**

In the middle of this fourth week, the middle day between Easter and Pentecost is solemnly celebrated. It is called the feast of Mid-Pentecost, at which Christ, “in the middle of the feast” teaches men of his saving mission and offers to all “the waters of immortality” (Jn 7.14). Again we are reminded of the Master’s presence and his saving promise: “If anyone is thirsty let him come to Me and drink” (Jn 7.37). We think also once again of our death and resurrection with Christ in our baptism, and our reception of the Holy Spirit from him in our chrismation. We “look back to one, and anticipate the other” as one of the hymns of the feast puts it. We know that we belong to that kingdom of the Risen Christ where “the Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price” (Rev 22.17; Is 55.1).



**“Jesus went up into the Temple and taught”**  
**John 7:14**

*In the middle of the Feast, O Savior,  
fill my thirsting soul with the waters of godliness,  
as You did cry to all:  
If anyone thirst let him come to me and drink!  
O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to You!*

Troparion of the Midfeast of Pentecost

**Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian**  
**May 8**

When Saint John was more than one hundred years old, he told seven of his disciples to take spades and follow him to a certain place outside the city of Ephesus, and then he told everyone to sit down while he went off to pray by himself for a while. When he returned, he told his disciples to dig a grave as long as he was tall, in the form of a cross. After giving them instructions and kissing them, he climbed into the grave and said: "Take some earth, my mother earth, and cover me." They covered him with earth up to his knees, and he said: "Now take some more earth and cover me up to my neck." As soon as he they had done this, Saint John spoke again: "Bring a linen cloth and place it on my face, then kiss me again for the last time, because you shall not see me anymore in this life." After the Apostle dismissed them, they buried him and wept bitterly. Later, they returned and opened the grave, but the Saint's body was not there. They wept and returned to the city.

Every year, on May 8, a red dust appears on his grave, which heals the sick, through the prayers of the Holy Apostle John. People call this dust "manna from the earth." Saint Augustine knew about this dust, and Saint Gregory of Tours also wrote about it. Some sources call this Feast "rodismos" (ροδισμός) i.e. Day of the Roses. Some think that this manna is called ροδής (a pink ointment, or a rose-colored dust). Others say that by this name they celebrate the roses of spring, just as we decorate the church with greenery and flowers on Pentecost. Saint John’s principal Feast Day is September 26, but today the Church commemorates Saint John because of the annual pilgrimage to his grave.

There is a special title to be used when commemorating Saint John at the Dismissal: “The holy, glorious Apostle and Evangelist, Virgin, Beloved friend of Christ, John the Theologian.”

**Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian**  
**May 8, September 26**

*O beloved Apostle of Christ our God,  
come quickly to deliver your helpless people.  
He on whose breast you leaned,  
will accept you as intercessor.  
Entreat Him, O Theologian,  
to disperse the clouds of darkness,  
granting us peace and great mercy!*

Troparion



## Rivers of Living Water

### “So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city....” [John 4:28].

by Fr. Steven Kostoff, May 24, 2016

A Samaritan woman came to Jacob’s Well in Sychar, a Samaritan city, at the same time that Jesus sat down by the well, being wearied by His journey. The evangelist John provides us with a time reference: “It was about the sixth hour” [John 4:6]—i.e. noon. The Samaritan woman had come to draw water from the well, a trip and activity that must have been an unquestioned daily routine that was part of life for her and her fellow city-dwellers. The ancients had a much more active sense of equating water with life than we do today with the accessibility of water from the kitchen tap, the shower, or the local store. On the basic level of biological survival, Jacob’s Well must have been something like a “fountain of life” for the inhabitants of Sychar. Therefore, it is rather incredible that she returned home without her water jar, a “detail” that the evangelist realized was so rich in symbolic meaning that he included it in the narrative recorded in his Gospel [John 4:5-42]. And this narrative, together with the incredible dialogue embedded in it, is so profound that every year we appoint this passage to be proclaimed in the Church on the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, the Fifth Sunday after Pascha. Why, then, would the Samaritan woman fail to take her water jar home with her?

Her “failure” was based on a discovery that she made when she encountered and spoke with Jesus by Jacob’s Well. For even though the disciples “marveled” that Jesus was talking with a woman [v. 27], Jesus Himself began the dialogue with the woman perfectly free of any such social, cultural or even religious restraints. As this unlikely dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman unfolded by the well, it was revealed to the woman that Jesus was offering her a “living water” that was qualitatively distinct from the well-water that she habitually drank [v. 11]. This “living water” had an absolutely unique quality to it that the Lord further revealed to the woman: “Jesus said to her, ‘Every one 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’” [v. 13-14].

A perceptive and sensitive woman who was open to the words of Jesus, she responded with the clear indication that she had entered upon a process of discovery that would lead her to realize that she was speaking with someone who was a prophet—and more than a prophet: “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw” [v. 15]. Her thirst is now apparent on more than one level, as her mind and heart are now opening up to a spiritual thirst that was hidden but now stimulated by the presence and words of Jesus. Knowing this, Jesus will now disclose to her one of the great revelations of the entire New Testament, a revelation that will bring together Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles: “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” [v. 23-24].

A careful reading of Saint John’s Gospel indicates that under the image of water, Jesus was speaking of His teaching that has come from God, or more specifically, to the gift of the Holy Spirit. For at the Feast of Tabernacles, as recorded in John 7, Jesus says this openly to the crowds that had come to celebrate the feast: “On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, ‘If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.’ Now this He said about the Spirit, Whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” [John 7:37-39].

Overwhelmed and excited, inspired and filled with the stirrings of a life-changing encounter, the Samaritan woman “left her water jar, and went away into the city and said to the people, ‘Come and see a man Who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?’” [v. 28-29]. It is not that the contents of her water jar was now unimportant or meaningless. That would be a false dichotomy between the material and the spiritual that is foreign to the Gospel. The Samaritan woman will eventually retrieve her forgotten water jar and fill it with simple water in fulfillment of her basic human needs. For the moment, however, she must go to her fellow city-dwellers and witness to Christ! They, in turn, will eventually believe that Jesus is “indeed the Savior of the world” [v. 42].

There are indeed innumerable “wells” that we can go to in order to drink some “water” that promises to quench our thirst. These “wells” can represent every conceivable ideology, theory, philosophy of life, or worldview—in addition to all of the superficial distractions, pleasures, and mind-numbing attractions that offer some relief from the challenges and oppressive demands of life. For a Christian, to be tempted to drink the water from such wells would amount to nothing less than a betrayal of both the baptismal waters that were both a tomb and womb for us; and a betrayal of the living water that we receive from the teaching of Christ and that leads to eternal life. It is best to leave our “water jars” behind at such wells, and drink only that “living water” that is nothing less than the “gift of God” [John 4:10].

## UPCOMING DIOCESAN & PARISH EVENTS

**Archbishop Michael Anniversary Consecration (2010)**

**Monday, May 8**

**St Olymphia Orthodox Church – Next Parish Council Meeting**

7:30 PM Monday, May 8, 2023

**Diocesan Council Meeting**

Thursday, May 18, 2023, at 11:00 AM

Diocesan Chancery

**Diocesan Altar Servers Retreat**

Saturday, May 20

Holy Resurrection Church, Wayne, NJ

**Presbyters' Council Meeting**

Thursday, June 1, at 11:00 AM

Diocesan Chancery, Bronxville NY

***Note Time Change!*** WEEKDAY VESPERS AT THE HERMITAGE OF ST OLYMPIA  
Weekdays at 5 PM

For information please contact Mother Sophronia at [mothersophronia@gmail.com](mailto:mothersophronia@gmail.com)  
or via Facebook: Nun Sophronia Hofstead.



**You gaze upon the icon of the Savior and see that He looks at you from it with brightest eyes; this look is the image of how He actually looks upon you with His eyes, that are brighter than the sun, and sees all your thoughts, hears all your heartfelt distress and sighs.**

**The image is an image, and represents in lines and signs that which cannot be delineated, cannot be given in signs, and can be comprehended by faith alone.**

**Believe, then, that the Savior always protects you and sees each one of you--with all your thoughts, sorrows and sighing, in all your circumstances, as upon the palm of the hand. "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me," says the Lord God.**

**How much consolation and life are contained in these gracious words of the Almighty and Provident God!**

**Therefore pray before the icon of the Savior as before Himself. The Lover of men is present in it by His grace, and with the eyes depicted in it really looks at you: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place," while with His ears as represented on the icon, He hears you. But remember that His eyes are the eyes of God, and His ears are the ears of the omnipresent God.**

St John of Kronstadt, *My Life in Christ*