

“HE TOLD ME ALL THAT I EVER DID”

The icon on the cover of this mornings Church Bulletin depicts the subject matter for this 5th Sunday of Pascha: Christ’s encounter with the SMARITAN WOMAN. Weary from His travels, our Lord seeks rest at the local well in the tiny town of Sichar. It is here that Jesus goes against the accepted social and political norm of His time: He engages in conversation with a woman!

And what a conversation they have! The Samaritans were a mixed race and were fierce enemies of the Jews. While they, too, worshipped the one true God of Israel and were awaiting the coming of the Messiah, the Samaritans accepted only the five books of Moses as their Scriptures. The Samaritan woman of the Gospel listens intently as Christ explains to her the significance of partaking of “living water.” “WHOEVER DRINKS THE WATER THAT I SHALL GIVE HIM WILL NEVER THIRST.” (John 4:14) He instructs her in the proper manner of giving glory to God. “GOD IS SPIRIT, AND THOSE WHO WORSHIP HIM MUST WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.” (JOHN 4:24). In response to her statement that she knows the Messiah is coming, Who will reveal all things, our Lord tells her plainly: “I WHO SPEAK TO YOU AM HE.” (John 4:26)

According to sacred Tradition, the Samaritan woman is later baptized into Christianity and given the name PHOTINI, meaning “the enlightened one.” During the reign of Nero, she suffered martyrdom by being thrown into a well.