

## St. Photina

Feast Day: March 20

The Samaritan woman at the well is a figure from the Gospel of John, in John 4:4–26. In the traditions of the Eastern Orthodox Church, she is considered to be a saint, named Photine or Photini/Photina (the luminous, or enlightened, one, from  $\phi\omega\varsigma$ , "light").

*According to John 4:4-26:*

" But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband.

What you have said is true!' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'



Following her encounter with the living Christ, Photina and her son apparently lived in Carthage, where they preached the Gospel to all who would listen. Her eldest son, Saint Victor, a soldier, had demonstrated his bravery in battle, and was therefore rewarded with a prominent station in the city of Attalia. Following a conversation with the city's administrator, Sebastian, during which Victor was encouraged to renounce his faith and warn his mother and sisters not to preach the Gospel, the city administrator was struck dumb and blind for three days. Upon recovering his senses, and seeing Victor still with him, the administrator converted to Christianity, along with his servants. News of this miraculous conversion eventually reached Emperor Nero, an active and sadistic persecutor of Christians, who ordered the m brought to Rome for trial.

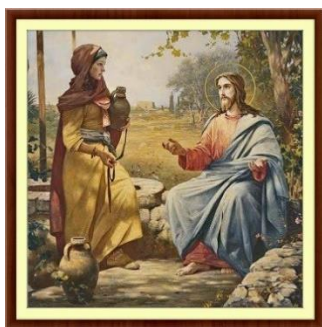
Hearing of the trial, Saint Photina, her sisters, and several other believers, traveled to Rome to join the confessors in their time of trial. The trial was short, and torture began almost immediately upon the accused refusing to renounce their belief in Christ. Each of the martyrs had their wrists crushed in an anvil, but reported feeling no pain. Photina's wrist,

however, was miraculously unable to be crushed. The men were thrown into prison, where they continued to preach to all who would listen, the prison itself transforming into a place that was glowing with light and sweet in odor. The women were confined to the service of the Emperor's daughter, who promptly converted to the faith through their witness, as did her servants.

Incensed with rage, Nero ordered the martyrs executed. The men were crucified upside down and beaten for three days, still refusing to die. They then had their legs severed below the knees, their limbs thrown to dogs, and were beaten until they expired. The women were mutilated, tied to two bent trees, and upon their release were split in half. Saint Photina was thrown down a well, fittingly, the place she had first encountered the Lord. After 20 days of freezing water, no food, or sleep, she was called before the emperor. Again, she was asked to renounce her faith, but replied, "Most impious, blind, lost mad man! Can you possibly think me so stupid that I would agree to renounce my Lord Christ and offer sacrifice to idols as blind as you?!" Without hesitation, Nero had her thrown back into the well, where she died at peace with the Lord.

Photina, so moved by the Lord, so thirsty for the water of life, gave all she had to spread the Gospel to others. So loving and charitable was she, she chose to give her life so that others might hear the words of Christ and come to believe. It is certainly a challenge in our lives to live our faith openly, witnessing to those we encounter—not because of threat of death in most cases, but because of the judgment and hostility exhibited by many in the world. The question is, should we let that stop us? The love of Christ compels us to call others to Him, so that they too may be saved. How, through our lives, words, and behaviors, are we serving as witnesses to the glory and redemption of Jesus Christ? We pray that we may courageously live our faith, so that all may see and believe!

<https://catholic.net/op/articles/2819/cat/1205/st-photina.html>  
<http://365rosaries.blogspot.com/2011/03/march-20-saint-photina-woman-at-well.html>



## Chaplet of St. Photina (*Decade Rosary*)

### Opening Prayer on the Crucifix

By the well of Jacob, O holy one,  
You did find the Water of eternal and blessed life;  
and having partaken of it, O wise Photina,  
you went forth proclaiming Christ, the Anointed One. Help us to follow your example, St Photina and through our lives bring glory to the Lord and believers to the Church.

Amen.

1 Our Father

10 Hail Marys

### Closing Prayer on the Medal

O Almighty God, whose most blessed Son revealed to the Samaritan woman that He is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the World; grant us to drink of the well that springs up to everlasting life that we may worship you in spirit and in truth through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

<http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/photini.html>

