

PRASSAS DESPINA

“Christian Calling as Encounter. Jesus in Conversation with Women”

Dr. Despina D. Prassas, Ph.D. Catholic University of America, 2003, teaches as associate professor at the Providence college and publishes in the area of Historical Theology. Dr. Prassas works primarily in the late antique and the early byzantine period, specifically looking at the monastic and ascetical writings of St. Maximos the Confessor. Another area of interest is the modern ecumenical movement, and she is currently a participant on several ecumenical dialogues.

Christ's encounter with the people he meets in the Gospels certainly led to changes in their lives, mostly for the better, though there are usually some difficulties along the way. But along with changing lives, Christ's encounters with women also set in motion the possibility of changing cultural norms. This paper addresses two encounters, the first with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), also known as St. Fotini according to the tradition, and the second with woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5: 25-34; Matt 9:20-22; Luke 8:43-48), known in the tradition as St. Veronika/Bernike, and looks at how these encounters not only transformed the lives of these women, but of women, in general.