

MAY 29, 2022



ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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–Fr. Theodore Pantels,
Proistamenos (Pastor)
–Deacon Euthym Kon-
taxis, M.D.

Holy Communion Or- der

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 Com-*

THE LADDER

THE SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN

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 --At that time, 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



TODAY'S GOSPEL PASSAGE, Continued

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.

THE MAN BORN BLIND - Our Savior sent the blind man to the Pool of Siloam so that he might wash his eyes, which had been anointed with the clay-not that the pool's water had such power, but that the faith and obedience of the one sent might be made manifest, and that the miracle might become more remarkable and known to all, and leave no room for doubt. Thus, the blind man believed in Jesus' words, obeyed His command, went and washed himself, and returned, no longer blind, but having eyes and seeing. This was the greatest miracle that our Lord had yet worked; as the man healed of his blindness himself testified, "*Since time began, never was it heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.*"

--Taken from our Archdiocese website: www.goarch.org

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, May 30th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, June 2nd.....THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"CATCH ME"... art exhibit in Los Angeles by **Nicholas Kontaxis**. Contact **Krisann Kontaxis, Rhonda Latkovic, and/ or Margarita Pagoulatos** for details and for transportation arrangements. See enclosed flier.

Sunday Coffee Hour Summer Update--Memorial Weekend kicks off the summer season....our snowbirds have left, the weather is heating up, and activities are slowing down for the next three months through Labor Day Weekend. We will be temporarily pausing our Sunday coffee hour for the months of June, July, & August unless a volunteer steps up & signs up to handle the coffee hour from start to finish on a specified date. A sign-up calendar has been posted on the bulletin board in the church hall. If you are interested in volunteering for a particular Sunday, please sign the sheet. In addition, for the summer months if a memorial is wanted to be scheduled please inform Father Ted and/or Rhonda Latkovic a minimum of two weeks in advance to the date requested so arrangements can be made. Parishioners are encouraged to prepare their own kolyva if possible.

ST. SOPHIA SUMMER CAMP -- 2022:Camp Registration is now open! --**Week 1: July 25th - July 29th - Camp Cedar Lake in Big Bear Lake, CA. Week cost: \$565 (online)/ \$550 (check)** --**Week 2: August 2nd - August 7th -- Camp St. Nicholas in Frazer Park, CA . Week cost (\$665 online)/ \$650 (check).** Register online at: <https://www.saintsophiacamp.org/>

NICHOLAS KONTAXIS

CATCH ME



JUNE 3RD OPENING NIGHT EVENT
5pm-8pm



A SOLO EXHIBITION

UTA ARTIST SPACE · LOS ANGELES

utaartistspace.com nicholaskontaxis.com

NK

HOLY BAPTISM ILLUMINES US

Let us keep in mind that Christ our God rejects the notion that the blind man of today's Gospel passage was born blind as a form of punishment. As such, as Orthodox Christians, we too must reject the notion that one's personal illness is a form of punishment from God. St. Paul's "*thorn in the flesh*" is an example of our Lord allowing illness in order for us to seek His strength, which is made "*perfect in our weaknesses.*" (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Yet, illness is the result of sin in general. The blind man symbolizes all of humanity which had fallen away from God. While without God's Grace we cannot be saved, at the same time, salvation is elusive without our own spiritual efforts of prayer and good works for God's glory.

The blind man found his sight, not only because of our Lord's great love for humanity, but because he was obedient to the words of our Savior. Our own obedience to our Lord is shown by studying Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Church, as we submit ourselves to God's Will. Upon seeing the Truth of God's Saving Love, we *bear witness to the world*, as did the healed blind man when he was confronted by the Pharisees, proclaiming Christ as God, despite social pressures to reject Him.

The mud that our Lord placed over the blind man's eyes reminds us of our creation "*from the dust of the earth.*" (Genesis 2:7). We can also understand the "mud" as a symbol of our sins. The Pool of Siloam reminds us of the Baptismal Font. Holy Baptism washes away the "mud," and, as a result, we are able to "see" the truth that Christ is the One True God, the Giver of Life. This is the *illumination* that is given to us upon baptism.

As the blind man came to "see" God's love, we can also "see" God's love through prayer and good works. As we "see" God, and bear witness by way of our Christian life-style, others can then "see" God. Participating in the Sacramental Life of His Church is our act of bearing witness so that others can avoid the darkness of spiritual blindness and also be witnesses of His glory, revealing His forgiveness and love through personal and concrete experiences.

+FR. THEODORE

Ας έχουμε κατά νου ότι ο Χριστός απορρίπτει την ιδέα ότι ο τυφλός της σημερινής Ευαγγελικής περικοπής εγεννήθηκε τυφλός ως μορφή τιμωρίας. Ως εκ τούτου, ως Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί, πρέπει επίσης να απορρίψουμε την ιδέα ότι η προσωπική ασθένεια του καθενός μας είναι μια μορφή τιμωρίας από τον Θεό. Το «*σκόλοψ εις την σάρκαν*» του Αγίου Παύλου είναι ένα παράδειγμα που ο Κύριος επιτρέπει την ασθένεια για να αναζητήσουμε τη δύναμή Του, διότι «*η δύναμις [Του] εν αδυναμία δεικνύεται τέλεια*». (2 Κορ. 12:9).

Ωστόσο, η ασθένεια είναι αποτέλεσμα της αμαρτίας γενικά. Ο τυφλός συμβολίζει όλη την ανθρωπότητα που είχε ξεφύγει από τον Θεό. Ενώ χωρίς τη Χάρη του Θεού δεν μπορούμε να σωθούμε, την ίδια στιγμή, η σωτηρία είναι άπιαστη χωρίς τις δικές μας πνευματικές προσπάθειες προσευχής και καλών έργων προς δόξαν Θεού.

Η «λάσπη» που έβαλε ο Κύριος στα μάτια του τυφλού μας θυμίζει τη δημιουργία μας «*εκ χώματος εκ της γης*» (Γεν. 2:7). Μπορούμε επίσης να κατανοήσουμε τη «λάσπη» ως σύμβολο των αμαρτιών μας. Η κολυμβήθρα του Σιλωάμ μας θυμίζει την Κολυμβήθρα του Αγίου Βαπτίσματος. Το Άγιο Βάπτισμα ξεπλένει τη «λάσπη» και, ως αποτέλεσμα, είμεθα σε θέση να «δούμε» την αλήθεια ότι ο Χριστός είναι ο Αληθινός Θεός. Αυτός είναι ο *φωτισμός* που έρχεται σε μας μέσω του Μυστηρίου του Αγίου βαπτίσματος.

+ Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ