

THE LIFE-GIVING FOUNTAIN

In Greek Orthodox communities, the week oafter Pascha is called “THE WEEK OF RENEWAL.” We are rmininded that just as the Spring season brings a reweval of nature, Christ’s Resurrection berings with it a “*new creation.*”

The Sixth Ecumenical Council offered some specific guidelines for how this week was to be spent. It was decreed that: “*From Pascha to St. Thomas Sunday, the faithful are required to spend time in a state of leisure, attending church and rejoicing in Christ’s Resurrection. They areto listen attentively to the reading of the Holy Scriptures, for in this way, we shalll rise with Christ and be glorified with Him.*”

Friday of Renewal Week has a special significance for us. This day is dedicated to the Holy Virgin, extolling her as the LIFE-GIVING FOUNTAIN. This commemoration dates back to the 5th Century, when a church was built by the Emperor Leo the Thracian, in Constantinople, near a spring where a great number of healings were attributed to the Intercession of the Theotokos. When the Byzantine Empire fell, the magnificent edifice was destroyed and replaced by a mosque. Somehow, the spring managed to survive the devastation around it, and the site continued to be a source of comfort and consolation for the faithful in the surrounding area. When the ruins of the church were completely demolished in 1821, the spring mysteriously sank into the ground anhd disappeared!

In 1834, permission was given by the government to rebuild a church on the original foundation of the former one. A large crown gathered for its consecratiomm, joyfully singing the Kondakion for the day: “I beseech you, O Life-Giving Fountain, to moisten me we the dew of your grace, so that I may cry to you: Rejoice, O Water of salvation!”