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His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America Homily for the Great Vespers of the Life-Giving Fountain



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Homily for the Great Vespers of the Life-Giving Fountain

April 23, 2020

Zoodohos Peghe Greek Orthodox Church, The Bronx, New York

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Christ,

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! [and in response: Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη!]

Christ is Risen! [and in response: Truly He is Risen!]

This evening we return to the source, the wellspring, the fountain of our blessings

and our joy: the Mother of God. As we sing in the Liturgies of this Paschal Season:

Ἐν Ἐκκλησίαις εὐλογεῖτε τὸν Θεόν, Κύριον ἐκ πηγῶν Ἰσραήλ.

In the Churches bless God, the Lord from the wellsprings of Israel.[*]

She is indeed our blessing from God, for her womb was the wellspring of the Heavenly blessing of the Incarnate God, Who has shown her to be a fountain of healing for the whole world.

This fountain of love and marvels is exemplified by the most famous Church of the Life-Giving Spring in the Μπαλουκλί quarter of the Queen of Cities, Constantinople. Μπαλουκλί means “fish” in Turkish language, because fish live in the pool of fresh water that continues to flow to this day. Over fifteen hundred years ago, a Church was built over the ἁγίασμα, over the sacred spring that flows with miracles. Like the Pool of Siloam – which we will celebrate on the Sixth Sunday of Pascha, the Ζωοδόχος Πηγή granted sight to the blind, and was revealed as a source of healing and grace.

As a sign of the healing in this Πηγή, a hospital was built just a short distance away to serve the Greek Orthodox Community. Its ministry is part of our Ecumenical Patriarchate’s operations in Constantinople that bring comfort and therapies to the faithful there, who are in the same situation as we are in this global pandemic. In fact, the Hospital is open to all people, and is renown as one of the best in the City.

Think of it! For fifteen hundred years the Virgin has graced the people with her healing touch – whether through the many miracles that come from the Πηγή, or from the medical staff who sacrificially serve in Her name. In either case, we witness the love of God, a love that flows like the waters of the Life-Giving Fountain.

In the services of this Feast, we acclaim the Virgin:

Μάννα Σιλωάμ, καὶ Στοὰν Σολομῶντος

Πηγὴν Κόρη σὴν ἐμφανῶς πᾶς τις βλέπει.

The Manna, Siloam, and the Stoa of Solomon,

are to all men manifestly apparent in thy Spring, O Maiden.[†]

We call the Virgin “Manna,” the “Bread of the Angels”[‡] because she was revealed by Gabriel, the Prince of the Angels to be the source of the human nature, the Body of our Lord.[§] As the Apostle Paul points out, she is the source of the humanity of our Lord.[**]

But we also name her “Siloam,” after the famous Pool in Jerusalem where the Lord healed the Man Born Blind.[††] Indeed, because the Πηγή at Μπαλουκλί was first revealed by the healing of a blind man, she becomes the living pool of healing and mercies.

And we call her the Stoa, the Portico of Solomon, because she is the image of the Church, the Bride of Christ. It was in the Stoa, this portion of the rebuilt Temple of Solomon, that the Disciples gathered after the Ascension of the Lord, as is recorded in the Book of Acts. There, they manifested the nature of the Church – miraculous ways of being, unity and harmony, and above all worship of the One True God.

And many signs and wonders were done among the people through the hands of the Apostles. And they were all with one accord in the Stoa of Solomon.[‡‡]

Therefore, we give thanks for the Mother of God – whose heart is a fountain of healing, whose body is the source of the Bread of Heaven Himself, and whose life is the story of the Church. May we always be united to Her in prayer, in supplication, and above all, love.

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη!

[*] *Eisodikon* of Pascha, Psalm 67:27 (LXX).

[†] Verses of the Synaxarion of the Matins of the Life-Giving Fountain.

[‡] Psalm 77:28.

[§] Luke 1:35.

[**] Cf. Galatians 4:4.

[††] John 9:1-7.

[‡‡] Acts 5:12.

Source