

Feast Day of Zoodochos Pigi, Life Giving Spring of the Mother of God



Zoodochos Pigi, Bright Friday, is the first Friday after Easter, when the Greek Orthodox Church celebrates Life-Giving Spring, a title given to the Mother of God, and an actual miracle-working spring near Constantinople, with an Icon of the same name.

Today we commemorate the Life-Giving Spring of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Today, all over Greece, the faithful will celebrate with a church service, followed by a Panygiri (festival) wherever there is a monastery named Zoodochos Pigi.

There once was a beautiful church in Constantinople dedicated to the Mother of God, which had been built in the fifth century by the Holy Emperor Leo the Great (January 20) in the Seven Towers district.

Before becoming emperor, Leo was walking in a wooded area where he met a blind man who was thirsty and asked Leo to help him find water. Though he agreed to search for water, he was unable to find any. Suddenly, he heard a voice telling him

that there was water nearby. He looked again but still could not find the water. Then he heard the voice saying "Emperor Leo, go into the deepest part of the woods, and you will find water there. Take some of the cloudy water in your hands and give it to the blind man to drink. Then take the clay and put it on his eyes. Then you shall know who I am." Leo obeyed these instructions, and the blind man regained his sight. Later, Saint Leo became emperor, just as the Theotokos had prophesied.



Leo built a church over the site at his own expense, and the water continued to work miraculous cures. Therefore, it was called “The Life-Giving Spring.”

After the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, the church was torn down by Muslims, and the stones were used to build a mosque. Only a small chapel remained at the site of the church. Twenty-five steps led down into the chapel, which had a window in

the roof to let the light in. The holy Spring was still there, surrounded by a railing.

After the Greek Revolution in 1821, even this little chapel was destroyed and the Spring was buried under the rubble. Christians later obtained permission to rebuild the chapel, and work began in July of 1833. While workmen were clearing the ground, they uncovered the foundations of the earlier church. The Sultan allowed them to build not just a chapel, but a new and beautiful church on the foundations of the old one.

Construction began on September 14, 1833, and was completed on December 30, 1834. Patriarch Constantine II consecrated the church on February 2, 1835, dedicating it to the Most Holy Theotokos.



On September 6, 1955, the church was one of the targets of a fanatic mob. The

building was burned to the ground while the abbot was lynched and the 90-year-old Archimandrite Chrisanthos Mantas was assassinated by the mob.



Another small chapel has been rebuilt on the site, but the church has not yet been restored to its former size. Today, in addition to the church, the compound includes the underground shrine of the Zoodochos Pigi with the holy spring which has golden fish in it. The spring still flows to this day and is considered by the faithful to have wonderworking properties.

The sanctuary is directed by a titular bishop and is one of the most popular among the Orthodox of Constantinople, who visit it especially today, the Friday after Easter, and on the feast day of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, September 14.

— Source: [Greek City Times](#)