

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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## SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC (3rd after Pascha) 6 May 2012

*Righteous Job the Long-suffering; Martyrs Barbarus the soldier, Bacchus, Callimachus, and Dionysius, in Morea (ca. 362).*

### FIRST ANTIPHON

*Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing to His Name, make his praise glorious! (R.:*

*Say to God: How awesome are thy works; let all the earth worship Thee, and sing to Thee! (R.:*

*Glory ... Now and ever... (R.:*

### SECOND ANTIPHON

*May God have mercy upon us, and bless us, and may He cause His Face to shine upon us, and have mercy on us! (R.:*

*That Thy way may be known upon earth, thy salvation among all nations! Let the nations give thanks to Thee, O God, let all give thanks to Thee! (R.:*

*May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear Him! (R.:*

*Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son ...)*

## THIRD ANTIPHON

Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee from before His face. *Christ is risen ...* [English, Byzantine melody]

As smoke vanisheth, so let them vanish; as wax melteth before the fire.

*Christ is risen ...* [Greek]

So let sinners perish before the Face of God, but let the righteous be glad.

*Christ is risen ...*[Arabic]

This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

*Christ is risen ...* [Romanian]

## AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

TROPARION OF RESURRECTION (Tone 3): Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm: He has trampled down death by death, and become the first born from the dead; He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world great mercy!

TROPARION OF SAINT ANTHONY THE GREAT (Tone 4, Russian): Like the zealous Elijah thou didst become, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways. A dweller in the wilderness, thou didst steady the world by prayer. O Father Anthony, intercede with Christ our God for our souls' salvation.

KONTAKION OF PASCHA (Tone 8): O Christ God, though Thou didst descend into the grave, yet didst Thou overthrow the power of Hades, and rise as an Immortal Conqueror. Thou didst greet the myrrh-bearing women with joy, and to Thine Apostles Thou didst send Thy peace, and to the fallen O Lord, Thou didst bring resurrection.

KONTAKION OF THE PARALYTIC (Tone 3): By Thy divine intercession, O Lord, as Thou didst raise up the paralytic of old, so also raise up my soul paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts; so that being saved I may sing to Thee: Glory to Thy majesty, O gracious Christ!

## NOTES FOR SUNDAY OF THE MYRRHBEARERS

SPECIAL HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS: The angel cried out to the Lady full of grace: rejoice, rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again I say: rejoice! For your son is risen from his three days in the tomb, and with himself He has raised all the dead. Rejoice, rejoice all you people! Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, the glory of the Lord has shown on you. Exult now, exult and be glad, O Zion! Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the resurrection of your son!

INSTEAD OF "WE HAVE SEEN THE TRUE LIGHT": Christ is risen. . . (once)

AT THE VERY END OF THE SERVICE:

**Priest:** Christ is risen!

**People:** Indeed He is risen!

Arabic: *Al Maseeh qam! Haqan qam!*

Greek: *Hristós anesthi! Alithós anesthi!*

Romanian: *Hristós a inviat! Adevarat a inviat!*

Slavonic: *Hristós voskresey! Voyistino voskresey!*

**Priest:** *Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death death ...*

**People:** *... and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!*

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon:

*Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Clap your hands, all you nations.*

*The Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles*

(Acts 9:32-42)

In those days Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints that lived at Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. Now there was at Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which means

“Gazelle.” She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him entreating him, “Please come to us without delay.” So Peter rose and went with them. And when he had come, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping, and showing tunics and other garments, which “the Gazelle” made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, rise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand and lifted her up. Then calling the saints and widows he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

“As father, as son” says the proverb. This applies also in the relationship between teachers and pupils, or masters of any craft and their disciples. The Lord himself said “A disciple is not above his master: but every disciple that is fully trained shall be as his master” (Luke 6:40). It is not surprising, then, that the Acts of the Apostles show precisely how the disciples of Christ act in ways that mirror those of the Master.

Today we read about two astounding miracles of Saint Peter—the healing of a paralytic and the raising from the dead of a young woman—which echo the Lord’s miracles (today’s Gospel recounts the healing of the paralytic!). Where does this reading place us, who are also called to be disciples of Christ and followers of his apostles? How should we strive towards the heights of holiness that we see in the holy apostle Peter?

*Humility*: this would be their first advice; that is, stop comparing yourself to the saints, and stop daydreaming about great feats of holiness. None of those whom we know to be saints of the Church ever dreamed of “becoming a saint,” or “mastering the art of” healing paralytics or raising the dead. The Church is not a school of witchcraft and wizardry, but the gathering of those who wish to become sober. “The Son of God came into this world to save sinner, *of whom I am first*”: this confession that Saint Paul gave to his disciple, Saint Timothy (1 Tim 1:15), which we also repeat at each Divine Liturgy, is our first step to sobriety, the first step out of the satanic intoxication with self-conceit, the first step to being a disciple of Christ.

## TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

*The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint John*

(John 5:1-15)

At that time, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethesda, which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and troubled the water; whoever stepped in first, after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever disease he had. One man was there, who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for you to carry your pallet." But he answered them, "The man who healed me said to me, 'Take up your pallet, and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your pallet, and walk?'" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befalls you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

The chronically ill man said to the Lord: "I have *no man* to put me into the pool." As the Gospel of John often does, a simple sentence, a simple complaint, carries a lot of theological freight. On the surface of it, the text states that the only hope of healing for the poor man was an angelic miracle at the Sheep's Pool, but that no fellow-human would be there to help him descend into the pool.

Read within the larger context of the Gospel of John, however, "I have no man" takes on a deeper meaning. First of all, the Gospel begins by stating that the Word of God took on human flesh: it is not an angel that appeared, but God himself; and he did not merely appear only to vanish soon after, but he took on flesh of our flesh, and tasted the fullness of being human.

Secondly, when Pilate paraded Jesus before the crowd calling for his crucifixion, he exclaimed, "Behold *the man!*" (Jn 19:5). In other words, the "man" whom the paralytic was seeking is now with us.

In fact, this is precisely what the interpretation given by one of the hymns sung at the Vespers of this Sunday: *A man lay sick by the Sheep's Pool. Seeing Thee, O Lord, he cried to Thee: "There is no man to lower me into the pool when the water is stirred!" Immediately the Savior was moved to pity, and said to him: It was for you that I became man; because of you I was clothed in mortal flesh. Yet you say: I have no man!" ... Remember us all, and have mercy, O holy Lover of humankind!*

If, therefore, the paralytic is also a representative of fallen humanity, then the Sheep's Pool can also be viewed as an image of the Church: the gathering of those "sheep" who are baptized and healed. So, we *do* have "a man": not an angel, but the Lord himself, who for us became flesh of our flesh, a man like us. And we can make our own the singing of today's Kontakion: *By Thy divine intercession, O Lord, as Thou didst raise up the paralytic of old, so also raise up my soul paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts; so that being saved I may sing to Thee: Glory to Thy majesty, O gracious Christ!*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Next two Saturdays in May: Reader's Vespers, 6:30 pm**

**Today:** Don't be shy, ask your questions, *stump the priest!*

**Sunday, 27 May, after Divine Liturgy:** In appreciation of the congregation's love and support, Jonathan and Joanna would like to invite the parish to a celebration of their marriage.

### *Remember in your prayers*

**LIVING:** Richard (Michaels), Sam, Bill, Jennifer, Karen (Joanna's mother), Victoria (Frank's mother), Diane, Sula, Fran, Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice (Totin), Ed, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian, Justin, Sara, Lorine, Stella, Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka.

**DEPARTED:** Tillie, Helen, Abie, Nicolae (Silviu's father), Joseph (Rose's father), Fred (Dollie's uncle), Bob (Diane's father), George (Botsis), Michael, priest James, Gabriel, Eduard, Lance, Nancy.