



ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

Saturday, June 3 & Sunday, June 4, 2017

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

Jesus' next words would have been even more startling: "*He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water*" (v. 38). Water was never abundant in the Middle East; nevertheless, both Jews and Christians emphasized that for religious purposes fresh, running ("living") water was the most fitting image, as standing water was not life-giving. Thus, the first-century book of Church order, the *Didache*, instructs: "After the foregoing instructions, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living [running] water. If you have no living water, then baptize in other water, and if you are not able in cold, then in warm. If you have neither, pour water three times on the head, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Di 7:1).

In our era people used to Biblical citations assume that the Lord Jesus is quoting some Scripture verse in v. 38 cited above. But, as St John Chrysostom and other Fathers pointed out, "Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" is not a verse from any Biblical book. Rather the Lord is referring to a whole range of Scriptures which make numerous references to the Messiah as the source of the life-giving Spirit.

During the exodus from Egypt Moses brought forth water from a rock at God's command, an event remembered and celebrated in both the Torah and the Psalms. St Paul would say that this was the Word of God, even before His incarnation, who was caring for his people: "*For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ*" (1 Cor 10:4).

The prophets Isaiah, Joel, Ezekiel and Zechariah all looked forward to the Messianic age when rivers of living water would spring forth from the temple or from the Holy City to water all creation. Isaiah in particular connected this flowing of water with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit: "*For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring*" (Is 44:2, 3). "*You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail*" (Is 58:11).

The water that quenches the thirst of the people is the Holy Spirit whom the Lord Jesus, the source of the Holy Spirit, sends into the world. This is what Christ says to the people in the temple, just as He told the Samaritan woman whom He met by the well at Sychar: "*Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst*" (Jn 4:13, 14).

Are You Thirsty? There is one final element in Christ's teaching here on which we must reflect. Water quenches the thirst of those who are thirsty; those who are not thirsty will not appreciate it. Similarly, the Living Water which is the Holy Spirit is for those who are thirsty (see Jn 7:37) and are tired from trying to quench their thirst with brackish water (see Jn 4:13-15). When the Holy Spirit came upon the first followers of the risen Christ at Pentecost, they were refreshed because they were thirsty: they had been waiting for the Messiah and had found Him in Jesus. Those who were not thirsty were untouched by the Spirit or, rather, the Spirit convicted them for their lack of faith in the present work of God.

Taking the Spirit for Granted There is always a temptation for us to celebrate Pascha and Pentecost with all the richness our Tradition has to offer and then to go back to our daily routines, assuming that we are living the life of the Spirit to the full. Russian theologian Paul Evdokimov described it this way: "We have become mere spectators or hearers removed from the context, the life and the presences evoked by the liturgical texts. In one of his studies on the Liturgy, Fr. Zacharias mentions the song that ends the Byzantine Divine Liturgy, 'We have seen the true light, we have received the heavenly Spirit,' and he asks: 'Have we really seen anything? Did we really receive the Holy Spirit? Or have we fallen into the habit of acting like the characters in Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes* by pretending to see what we do not see?'" (*Women and the Salvation of the World*, p. 15)

(May2017Leaflets)

WEEKLY SERVICES

Daily Liturgy: Monday-Friday at 8:30AM **Holy Confession:** Every Monday at 4-6PM
Holy Liturgy: Saturday at 4:30PM, Sunday at 11:00AM **Vespers:** Every Saturday at 3:00PM
Matins/Orthos: Every Sunday at 9:00AM **Holy Rosary:** Every Sunday at 10:30AM

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please pray for our convalescing members: **MaryEllen Busa, Carol Chanatry, Lorraine Chanatry-Howell, Anne Cragnolin, Edgar Hallak, Sandra Kakaty, Mary Machis, & Rose Rawlings.**
Notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

Sunday Collection May 27/28: \$ 329.00 Cheese Sale: \$ 00.00 Memorial Services: \$ 55.00

† MEMORIAL MASSES †

This Saturday, June 3, 2017

† **Yousef Marji**, By his Family

This Sunday, June 4, 2017

† **Jannah Jbarah**, By her Family

† **Chester Bednarczyk**, By Robert Lalli

† **Deceased Members of the Stamboly Family**, By their Children

Next Saturday, June 10, 2017

Next Sunday, June 11, 2017

† **Jannah Jbarah**, By her Family

† **Arlene Lalli, 19th Memorial Anniversary**, By Robert Lalli

**** ANNOUNCEMENT ****

The next Parish Advisory Council Meeting will be held on Mon Jun 5 @ 6:30 PM in the Meeting Room.