

# THE PILGRIM WHO WAS RESURRECTED BY THE WATER OF THE LIFE-GIVING SPRING

—from the book *The Unrivaled Protectress*—

On Friday of Bright Week, it is recorded within the book of *Pentecostarion*, that a certain rich man from Thessaloniki with great piety set out on a pilgrimage to the church of the Life-Giving Spring.<sup>1</sup> For he had heard of the astounding miracles that the all-powerful Mother of God performs through the spring's waters; wherefore, he desired to drink from it for the sanctification of his soul. Having taken a sizeable sum of money with him to cover his expenses, and to serve as a donation for the church, he embarked on a ship. During the course of his journey, however, he became critically ill, and, recognizing his imminent death, he said to the ship's captain, "It seems that I am not worthy to worship in the church of the Most Holy Theotokos, nor to drink from Her sanctified waters. Since my sins have prevented me from going there alive, I adjure you in the name of our Lady Theotokos: do not throw my body into the sea; rather, place me in a trunk, take me to Her holy church, and bury me there. From my possessions, keep 100 gold pieces for yourself, and give the remainder to Her church, in memory of me. If you do so, the Panagia will certainly reward you for your compassion." Upon hearing this, the captain vowed to fulfill his wishes, and, shortly thereafter, the pilgrim passed away.

Indeed, the captain kept his body on board, and, when they arrived in Constantinople three days later, he carried the deceased man ashore and transferred him to the church of the Virgin Mary, where he called priests to perform the funeral and burial services. As the members of the clergy were chanting, the senior priest decided to open the casket because the body was not emitting a foul odor as decaying corpses typically do. Upon opening it, they threw soil cross-wise on top of the body, as customary, reading aloud, "The Life-Creating Potter formed me from clay ..." and the rest of the prayer. At that moment, one of his companions from the ship took a small amount of holy water

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<sup>1</sup> The church of the Life-Giving Spring was built by Emperor Leo the Great in the middle of the 5th century, at the location where water had miraculously sprang forth from the earth. This water gave sight to a blind man, it saved the emperor Leo VI the Wise from certain death, and performed innumerable miracles, for which it became a popular and well known site of pilgrimage. It is located just outside of Constantinople.

from the Life-Giving Spring, and approaching the body remarked, “You poor man! You wanted to drink from this water but were unable to do so. Receive it even now that you are dead.” Having uttered this, he poured the water on the body, and immediately—wondrous are thy works, O Life-Giving Virgin!—the dead man came back to life and sat straight up, glorifying God and His Blessed Mother. How surprised do you think everyone present was, dear reader, (particularly the sailors who had witnessed his death), when they saw him arise after four days, like blessed Lazarus! As they stood in awe, the resurrected pilgrim thanked the Most-Holy Theotokos at length.

Henceforth, he continuously remembered this blessing, and, out of gratitude, he became a pious and virtuous monk and remained in Her church until the end of his life, attending to it with great zeal. Pilgrims would come from far and near to ask him about Hades; however, just as Lazarus, he said nothing to anyone. Leading a God-pleasing and marvelous life for another twenty years after his resurrection, he reposed in the Lord, to Whom is due glory unto the ages. Amen.