

Scripture Readings

EPISTLE Acts of the Apostles 9:32-42 In those days, as 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 Dorcas. 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 Dorcas 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.

GOSPEL 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 befall you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

Gospel Reflection: Discovering Who Christ Is and Who We Are

In one of the Great Vespers hymns for today we hear that "the paralytic ... was like a dead man unburied." He suffered from paralysis not only of his body, but also of his mind and heart. Sitting by the Sheep's Gate pool for thirty-eight years had withered his spirit into a state of isolation and destitution. Jesus offers the paralytic the glory of divine healing, which elicits instead the desperate response: "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool..." We might surmise that deep inside this man – paralyzed in body, mind, and heart - was a tender center, encrusted in the defense mechanisms of anxiety, fear, depression, or aggression. What do these mechanisms protect? Usually, it our sense of self that we work so hard throughout every facet of our lives to develop, and which we strive so ardently to preserve at all costs. We cobble this construct of the self out of the debris of life, especially our talents and our desires, as well as our fears and our shame. We call it "me" and then set out to make sure that it uses every possible means to assert itself and ascend atop the great heap of everyone else's selves, at any cost. Often that means the self takes no prisoners and ends up becoming imprisoned. The paralytic was imprisoned not by his disease, but by his mind and heart. This is why Jesus asked him this all important question, "Do you want to be healed?" One would assume the answer is "Of course!" Yet the Lord went to the heart of the problem, cutting through the defenses and past the frailty of the paralytic to the truth of his very being. The paralytic's explanatory response seemed to indicate almost a reluctance, perhaps of fear, to be healed. But the image of God in the paralytic, the truth of his identity, the part of him most deeply imprisoned and forgotten heard voice of his Lord. Though there was likely much richer dialogue between them, Scripture offers Jesus' direct command: "Rise, take up your bed and walk." When Jesus later meets the healed man, he tells him, "See you are well. Go and sin no more that nothing worse befall you." The point of developing an authentic spiritual practice is liberation. Do we really want to be healed? The Church holds the means of salvation for us and offers them freely, as did the Lord at the Sheep's Gate Pool. The Church awakens in us the gifts of God given to all made in His image through Her sacraments, prayers, and liturgies. The Lord Jesus came to set us free, and there is much we can do to become co-workers in our own liberation. The instantaneous freedom from physical paralysis was only one aspect of the miracle. The other was to awaken the man to the truth of his nature. The Lord advised him to be careful that he not fall again into the mire of despair that befell both his mind and his heart, imprisoning him for thirty-eight years. The antidote to that poisonous state of mind and heart that may imprison us as it did the paralytic is an authentic spiritual practice of meditation, prayer, and the conscious nurturing of virtuous thoughts and actions. The Christian faith is not about being forced, for God has graced us with the gift of free will. It is about making the clear and correct choice about who Christ is in our life and how He will illumine our 'self.'

Hymn of Praise to St. Mary the Myrrhbearer



By the hand of our Holy Father
St. Nikolai of Ochrid (Serbia, 1881-1956)

Magdalene, in dark sorrow wrapped herself
Because of the bloody death of the Son of God.
Sorrow is to love, the most bitter sorrow,
It, in the world, has no comfort or companion,
To it, tears are comfort and pain its only companion,
To Saint Magdalene, in darkness the world became
wrapped.

The weak creation of man, asked for light,
Without hope, in the dark Mary groped.
His tomb to her is light but behold, the tomb is empty!
Stolen she thought, naked and not anointed!
Bitterly she wept, to weeping never any end,
At that moment, a man's voice beside her, she heard:
Woman, why are you weeping, tell me:
Whom do you seek? Whom do I seek, you ask?
To comfort me, do you wish!
But, if you took Him away, where did you place Him?
Tearful and melancholy, Jesus looked at her,
And with a sweet voice called her: Mary!
In Mary's heart, a light began to shine
O familiar voice, with sweetness unsurpassable,
The voice overly generous by life and power!
With that voice, the Lord healed the sick,
With that same voice, He resurrected the dead.
Life-creating voice, a miraculous voice!
Mary recoiled and turned around
"Rabbi", she cried out. At that moment the sun came out.
A New Day dawned for Mary and for the world.



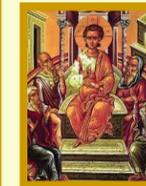
Save and Protect, O Lord, These Thy Servants

In an effort to keep the Prayer List current, we have taken away the last list and will begin accepting names for a new Prayer List beginning tomorrow (May 24). Names will remain on the list for one month and the list will be revised at that time. If you have submitted a name and learn that the person's status has changed, kindly inform the Parish Office. We appreciate your assistance in keeping our Prayer List up-to-date and current. Remember, pray always for each other — and for yourself! God bless you all.

Father Dimitrios



Divine Services of Mid-Pentecost



Wednesday, May 26, is Mid-Pentecost, the midpoint between Holy Pascha and Holy Pentecost. The Church begins to focus our attention on the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, constituting the Church of Christ and the beginning of the evangelization of the world. Orthros of the feast will be at 8:30 AM followed by the Divine Liturgy at 9:30 AM. Let us prepare our hearts for the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Χριστός Ανέστη!
Ἀληθῶς Ανέστη!

O Lord, Grant Them Eternal Rest



Rev. Fr. Demetri Tsigas (6 months)
Maria Dragoumis (40 days)
Angeliki Asimakopoulos (40 days)

May they rest in peace and rise in glory and may their memory be eternal!

PARISH MINISTRIES

BIBLE STUDY: The Spring session of Bible Study will begin on Thursday, May 27 at 10:30 AM and 7:00 PM. The subject of our study will be the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans. Sessions are on ZOOM every Thursday at 10:30 AM and 7:00 PM. All are welcome to join this important study! Please bring your Bibles to each session.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: Every Monday at noon, fifteen-minute reflections live-streamed through the Orthodox Christian Network at <https://www.facebook.com/MyOCN/>.

PARISH ACTIVITIES

LIGHT A CANDLE: Please make wax and red glass candle offerings and tray offerings at <https://stgeorge.org/livestream/> - thank you for your continued love and generous support!

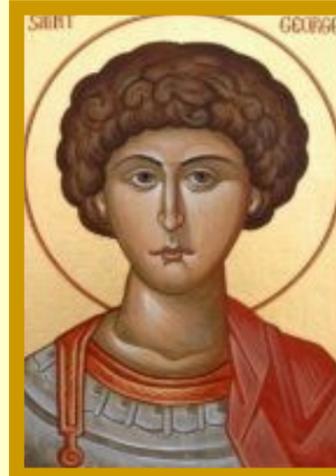
SUNDAY SCHOOL: Today, following Divine Liturgy, we will bestow our annual Sunday School Awards, recognizing students, teachers, Oratorical Festival participants, and Altar Servers for their attendance, hard work and service during the past challenging year. May God, Who is the seat of all Wisdom, bless them all!

ST. GEORGE MISSION TEAM: to continued safety concerns we have decided not to travel out of state this year. Our spirit is high, and we will embark in local service projects to assist those in need. Please consider participating and be part of an organization that puts your Orthodox faith to work. Students can earn service hours. For information, contact Athena Kaiser at avmail@verizon.net or (240) 498- 0870.

GREEK PRESCHOOL: 2021-2022 school year registration now open for programs Monday-Friday 8:30 AM-5:30 PM, offering half or full-day classes for children ages 2-5. To schedule a private tour, contact Director Marilena Michalas at directorstgeorgegreekpreschool@gmail.com. To register or for more information, visit <https://www.stgeorgegreekpreschool.org/>

GREEK SCHOOL: Offering a unique opportunity for donation-matching up to \$10,000. All funds donated will assist in procuring instructional materials/equipment for the 2021-2022 school year, since the pandemic has curtailed our ability for large-scale fundraising. Thanks for your continued support!. Contact the following link: <https://stgeorge.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/495/responses/new>.

GREEK PRESCHOOL: The preschool is undertaking renovating the playground to ensure it is ADA compliant and within Montgomery County regulations. This will be one of the most important projects the preschool undertakes as it not only benefits the preschool but the entire Saint George community. To support the "Yiayia's playground" renovation, we're asking you to consider purchasing a leaf on our Agape Tree to be displayed in the Educational Building..



THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE

Rev. Fr.
Dimitrios J. Antokas,
Presiding Priest
FrAntokas@stgeorge.org



**Χριστός Ανέστη!
Ἀληθῶς Ανέστη!**

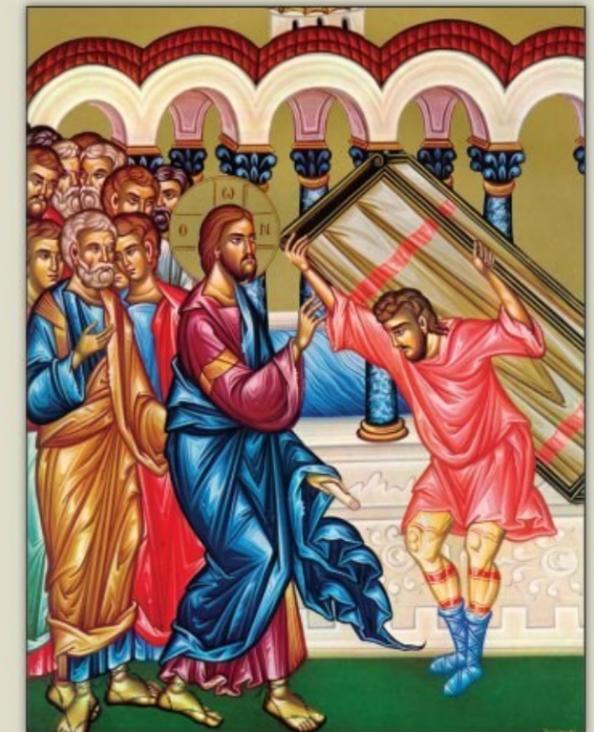
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SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC MAN

St. Mary Magdalene the Myrrhbearer

May 23, 2021

SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC MAN



Icon of Christ and the Paralytic Man

Apolytikion of the Feast of Feasts

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, θανάτῳ θάνατον πατήσας,
καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι, ζῶν χάρισάμενος!

Christ is Risen from the dead, by death trampling down
upon death, and to those in the tombs
He has granted life!