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## **His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America - Homily for the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman**



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**May 17, 2020**

**Saints Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church West Nyack, New York**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

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

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

Today, we come together virtually once again, to celebrate the Risen Christ and

observe two important commemorations: the Annual AHEPA Sunday and the Pontian Genocide remembrance. Both of these observances call to mind that we are a community with a past, and a community with a future. The past must not be forgotten, and how we handle the future is now more important than ever.

Communities across our Nation are beginning to reopen on differing schedules and with differing regulations. We, who are Christians and whose chief love is for our God and for our neighbor,<sup>[\*]</sup> are called to practice wisdom and patience as we begin to open for public worship again.

All around us, we see many fellow citizens, in their frustration and sometimes even in anger, demand a total return to the status quo that existed before the pandemic. But this is neither wise nor safe. As Christians, we have a responsibility to listen to our public health officials and obey the reasoned and reasonable regulations of our governmental leaders.

Even Saint Paul, who was martyred by the ruling state at that time, and whose Lord was put to death by a Roman Procurator, advocated for obeying the laws of the land.<sup>[†]</sup> But for Christians, the more important point is, as Saint Paul himself wrote, “Love brings nothing evil or bad upon one’s neighbor, and thus, the fulfillment of the Law is love.”<sup>[‡]</sup>

In this tenuous time when we feel pressure to return to what we perceived as our normal lives, we must also desire to preserve the health and safety of others. The Lord’s message to the Samaritan Woman today provides us with a key to understanding how best to proceed.

In their encounter at the Well of Jacob, our Lord Jesus Christ dialogued with the Woman, who was avoiding the subject of her personal life by deflecting to religion, something as common now as it was then. The Woman said to the Lord:

*“Sir, I perceive you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain,<sup>[§]</sup> but your people say, ‘in Jerusalem,’ that is the place one should worship.”<sup>[\*\*]</sup>*

The woman wanted to make of her religious beliefs an argument about “where.” Today, we hear arguments about “when.”

But the Lord replied to her:

*“My Lady, believe Me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ... But a time is coming when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such worshippers as these. God is spirit; and those who worship God must do so in spirit and in truth.”*

[\[††\]](#)

Spirit and in truth. This is the mark of the ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταί, the true worshippers of God. The time is upon us, the answer to “when” we can enter into the experience of God. It is every moment of our lives, in spirit and in truth, in reality.

Therefore, my beloved brother and sisters, let us think long and hard about our insistence on liberty, and pray that it is not an impulse for license. Let us be prudent and wise in our requests and decisions; not pushy and without consideration for others.

And finally, let us be confident that wherever we are, whenever we are, and in whatever condition, we can always be in perfect communion with God through the gift of His Holy Spirit, Whose descent at the Holy Pentecost is not many days hence.

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! [Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη!]

[\[\\*\]](#) Cf. Matthew 22:37.

[\[†\]](#) Cf. Romans 13:1-6.

[\[‡\]](#) Romans 13:10.

[\[§\]](#) Mt. Gerizim.

[\[\\*\\*\]](#) John 4:19,20.

[\[††\]](#) John 4:21,23,24.

[Source](#)