

JUNE 6, 2021

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN

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– Fr. Theodore Pantels,

Proistamenos (Pastor)

– Deacon Euthym Kontaxis,

M.D.

Holy Communion Order

1. Please remain standing while following the directions of our ushers.
2. Ladies, kindly remove lipstick before receiving.
3. When receiving Holy Communion, make the Sign of the Cross, state your name (baptismal name), and naturally receive as if being fed.
4. Non-Orthodox Christians may not receive Holy Communion, but they may receive the Holy Bread at the end of the service.
5. *All Orthodox Christians must be spiritually prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please see the priest if you have any questions.*

LIGHT OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

The miracle by which Christ our God healed the man who was born blind shows that Christ is “The One Who enlightens” everyone in the world. Once the Blind Man was enlightened, he gave thanks to God. He also became a teacher to those who were spiritually blind. Through Holy Baptism, we are all called “newly-enlightened” and, as in the case with the man born blind, we are obligated to Christ to also enlighten those who are spiritually blind around us.

We have two kinds of darkness and two kinds of light. One kind of darkness is the physical darkness that covered the

earth before God created the light. There is also the spiritual darkness which covers the soul when we reject God.

In addition, there is physical light through which we see the material world and, yet, as much as we may be able to see the world around us, we still do not understand the entire truth of life. It is by means of spiritual light we come to know the True Light of the world, Who is Christ our God.

The Holy Sacraments of our Church, enlighten us to become “light of the world.” This is very much a process

Continued on page 2

THE POOL OF SILOAM AND HOLY BAPTISM

The miracle by which our Lord healed the Blind Man is associated with the Pool of Siloam, and the Pool of Siloam is the image of our Baptismal Font in which we are cleansed spiritually of our sins. Indeed, sins blind us spiritually and ethically. Christ is the One Who opens our inner, spiritual eyes so that we can know the truth about God’s love. The Sacrament of Baptism begins with one choosing to renounce sin. But, “renouncing sin” is not a one-time act; it is a life-time effort. As Fr. Alexander Schmemmann states, “No one can be Christ’s until he has first faced evil and then become ready to fight it.” (*Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, pg. 86). We renounce Satan and *all* of his “pomp;” *all* of his power. Satan and idolatry go together. Idolizing money, power, luxuries and the like prompt people to many temptations. The fight against temptations is an on-going, daily fight that takes place in our minds and souls and which can only be won through the power of Christ our God. Praying for this Divine power is a conscious choice. It is the choice that we make at Baptism – we renounce sin and we *join Christ*.



Το θαύμα με το οποίο ο Χριστός εθεράπευε αυτόν που εγεννήθηκε τυφλός δείχνει ότι ο Χριστός είναι ο Ιδιος «ο Φωτισμός» του κάθε ανθρώπου. Μόλις εφωτίσθηκε ο τυφλός, ευχαρίστησε τον Θεό και Τον εδοξάσε. Εγινε επίσης διδάσκαλος στους ανθρώπους της κοινότητας στην οποία εζούσε, οι οποίοι ήσαν τυφλοί κατά την πνευματικήν άποψη. Δια του Μυστηρίου του Αγίου Βαπτίσματος, όλοι μας γνωρίζομεθα ως «νέο-φωτισμένοι» και, όπως στην περίπτωση του γεννημένου τυφλού, είμεθα υποχρεωμένοι στον Χριστό να φωτίσουμε επίσης εκείνους που είναι κατά πνευματική άποψη τυφλοί γύρω μας.

Έχουμε δύο είδη σκοταδιού και φωτός. Ένα είδος σκοταδιού είναι η φυσική τύφλωση και το φυσικό σκοτάδι που εκάλυψε τη γη πριν ο Θεός εδημιούργησε το φως. Υπάρχει επίσης το πνευματικό σκοτάδι που καλύπτει την ψυχή όταν απορρίπτουμε τον Θεό. Επιπλέον, υπάρχει φυσικό φως μέσω του οποίου βλέπουμε τον υλικό κόσμο και, ωστόσο, όσο μπορούμε να δούμε τον κόσμο γύρω μας, ακόμα δεν καταλαβαίνουμε ολόκληρη την αλήθεια της ζωής. Αλλά, μέσω πνευματικού φωτός γνωρίζουμε το Αληθινό Φως του κόσμου, ο Οποίος είναι ο Χριστός.

Τα Ιερά Μυστήρια της Εκκλησίας μας διαφωτίζουν. Κατά τη εκτέλεση της Θείας Λειτουργίας προσευχόμεθα: «*Ελλαμψον εν ταις καρδίαις ημών, φιλάνθρωπε Δεσποτα, το της Σης θεογνωσίας ακήρατον φως και τους της διανοίας ημών διανοιζον οφθαλμούς.*» Καθώς ο Χριστός μας ανοίγει τα μάτια του νου μας, μαθαίνουμε την Σοφία του Θεού.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

equal to the spiritual advancement that is evident in the person of the Blind Man of today's Gospel. His spiritual advancement was in stages, as pointed out by the Orthodox theologians of *The Orthodox Study Bible*. We read the following: "*Having opened the Blind Man's eyes, the Lord also opened his heart and illumined his spirit. The man moves from knowing nothing about Christ (v.25), through the conclusion that Jesus could not possibly be a sinner (v.31), through confessing that Jesus must be from God (v. 33), to finally seeing Him as the divine Son of God and worshipping Him (v. 38)...*" (pg. 1443).

During the celebration of the Divine Liturgy we pray: "*Shine within our hearts, O loving Master, the pure light of Your Divine Knowledge and open the eyes of our minds...*" As our Savior opens the eyes of our minds, we learn His Divine Wisdom. Not only are we made able to discern the things that are "good and beneficial for our souls," we find meaning in our lives by sharing those things that are "good and beneficial" for the souls of others.

Finally, the pool to which Christ sent the Blind Man was called "*being sent.*" We "go forth" after participating in the "journey" of the Divine Liturgy. This is nicely explained by Fr. Stephanos Anagnostopoulos as follows: "*That which we take from the Divine Liturgy and the Sacrament of Holy Communion, therefore, is the divine joy, peace, love, patience, strength and all the other heavenly good things which are too numerous to be counted, and we bring them with us into our homes and our families; to our jobs and into all aspects of our lives. To everyone in our world we are the bearers of the new life in Christ.*" (*Experiences During the Divine Liturgy*, pg. 501).

+FR. THEODORE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEMORIAL -- Today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for the servant of God, **William Earnest Piggott (6 months)**, the beloved husband of **Mary Piggott**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Life to **William Earnest Piggott** and may He grant peace and comfort to **Mary Piggott** and the entire family. **MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**

Today.....We welcome **Fr. Simeon Poptelecan** who is celebrating the Divine Liturgy while Fr. Ted is away. Please extend your prayers and gratitude to him during today's Coffee Hour. Also, today's Coffee Hour provides the occasion for all of us to celebrate with **Emily Tcharos** her **88th birthday!** Many blessings to Emily Tcharos!

Thursday, June 10th.....ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

(The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated by **Fr. Simeon Poptelecan**)

PRAYER FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURES



"Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us, also, reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all these things that are pleasing to You. For You are the Light of our souls and bodies and to You we give glory together with Your Father Who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen"

EPISTLE- ACTS 16:16-34 --In those days, as we apostles were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by soothsaying. She followed Paul and us, crying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." And this she did for many days. But Paul was annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the rulers; and when they had brought them to the magistrates they said, "These men are Jews and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice." The crowd joined in attacking them; and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and every one's fetters were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family. Then he brought them up into his house, and set food before them; and he rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God.

GOSPEL- ST. JOHN 9:1-38--As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, "Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is he"; others said, "No, but he is like him." He said, "I

am the man." They said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put clay on my eyes and I washed, and I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" There was a division among them. So they again said to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be Christ he was to be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age, ask him." So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?" And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you." He said, "Lord, I believe": and he worshiped him.

88th Birthday Celebration for Emily Tcharos

6/6/21

St. George Church Hall after
Divine Liturgy on Sunday
(light refreshments & cake will be
served)

Please bring a birthday card or note that we
can present to Emily from as many of us as
possible! If you cannot attend, drop off the
card at the church office before June 6th.





THE GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ARCHIEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 130/2021

Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres Sunday

June 6, 2021

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Christ,

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen!

Μενοῦνγε μακάριοι οἱ ἀκούοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ φυλάσσοντες αὐτόν. (Λουκ. 11:28)
Indeed! Most truly so! Blessed are those who listen to the word of God and keep it! (Luke 11:28)

Finally, the day has arrived for the Church to dedicate a Sunday and celebrate all our Presvyteres throughout the Holy Archdiocese of America. This National Sisterhood of Presvyteres Sunday — on the closest Sunday to June 4th, the Feastday of the Holy Sisters Mary and Martha — is being set aside, not because our Presvyteres deserve only one Sunday, but because we must have a national day of recognition for every Sunday, and indeed every day, that they so diligently and willingly serve the Body of Christ. Theirs is a role of both deep faith and contemplation, and of tremendous activity.



Therefore, their heavenly patrons are Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazaros, who manifested the best of both stillness and service.

We read of these sisters of Lazaros at all the great feasts of the Theotokos (Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28), and in particular at the Dormition. In the Gospel pericope for this great feast, we see the paralleled uncompromising service of our Presvyteres, a diakonia that is based in prayer and action. And this Reading concludes with an affirmation from our Lord Himself, of the blessedness of all those who truly hear His words and observe them. In this, we see that Martha and Mary are equals, and that they imitate the Theotokos herself. For all our Presvyteres, whose dedication and devotion to the Church is matched by their dedication to their families, all of us owe a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Therefore, let us honor their sacrifice and their labors on this Sunday every year with special observances and hallmarks of gratitude. But let us never forget that our Presvyteres are with us every day, supporting their husbands and children, and setting examples of faith, hope, and love that lead our Faithful to not only hear the words of God, but to keep, preserve, and guard them in their hearts.

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη!

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

† Ἐλπιδοφόρος

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America