

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Christ is risen!

Along with the commemoration of our Lord talking with the Samaritan woman at the well we also continue the commemoration the Feast of Mid-Pentecost. This feast day was actually last Wednesday, but we continue to celebrate it today. The feast falls exactly in the middle of the 50 days between Pascha and Pentecost.

The Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was an eight-day harvest festival commemorating the Israelites wandering in the desert for forty years, when they lived under tents and tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles served as the middle link between the Jewish Passover, which recalls God's deliverance of His people from the Egyptian pharaoh, and the Jewish Pentecost, which remembers Israel's entry into the "promised land" of Mount Sinai. During the feast, one ceremony consisted of carrying water from the pool of Siloam and pouring it as a libation in the temple. This ceremony commemorated the water that flowed from the rock that Moses struck in the wilderness.

The Gospel lesson for that day was the speech which our Lord made in the Temple in the middle of the feast of the Tabernacles. In that speech, our Lord explained His authority over the Sabbath in terms of the divine origin of both His teaching and His existence.

Central to this are the Lord's words to the people of Jerusalem. He said to them: "I did not come on my own. The one who sent me is truthful and you do not know Him. But I know the One Who sent Me is truthful, and you do not know Him. But I know the One Who sent Me, because I came from Him" (John 7:28)".

Then, at the end of Feast he gave another speech and he told the people: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink! From within whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will flow rivers of living water!". But he said this concerning the Spirit, which those believing in him were to receive. For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John: 7:37-40).

The risen Christ is the link for New Israel as it celebrates the New Passover – Pascha and the New Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples and apostles. When Jesus had preached in the temple, he had just healed the Paralytic

Man—which we recalled last Sunday—and was about to give sight to the Blind Man—which we will recall next Sunday. The apolytikion of Mid-Pentecost announces the “waters of true worship”, which Christ will give us to drink, just as He gave the Samaritan Woman to drink as we heard in today’s Gospel. Thus, Mid-Pentecost reveals to the world that Christ will heal all of its infirmities, both physical and spiritual.

The fathers of the Church have always seen this living water to be the Holy Spirit who was poured out on the Day of Pentecost, establishing the Holy Church. And so, we stand at the feast of Mid-Pentecost gazing in awe and joy at this living stream – its headwaters being the Cross for “out of His side flowed blood and water”; its course flowing through God’s Church, sustaining and nourishing us in this life; and its culmination being Heaven itself. “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev.22:1). And again: “And the Spirit and the bride say ‘Come’ and let him who hears say ‘Come’. And let him who thirst come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev.22:17).

How wondrous is God’s love! How grand His purposes for those who love Him! He has immersed us in the streams of eternal life. The living water that flows from the cross through the Church to Heaven itself is given by God to sustain us and nourish us in the fullness of eternal life.

It is a tradition of the Church to bless gardens with Holy Water at Mid-Pentecost asking God for the fruits of the earth, so too, here at Mid- Pentecost let us contemplate and celebrate the fruits nourished within us by streams of living water – the waters that flow from the cross through the Church to eternal life in heaven.

On the feast of Mid-Pentecost, we heard Jesus promise us that if we came to him seeking to drink of the living water he would give it to us. We also heard Jesus promise this to the Samaritan woman in today’s Gospel.

Quoting St. Theophan the Recluse: “If this is so, then let us all run to Him. Whatever you thirst for - so long as it is not contrary to the spirit of the Lord - you will find relief in Him. If you thirst for knowledge, run to the Lord, for He is the one and only light, enlightening every man. If you thirst for cleansing from sin and quenching of

the flames of your conscience, run to the Lord, for He tore asunder the handwriting of our sins upon the Cross.

If you thirst for peace in your heart, run to the Lord, for He is the treasury of all good, Whose abundance will teach you to forget all deprivations and despise all earthly good, so as to be filled with Him alone. If you need strength, He is almighty. If you need glory, His glory surpasses the world. If you desire freedom, He gives true freedom. He will resolve all of our doubts, loose the bonds of our passions, dispel all our troubles and difficulties, will enable us to overcome all obstacles, temptations and intrigues of the enemy, and will make smooth the path of our spiritual life. Let us all run to the Lord!"

There are so many people seeking this living water. Unfortunately, they are too often searching in the wrong places. Having never experienced the true and loving God, they go after the things of this world. They go after drugs to alter their consciousness, probably doing great harm to themselves, instead of seeking the Lord Jesus.

They go after material things, newer and fancier cars, expensive homes, larger and larger bank accounts or stock portfolios. But as Jesus taught us, these things moth and rust consume and thieves break in and steal. Instead, store for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves do not break in and steal. Indeed, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. There are many who go after the physical pleasures of this world. They hope that this will bring them joy. Instead they should be going after the living water which will fill us with joy far greater than we will ever know from the pleasures of this world.

We know of people suffering from depression, and yes sometimes it is a physical illness, it often is more a sadness because they are not experiencing the joy they think they deserve. How often have I talked to somebody who complains that they just want what everybody else has, they deserve it. They don't realize the true joy and happiness comes from God and God alone.

He will fill us with the living water that will bring us peace and joy far greater than that of the world. So let us as St. Theophan the Recluse said: "Let us all run to the Lord". Let us, as St. Paul wrote to the Philippians when he was imprisoned: "Rejoice

in the Lord always! Again I will say, rejoice! Let your kindness be known to all. The Lord is at hand! Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are commendable, if there is any virtue or any praise, think about these things. What you learned, received, heard, and saw in me— practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”

Through the prayers of St. Photini, Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on us.