



Christ asks the paralytic man an obvious question
to stimulate his faith:

"Do you want to be made well?"

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday of the Paralytic

May 15, 2011

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel
J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 - 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ The Scripture Study Class will meet this Tuesday at 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Please come and join us by investing time in learning our precious faith so we can better enjoy and live it! The public is invited to participate with us, so invite a friend or neighbor. In preparation for the next class, please read the twenty-fourth to twenty-sixth chapters of the Book of Genesis.

+++ The Next Pirohi Sale will be Saturday, June 4 and Bake Sale on Saturday, June 18.

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week: Tithe Offering, \$564.00; Candles, \$58.00; Food Coupons, \$140.00; Kitchen, \$474.00, for a total of \$1236.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Louis Pasquino, +Paul Szmaida, Debra Szmaida, George Idromenos, Kent Pasquino, Kyle Pasquino, Bob Gorbich, Marina Topsis, Anna Zacharyczuk and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$1617.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$107,815.00. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

+++ Please be certain to see **Helen Karpiak** or a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$5300.00 on this project to date!

+++ **The Clothing Drive is a permanent on-going project in our parish. Please bring any type of clothing and fabrics along with stuffed animals and shoes for the benefit of our parish. The bags can be left in the vestibule or on the front porch of the rectory. Please invite your friends and neighbors to assist us in disposing of unwanted clothing, shoes and fabrics.**

+++ We remember only those who are present for the entire Divine Liturgy should come forward to receive Communion. The entire Liturgy means "Amen" to "Amen."

+++ May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!

LORD



TEACH
US

Eternal Life

And now I entrust you to God and his care and to his wonderful words which are able to build your faith and give you all the inheritance of those who are set apart for himself Acts of the Apostles 20: 32.

In just a little while I will be gone from the world, but I will still be present with you. For I will live again and so you will too John 14: 19.

For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection or angels or eternal spirit within us, but the Pharisees believe in all these. So a great clamor arose. Some of the Jewish leaders jumped up to argue that Paul was all right. We see nothing wrong with him, they shouted. Perhaps a spirit or an angel spoke to him on the road to Damascus Acts of the Apostles 23: 8, 9.

The twelve tribes of Israel strive night and day to attain this same hope I have! Yet, O king, for me it is a crime they say! But is it a crime to believe in the resurrection of the dead? Does it seem incredible to you that God can bring men back to life again, to open their eyes to their true condition so that they may repent and live in the light of God instead of in satan's darkness, so that they may receive forgiveness for their sins and God's inheritance along with all people everywhere whose sins are cleansed away, who are set apart by faith in me Acts of the Apostles 26: 7, 18.

He will grant eternal life to those who patiently do the will of God, seeking for the unseen glory and honor and eternal life that he offers Romans 2: 7.

Before sin ruled over all men and brought them to death, but now God's kindness rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord Romans 5: 21.

MID PENTECOST

There are two important periods of time during the course of the liturgical year as we celebrate our blessed faith. The first of these is the Great Fast, the renewal of our baptismal commitment to renounce evil and follow after the Lord. The second is the glorious celebration of the Resurrection of Christ, his gift to us in everlasting life. Both of these actually last about fifty days. Even though the Great Fast is but forty days, to commemorate the forty years Israel wandered in the desert and forty days of our Lord fasting in the desert, it is joined to the intense Fast of Passion Week, the Passover Fast and a short fast between Meatfare and Cheesefare Sundays. Likewise the fifty days between the Resurrection of our Lord and Pentecost, the day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, is divided into a period of forty days to recall the forty days our Lord spent with his disciples before ascending and returning to the glory He always had with the Father, and a period of ten days of waiting for the promise of our Lord to be fulfilled, with the precious gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Liturgy, moreover, commemorates the mid-point of both these periods with a special feast. Wednesday of the fourth week of the Great Fast, half way between Cheesefare Sunday and the Passover, is called Mid-Fast and celebrates the glory of the cross in our salvation. The compliment to this is the feast on the twenty-fifth day after the Passover, which is also the twenty-fifth day before Pentecost and is popularly known as the feast of Divine Wisdom. These feasts celebrate the role in our salvation of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Holy Trinity. Both are true and authentic and necessary. It might seem that the cross celebrates suffering, pain and death, and the Holy Spirit celebrates joy and life and light. However, in our worship we sing, "...through the cross joy has come into the world." The cross and the gift of the Holy Spirit are one and the same mystery. Jesus identifies his "lifting up," his ascension with both his crucifixion and glorification. It is not that we seek pain and suffering and death, and Jesus even prayed that this chalice be taken from him, but through the cross the infinite and life-creating love of God for us was revealed. For us, then, the cross becomes our self-denial, which in turn is our glorification, as Jesus taught, "Everyone who humbles himself will be exalted" Luke 14: 11.

The feast of Mid-Pentecost remembers Jesus' pilgrimage to Jerusalem before the feast of Tabernacles, the great autumn harvest feast of the Jews called *sukkot*. During this feast the Jews lived in temporary shelters or huts made of branches to recall their journey through the desert to the promised land of milk and honey. This is evidence of their dependence on God in a temporary, changing, even threatening situation. Two rituals of this feast that our Lord is to



FIRSTFRUITS

I CORINTHIANS 15:23 KJV

*But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits;
afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

It is, indeed, in accordance with the nature of the invisible God that He should be thus known through His works; and those who doubt the Lord's resurrection because they do not now behold Him with their eyes, might as well deny the very laws of nature. They have ground for disbelief when works are lacking; but when the works cry out and prove the fact so clearly, why do they deliberately deny the risen life so manifestly shown? Even if their mental faculties are defective, surely their eyes can give them irrefragable proof of the power and Godhead of Christ. A blind man cannot see the sun, but he knows that it is above the earth from the warmth which it affords; similarly, let those who are still in the blindness of unbelief recognize the Godhead of Christ and the resurrection which He has brought about through His manifested power in others. . . .

He it is Who has destroyed death and freely graced us all with incorruption through the promise of the resurrection, having raised His own body as its first-fruits, and displayed it by the sign of the cross as the monument to His victory over death and its corruption.

ATHANASIUS



Miracles of the Resurrection

The sleeping earth awakens,
the robins start to sing,
the flowers open wide their eyes
to tell us it is spring.

The bleakness of the winter
is melted by the sun,
the tree that looked so stark and dead
becomes a living one.

These miracles of the Resurrection,
wrought with divine perfection,
Are the blessed reassurance
of our Saviour's glorious Resurrection.



JESUS' MIRACULOUS RESURRECTION

As with all of Christ's miracles, the resurrection was not an end but a means. Jesus didn't rise from the grave to prove that He could; He rose from the grave to highlight every other promise He made. He rose from the grave to defeat death and Satan. He died on the cross to obtain our pardon, but He left the tomb to personally guarantee our forgiveness. He rose from the grave to give us a prelude for eternal life.

The resurrection of Jesus places Christianity in a category of its own. Without the bodily resurrection of Jesus, His followers are just another large group of believers in a more-or-less religious system. Without the resurrection, Christianity is a major religion. With a risen Lord, however, Christianity is a supernatural relationship between the Son of God and those who trust Him. Those who reject the resurrection of Jesus are left with little but the despair of their own efforts to merit eternal benefits. The infinitely better choice involves the hope-filled realization that because Jesus lives, so can we.

Wisdom, Be Attentive!

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; with His arm, the Lord has won victory; by His death, He has conquered death; He has become the first born of the dead; He has delivered us from the depth of the Abyss and has granted great mercy to the world Troparion, Sunday of the Paralytic.

With your divine protection, O Lord, as you once raised the paralytic, now lift up my soul paralyzed with all kinds of sins and evil deeds of wickedness, so that saved I may cry out to You: "Glory to your might, O merciful Christ!" Kontakion, Sunday of the Paralytic.

Although You descended to the grave, O Immortal One, You destroyed the power of death; You rose again as a Victor, O Christ God! You announced to the women bearing ointment: "Rejoice!" You gave peace to your apostles and resurrection to the fallen Kontakion, Sunday of the Paralytic.

May your kindness O Lord, be upon us who put our hope in You Prokimenon, Sunday of the Paralytic.

Receive the Body of Christ! Drink the Source of Immortality! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Communion Hymn, Sunday of the Paralytic.

When the Paschal Feast is half-completed, quench my thirsty soul with the waters of devotion, for You, O Saviour, have announced to all: "Let him who is thirsty come to me and drink," O Christ God, Source of our life, glory to You! Troparion, Feast of Mid-Pentecost.

O Christ God, Creator and Lord of all, when the Paschal feast was half-completed, You told those present: "Come and draw the water of immortality." Let us therefore adore You and cry out with faith: "Grant us your goodness, for You are the Source of our life!" Kontakion, Feast of Mid-Pentecost.

THE "SEVEN SIGNS" OF THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

In the Gospel of the Evangelist John, we see seven signs, or miracles that point out the divine power of our Lord. These signs are: changing water into wine; curing the nobleman's son; the healing of the paralytic; feeding the 5,000; walking on water; giving sight to the blind man and raising Lazarus from the dead. Each was performed by Christ to strengthen the faith of His followers in the truth that, indeed, He was the Son of God, Who came from the Father.

On this, the 4th Sunday of Pascha, our Holy Orthodox Church dedicates the day to the "third sign:" THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC. This miraculous event unfolds near the Sheep Gate, some 100 yards north of the temple area in Jerusalem. The water for this pool came from underground springs, and it was used to wash down the lambs that were sacrificed by the Jews before they were slain. It was here that Jesus cured the man who had suffered from his infirmity for 38 years.

The contrasts between our Lord and the pool are striking. The pool of Bethesda was a PLACE of miracles. Legend had it that when an angel "stirred" the waters, the first person to enter the pool was cured of whatever disease they had. Christ was a PERSON of miracles, with the power to heal with a mere word. This thought was articulated beautifully by the centurion, who approached our Lord and proclaimed: *"Say the word, and I know my servant will be healed."* The pool offered hope for ONE person at ONE time. Christ offers hope for EVERYONE at ANY time. The pool gave PHYSICAL well-being. Christ, on the other hand, takes care of our SPIRITUAL needs and ETERNAL well-being. Let us cry out in the words of today's Troparion: GLORY TO YOUR MIGHT, O LORD!

Icon by Sister Ruth - Keene, NH

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