My Beloved Ones,

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΘΗ!
Christ is Risen!

So that we may better understand the importance of this Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, we must first remember how Jews and Samaritans considered each other anathema, especially because of differences in where each group worshipped God (the Jews in the Temple & the Samaritans on the mountain called Gerizim). This is why the Parable of the Good Samaritan is so strong: the Levite & the Priest are Jews who know the Law but fail to imitate God’s mercy for the wounded man; while his enemy, a Samaritan, shows us how God expects us to act to those in need.

Jesus demonstrates this same kindness and love, when He greets a passing Samaritan woman. He asks her for a drink from the well that is nearby, but of course, His purpose is greater than this. Knowing that He is a Jewish stranger, she answers Him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (John 4:9). Jesus responds that He is the living water, and “…whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:13-14).

Now, thinking as a human being, she asks Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw” (John 4:15). He reveals that He knows she is a sinner, but He speaks His Word to her compassionately, “The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. But the hour is coming, and now is when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:21; 23-24). And so, the Samaritan Woman (who later takes the baptismal name Photini) returns to her home, and to her village, preaching the Gospel. The people are so moved and amazed that they forget about her sinful life, and instead came to Christ.

Here we have a woman, who, like the Myrrh-Bearers, believes in our Lord, and testifies to the Truth, rather than the earthly Law. And because of her testimony, we have yet another group of people, strangers, and outcasts, who are brought together as one by the Word of God. I hope and pray that this message serves as an example that we as believers, also have an obligation to share the Good News with others; and not only our non-Orthodox brothers and sisters, but even our Orthodox friends who need understanding and support as well.

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta